

An Exploration of the Differences between  
Cover Design for Commercial Women's  
Fiction in the UK and Taiwan

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Abstract

The book cover design has gathered great importance in recent years. However, while visual design in general has been extensively investigated, book cover design is relatively unexplored. This research project seeks to explore how book cover design influences the process of publishing process of women's commercial fiction. It will compare cover design within this genre in the UK and Taiwan. It will compare the different markets of Taiwan and the UK; it will also explore and analyse publishers' commercial strategies, and practical marketing considerations that influence decisions regarding various local or translated female fictions. The research relates to the wider context of how content is presented to gain maximum investment by stakeholders, both industry (e.g. retailers, stockists and reviewers) and end-user (e.g. readers, purchasers and borrowers). The findings suggest that publishers in the UK consider market appeal and resulting likely commercial profits more than publishers in Taiwan. In Taiwan, with less commercial awareness or emphasis, editors and designers seek to express themselves and create personal style in the products they bring to market; therefore, marketing is not the most influential department within publishing houses. These findings have implications for decision making about covers in women's commercial fiction, and for design considerations for different markets.

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## Chapter 1: Introduction

### 1.1 Research Background Information

In this competitive publishing era, it is more difficult to sell books without attractive cover design. Harland Miller, best known for his giant canvases of Penguin Book Covers, states that ‘there’s no way publishers could sell books today if they all had plain covers’<sup>1</sup> (Brown, 2007). An attractive cover does not necessarily guarantee to sell well, but at least it could increase possibilities to catch readers’ attention. A book cover could visually connect the consumer and arouse their desire to read or buy the book. If the designer designs the cover like an art work, consumer might buy it for its aesthetic worth and treat it as art. For the author, a good cover is like remarkable advertisement to attract more consumers’ or readers’ attention. An author usually has personal opinion about the cover design but their ideas alone will seldom prevail; the challenge is to get the best cover through discussion between the designer and the publisher, while hopefully keeping the author on board. Book cover design is an interesting area of art work, which connects editors, designers and authors. Who plays the crucial role in deciding the cover? Does the marketing/sales team or editorial team make the final decision? The answer might be different depending on the book, the market and the country.

People often say ‘Don’t judge a book by its cover’, but in fact, most readers do this. Alison Baverstock (2008) states that ‘instant decisions to buy or discard are

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<sup>1</sup> Brown, H. (2007). *What’s behind the cover (and we don’t mean the book)*. The Telegraph. [Online] Available from: <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/culture/books/3667319/Whats-behind-the-cover-and-we-dont-mean-the-book.html> [Accessed 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2019]

based on how something looks and feels.’<sup>2</sup> When the consumer sees a new book in the bookstore and does not know the author, the first impression of this book plays a crucial role in deciding whether to find out more about it. As Alexis Weedon (2007) puts it, ‘book covers can be seen as a doorway through which we glimpse the text’.<sup>3</sup> The design of the book is an advertisement and a tease, attracting consumers to enter the author’s world or enabling them to recognise the work of an author they have enjoyed before. Hence, this first impression determines the relationship between the reader and the author. Gerard Genette (1997) notes that ‘the most obvious function of the jacket is to attract attention, using means even more dramatic than those a cover can or should be permitted: a garish illustration, a reminder of a film or television adaption, or simply a graphic presentation more flattering or more personalized than the cover standards of a series allow’.<sup>4</sup> A book cover is more than just being a wrapping, representing the meaning and soul of a book, encompassing aesthetics, symbolisation and commercial practical worth.

The balance between aesthetic concerns, commercial profits and expressing the meaning of the book is generally the consideration of the publisher, who makes the decision on book cover design. The book cover is focused on securing market attention, and helps potential stockists and readers identify the reading experience available. A book cover is a way of expressing the author’s main ideas, interpreted

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<sup>2</sup> Alison Baverstock, *How to Market Books: The Essential Guide to Maximizing profit and Exploiting All Channels to Market*, 4<sup>th</sup> ed.2008. London: Kogan Page Ltd, p.6.

<sup>3</sup> Alexis Weedon (University of Bedfordshire), (2007). ‘In Real Life: Book Covers in the Internet Bookstore’. *Judging a Book by its cover: Fans, Publishers, Designers and the Marketing of Fiction*. Nicole Matthews and Nickianne Moddy eds. Aldershot: Ashgate.

<sup>4</sup> Genette, G. (1997). *Paratexts : Thresholds of Interpretation*. Cambridge University Press.

through the designer's aesthetic talent and marketing considerations, which are the main concern of the marketing and sales team. The book cover is not just about artistic expression; it also has commercial meaning and importance.

This combination of aesthetics, to convey the main idea of the whole book, and marketing considerations, to attract the consumer, is complicated. As Peter Conrad (2009) defines it, 'a good cover sums up uncountable thousands of words in one striking, tantalising image'.<sup>5</sup> A great cover can tell a story in a striking and clear way, expressing the book's artistic and even business value. For authors and editors, if an appealing cover allows their books to be seen by more new readers, it will be an easy and effective and efficient advertisement.

The book cover is similar to a product's logo, and the designer plays a crucial role in creating it. However, designers usually face many problems, due to insufficient understanding of the text. This research therefore aims to clarify how designers communicate with marketing teams and editors in publishing. Publishers always brief the designer on the basis of their own reading of the book; whether or not the designer has time to read the book as well, they need the publisher's brief. Based on this, a good designer needs to have great communication ability. Furthermore, the designer should interpret the book's content in artistic ways. Being both an artist and a communicator, a designer faces the challenge of expressing the words' content in a visual way. Communication is a main problem that every designer will face. Thus, the publisher and the book's author can convey their exact needs to designers, but this is

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<sup>5</sup> Peter Conrad, 'This Time You Can Judge All You Like', *The Guardian*, 2009. [Available Online]: <<https://www.theguardian.com/books/2009/jul/12/eight-years-book-design-conolly>> [accessed 6 June 2018]



not an easy task.

As Paul Rand (2009) states, ‘graphic design should fulfil aesthetic needs, comply with the laws of form, speak in semiotics and abstract, transform, translate, rotate, dilate, repeat, mirror, group, and regroup, or else it is not good design and is irrelevant. If it doesn’t evoke symmetry and dynamism, it is not good design’.<sup>6</sup> Excellent design can express the important points and keep a sense of artistic worth at the same time. Design for book covers is not just artistic work; design is more than simple art creation. Rather, it should solve problems and conflicts, and achieve a good balance amongst the concerns of the author (especially in Taiwan, where authors can play an important role) and publisher, artistic worth and commercial worth.

## 1.2 Previous Research

In the UK, there has been some academic research into the issues of female-orientated fiction, publishing and book cover design. As my research particularly concerns what is referred to by the publishing industry as ‘women’s commercial fiction’, it is appropriate to define the terminology, beginning with the difference between literary fiction and commercial fiction.

According to Neugebauer (2014)<sup>7</sup>, ‘the aim of commercial fiction is entertainment. The aim of literary fiction is art.’ Neugebauer goes on to specify that: ‘Literary fiction does put the artistry first. If they have a gorgeous, complex metaphor

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<sup>6</sup> Heller, S. Foreword. In: Godfrey, J. ed. *Bibliographic: 100 Classic Graphic Design Books*. London: Laurence King Publishing Ltd, 2009, p. 5.

<sup>7</sup> Neugebauer, A. (2014, January 27). *The Differences Between Commercial and Literary Fiction* | Annie Neugebauer. Annie Neugebauer | Something Sharp. Something Dark. Something Beautiful. <https://annieneugebauer.com/2014/01/27/the-differences-between-commercial-and-literary-fiction/>

that's perfect for a passage, they keep it at the risk of isolating some readers because they believe the art form is the priority. But commercial fiction puts the reader first.' Neugebauer also compares two different fictions' style: 'in commercial fiction, the writing style is clean and pared-down,' but 'in literary fiction, the writing style takes more risks. This definition is based on the comparison to literary fiction, and it expresses the different goals and styles between literary fictions and commercial fiction.

According to Gelder (2019) literary fiction values characteristics such as 'narrative and linguistic complexity, artistic individuality, and markers of prestige such as prizes', but popular fiction values 'simple and engaging plots, generic identifiability, seriality, and markers of commercial success such as screen adaptations and prizes.' Berberich (2015) discusses the beginning of 'popular literature', as 'it first appeared only a century or so ago. Before the Industrial Revolution, the immense labours required to print and distribute books conspired to imbue printed works, despite quality of writing, with a halo of cultural and literary legitimacy. Popular fiction was from this, different from 'serious' literature. In Berberich's introduction however he states 'that popular fiction indicates writing that is [...] enjoyed by many readers. However, it is not that simple. 'She continues: "the term popular contains a variety of different and, potentially, contradictory meanings, and is one weighed down with ideological meaning.' Popular fiction is like commercial fiction, which is enjoyed by a lot of readers, and unlike literary fiction which is enjoyed by less readers.

Combining this consideration of the distinction between literary and commercial or popular fiction, commercial fiction focuses more on readers and the readers read them primarily for entertainment. Literary fiction can be very artistic and author-centred, however, commercial fiction is realistic with more audience.

Developing the difference between literary fiction and commercial fiction within writing mostly aimed at women, is women's commercial fiction, Langton's International, a literary agency based in New York, defines women's commercial fiction as 'a broad, varied genre, but in general it is a commercial, realistic genre that focuses on women's perspectives.' According to this agency's opinion, this genre 'is written with a literary voice, but crafted in a relatable way, for a broad audience'. Commercial women's fiction targets on the market and the main readers are female. For publishing professionals, when they publish this genre, they focus on the markets and sales and do not treat it just an expression of art.

Having considered the various definitions of women's commercial fiction, there is some related research about female fiction and cover design. According to *Judging a Book By its Cover* (2016)<sup>8</sup>, 'determining the genre of a book is a difficult task because covers can be ambiguous and genres can be overarching', but they used 'a deep Convolutional Neural Network (CNN) to predict the genre of a book based on the visual clues provided by its cover'. From the research conducted by them, it concludes that colour matters and text matters: for 'literature and fiction', they usually use 'green colour' and 'expressive fonts'. These researcher 'presented the application of machine learning to predict the genre of a book based on its cover image', and

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<sup>8</sup> Iwana, Rizvi, S. T. R., Ahmed, S., Dengel, A., & Uchida, S. (2016). *Judging a Book By its Cover*.

showed ‘it is possible to draw a relationship between book cover imaged and genre using automatic recognition’. Their research can show a trend of book cover and the different colours and fonts of different genres. Simone Murray’s doctoral thesis, *Mixed Media: Feminist Presses and Publishing Politics in Twentieth Century Britain*, analyses ‘the complex interaction of feminist politics and fiction publishing in twentieth-century Britain’.<sup>9</sup> Murray (1999) analyses the organisational structures and innovative marketing strategies of Britain’s oldest extant women’s publishing venture, Virago Press. The marketing strategies of twentieth century was different from those today, but history still can lead the researcher to understand the marketing history of previous British publishing.

Turing to Taiwan, some topics related to this research have been addressed, which the author intends to compare and combine with this research. Kun-Che Tsai’s dissertation *A Study on Purchasing Decision of Domestic Readers of Best-sellers*<sup>10</sup> employs analytical methods such as descriptive statistics, one-way analysis of variance to show the variables that influence readers’ motivation to purchase. Tsai’s research focuses on the readers’ analysis, providing a careful analysis of readers’ behaviour. Besides this, Huang’s dissertation *Study of Expressional Forms and Images on Visual Design Book Covers in Taiwan* employs a sample of 230 covers of visual design books published from 1981 to 2010, in order to analyse the publishing situation in Taiwan. It also conducts a questionnaire survey to understand ‘what kind

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<sup>9</sup> Simone Elizabeth Murray, *Mixed Media: Feminist Presses and Publishing Politics in Twentieth Century Britain*, Doctor of Philosophy Thesis, University College London, 1999.

<sup>10</sup> Kun-Che Tsai, *A Study of Purchasing Decision of Domestic Readers of Best-sellers*, Nan Hua University, 2005.

of impressions and images the participants receive from the covers, and the influencing preference factors engaging'.<sup>11</sup> In addition, there is much research about female popular fictions or romance. Some Master dissertations have studied the same famous Taiwanese romance writer, Xi-Juan. Mei-Yu Wang's dissertation<sup>12</sup> analyses the female images and the writer's writing style, through which the author conveys the female consciousness. These female images also influence their book cover style and have a series of similar styles from this writer's books.

Regarding dissertations on fiction book covers, these include fantasy fiction, romance and science fiction novels. Three dissertations have studied the covers of romance novels: Chieh-Yu Chiu's *Research of the Illustration and Style of the Covers of Romance Novels*,<sup>13</sup> Wang-Ning Hung's *The Discussion of the Visual Codes for the Cover of Love Story Novels by Using Narrative Research*,<sup>14</sup> and Xun-Xi Liu's *An Analysis and Creation of the Illustration of Domestic Romance Covers in Taiwan from 1980 to 2000*.<sup>15</sup> These studies discussed romance fiction covers and focused on the local market. They did not explore other countries' situation and how other countries' strategies when creating a book cover. Many popular female fictions are translated by other countries, but there is little research that analyses and compares different book

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<sup>11</sup> Shih Tian Huang, *Study of Expressional Forms and Images on Visual Design Book Covers in Taiwan*, National Taiwan University of Arts, 2012.

<sup>12</sup> Mei-Yu Wang, *Women, Marriage and Romance: The Female Writing Research in Xi-Juan's Fictions*, National Tsing Hua University, 2008.

<sup>13</sup> Chieh-Yu Chiu, *Research of the Illustration and Style of the Covers of Romance Novels*, National Taiwan University of Arts, 2018.

<sup>14</sup> Wang-Ning Hung, *The Discussion of the Visual Codes for the Cover of Love Story Novels by Using Narrative Research*, ChienKuo Technology University, 2016.

<sup>15</sup> Xun-Xi Liu, *An Analysis and Creation of the Illustration of Domestic Romance Cover in Taiwan from 1980 to 2000*, National Taiwan Normal University, 2007.

covers and marketing strategies in different countries.

The previous studies have provided some information about the publishing market and design considerations, but the cover design-related research focused on the readers' perspective, using quantitative research. Although this can provide broad information, the researcher seeks to conduct a more detailed and profound research on the relationship between the cover design and the publishers. Moreover, the researcher aims to compare different strategies of different leading publishing companies, which potential designers or publishers can follow. Because this research will focus on the specific genre of women's fiction, it can also offer such writers some directions to follow when trying to publish a book or cooperating with publishers. This research can also give designers more practical and commercial knowledge, to understand the real market which has much commercial consideration for design. Furthermore, it might encourage publishers in different countries to adopt some other marketing strategies, and use different perspectives to create other commercial ways to work.

### 1.3 Research Scope

As noted above, most of the previous studies of women's fiction and book covers described the literary importance or the visual considerations and consumers' feelings. Some studies reported the literary phenomenon and the development of women's fiction. Other studies were based on a single questionnaire, which aimed to examine the effect of visual codes on consumers/readers. Based on an understanding of the commercial value of book cover design, this research seeks to explore how

book cover design can influence the success of the book market. Amongst the many book genres, the researcher selects one which both has literary history and commercial worth. According to the Romance Writers of America<sup>16</sup> association, it shows that ‘the five most valuable, highest-earning genres in the book business<sup>17</sup> and “Romance/Erotica” is the most profitable’, which is a main reason why the researcher has chosen this genre to analyse.

When analysing commercial women’s fiction, the bestseller or ‘fast-seller’ list provides important information on the market, showing that ‘romantic fiction is somehow more popular and profitable than ever before’.<sup>18</sup> Some women’s novels have won remarkable commercial success globally, such as *Fifty Shades of Grey*, of which it was commented: ‘the fastest-selling author in history is also the book world’s top earner in the last year, with a tidy \$95m’.<sup>19</sup> Sophie Kinsella was ranked 31st bestselling author of the decade on 22 December 2009 (a sales volume of 4,528,095, with a value of £27.7m).<sup>20</sup> Statistics from the Romance Writers of America (RWA) shows that romance revenues in the US increased from \$1.368 billion in 2011 to

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<sup>16</sup> Romance Writers of America Introduction, from the website: [https://www.rwa.org/Online/About\\_RWA/Online/About/About\\_RWA.aspx?hkey=c3b46e21-4b8e-4265-b7a5-c01fe2bad22c](https://www.rwa.org/Online/About_RWA/Online/About/About_RWA.aspx?hkey=c3b46e21-4b8e-4265-b7a5-c01fe2bad22c), Romance Writers of America® (RWA) is a nonprofit trade association whose mission is to advance the professional and common business interests of career-focused romance writers through networking and advocacy and by increasing public awareness of the romance genre. RWA works to support the efforts of its members to earn a living, to make a full-time career out of writing romance—or a part-time one that generously supplements their main income.

<sup>17</sup> Thomas Stewart, [https://www.therichest.com/rich-list/which-5-book-genres-make-the-most-money/Which\\_5\\_Book\\_Genres\\_Make\\_The\\_Most\\_Money?](https://www.therichest.com/rich-list/which-5-book-genres-make-the-most-money/Which_5_Book_Genres_Make_The_Most_Money?), 31 Jan. 2014.

<sup>18</sup> Olivia Tapper, ‘Romance and Innovation in Twenty-First Century Publishing’. *Publishing Research Quarterly* 2014; 30:249-259, p.249.

<sup>19</sup> *The Guardian*: <https://www.theguardian.com/books/2013/aug/13/50-shades-el-james-highest-earning-author>, 13 August 2013.

<sup>20</sup> Brian MacArthur, *The Telegraph* 22 December 2009. <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/culture/books/6866648/Bestselling-authors-of-the-decade.html>

\$1.438 billion in 2012.<sup>21</sup> This represents the American market, but it does not mean this phenomenon only happens in America. For instance, Larsen (2009) reported that contemporary American romance publishers ‘sell more than 4 books per second and about 1/2 of those sales are international’<sup>22</sup>. Based on the striking commercial success of commercial women’s fiction, the researcher will focus on this genre as a basis for studying its cover design and marketing strategies.

In the future, research could conduct a more global market comparison. The global publishing market is too wide scope for the present research; thus, this research seeks to gain insight into different practices and approaches to cover design through a small scope of comparison of UK and Taiwanese examples. Future research might consider a more global approach. According to the International Publishers Association’s (IPA) 2015–2016 annual report,<sup>23</sup> China published 470,000 new titles and the US published 338,986 in 2015, which surpasses the 173,000 new titles in the UK; nevertheless, the UK’s 2,710 new titles per million inhabitants (in 2015) is the highest rate in the world (China 335 and US 1,043). Taiwan has not joined the IPA, so there are no relevant data in this document. In 2015, Taiwan published 37,339 new book titles, with 1,589 new titles per million inhabitants (2015),<sup>24</sup> which is the highest in Asia (Republic of Korea 909 and Japan 603). Thus, the UK and Taiwan

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<sup>21</sup> Romance Industry Statistics. Romance Writers of America. <http://www.rwa.org/p/cm/ld/fid=580>

<sup>22</sup> Larsen K. ‘Romance Writers are Passionate about Their Work’. *Voice of America*, 31 October 2009. <http://www.voanews.com/content/a-13-2005-08-09-voa26/396537.html>.

<sup>23</sup> [https://www.internationalpublishers.org/images/reports/Annual\\_Report\\_2016/IPA\\_Annual\\_Report\\_2015-2016\\_interactive.pdf](https://www.internationalpublishers.org/images/reports/Annual_Report_2016/IPA_Annual_Report_2015-2016_interactive.pdf) p.16

<sup>24</sup> <http://mocfile.moc.gov.tw/mochistory/images/Yearbook/2015survey/book1/chapter7.html>



have the highest percentage of publishing in the world and in Asia respectively; this is a main reason why the researcher has chosen publishers from these two countries, to conduct this comparative research. The leading publishing role in Asia and Europe is worth to compare. The researcher is from Taiwan and the opportunity arose to study how the market works there is comparison with the UK, and the scholarly funding enables the researcher to do this research.

#### 1.4 Research Questions

This research aims to discover what influences the decision making for cover design in the UK and Taiwan, both of which have mature publishing markets in Europe and Asia.

1. The primary research question is to find how different commercial considerations and the process of publishing influence the decisions relating to cover design for commercial women's fiction in the UK and Taiwan.
2. What are the different commercial women's fiction's book cover styles (including colour, font, illustration) between Taiwan and UK cover design, and what might account for these differences? What is different design thinking in the UK and Taiwan? This research will employ real book cover and bestseller examples with publishing professionals' opinions to showcase the different design style and the reasons to develop the style.
3. What are the publishing industry professionals' practice and associated opinions? The research seeks to identify the marketing strategies publishers use when commissioning jacket covers. For example, whereas it may appear

that Taiwanese publishers generally demonstrate a desire to create new style with a less commercial emphasis, this study will explore why this is and any associated advantages and disadvantages.

4. What are the processes of making book covers within the specific cultures within which they operate, and more widely? This research intends to analyse and compare cultural and historic meanings in book cover design, in the UK and Taiwan. For example, while the UK has its own strong and commercial market, it also has a significant history of exporting titles, Taiwan is a country that contains a mixture of different nationalities and cultures, and is seeking to create and harmonise a unique and mixed style.

### 1.5 Research Value

This study is conducted with the hope of promoting the consideration of alternative solutions for decision making in commercial women's fiction. Additionally, a greater understanding of different marketing strategies in different cultures may serve as a basis for practical industry use, or for the study of related visual research and cultural studies. For example, during the interviews with Taiwanese publishers, the researcher mentioned the importance of the role played by sales' department in the UK to Taiwanese editors, which made Taiwanese publishers consider having more business awareness in the future. If publishers' main focus is earning money, the Taiwanese publishing market might consider developing an approach that is based more on commercial considerations. Based on the convenience

of language and culture, Taiwan has a strong connection with the Chinese market, and the UK has a similar connection with the US. Insights gained into associated colonial and post-colonial relationships might enable publishers to create more opportunities in the global market.

### 1.6 Overview of the Paper

This paper is divided into five main chapters. Chapter 1 provides some background information about the beginning of the project, as well as the research purpose, questions and value. Chapter 2 outlines the process of book cover design, and the literature review about book cover design. Chapter 3 discusses the methodology of this research and the procedure of data collection. Chapter 4 analyses the data collected from professionals in publishing and design, and presents the result found from this research. It also employs the real samples to compare different design in these two countries. Finally, Chapter 5 outlines some plans and suggestions for future development.

## Chapter 2 Literature Review

### 2.1 Introduction

In order to set in context a discussion of the commercial women's book cover creation in the UK and Taiwan book publishing industry, consideration will be given to the literature on the subject of book cover design and the history of commercial women's book, but the main part will focus on the book cover section. Genette's elaborates the history of book cover in *Paratexts: Thresholds of Interpretation* (1997). He notes that 'the printed cover' is a 'fairly recent phenomenon and seems to date from the early nineteenth century<sup>25</sup>' (Genette, 1997). He shows that 'once the possibilities of the cover were discovered, they seem to have been exploited very rapidly' (Genette, 1997). From Genette's research, the function of the book has already been discovered and publishers began noticing the importance of the book cover.

### 2.2 The Meaning of Book Cover Design

A book cover is like a person's face, which is readers' first visual impression. We observe the aesthetic form by looking at the cover design, which might tantalise our desire to read or to own the book. From a functional perspective, good cover design makes it easier to recognise and read. The book cover cannot be totally independent from the book content, and the cover and the content should have a suitable

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<sup>25</sup> Genette, G. (1997). *Paratexts : Thresholds of Interpretation*. Cambridge University Press, p. 23.

combination. Book cover design is similar to graphic design but not completely the same. A book cover only has short time to convey the book's main idea and to catch the readers' eyes. Book cover design is the most direct and significant media with consumers (Lin, 2004)<sup>26</sup>.

### 2.3 The Form and Function of Book Cover

In *The Best of Cover Design*<sup>27</sup> (Altitude, 2011), the authors suggest that 'designing a cover is a minefield of requirements, constraints, and subjective opinions, oftentimes resulting in what we like to call the 'design-by-committee pit of despair'. The Altitude Associates think that a successful cover should 'make a connection with us' and 'engage us with inspiration' instead of just focusing on the aesthetic parts<sup>28</sup>. Their point emphasises the practical part of cover design. Cover design is not just for aesthetics, it should be a bridge between readers and the book.

The book cover includes front cover, back cover and book spine. Genette comments: the spine, 'a narrow site but one with obvious strategic importance, generally bears the name of the author, the colophon of the publisher, and the title of the work<sup>29</sup>' (Genette, 1997). There are also different layouts for information on the spine, largely dependent on its width, one of which prefers horizontal printing, the other one of which prefers vertical printing. This problem does not happen to Taiwanese books as the different word characters only have one choice. The spine

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<sup>26</sup> Lin, J. (2004). *Shi jue chuan da she ji gai shuo*. [*The Introduction of Visual Design*] Taipei City: Yi feng tang.

<sup>27</sup> Altitude, *The Best of Cover Design* (Beverly, Massachusetts: Rockport Publishers, 2011), p.7.

<sup>28</sup> Altitude, *The Best of Cover Design* (Beverly, Massachusetts: Rockport Publishers, 2011), p.7.

<sup>29</sup> Genette, G. (1997). *Paratexts : Thresholds of Interpretation*. Cambridge University Press, p. 26.

looks narrow but the importance cannot be ignored. In the bookstore and on library shelves, the first impression of most books is from the spine.

The front cover plays a role welcoming readers and saying hello, and the back cover includes more product information, helping readers to understand the book more and playing a key part in purchasing decision. This research will focus on the front cover more, including the pictures of the cover, the writer's name, the typography, the colour design, and the layout design. The cover design needs to employ simple and fast ways to make readers to understand the important information. From the publishing company's website, it states that 'a great cover can be a major factor in persuading book shops to stock your self-published book and then getting the reader to access the pages inside'<sup>30</sup>. From the marketing perspective to see the book cover, the book's cover needs to 'attract, inform and sell'<sup>31</sup>. Whereas book covers are very varied, depending on the market being approached, the most important task of book cover design is to convey the quintessence of the book in very limited time.

Book publishing relies on cooperation amongst many experts, and book cover is not just the job of designers. As Davies puts it, the editor 'must play a key role in the design team' and this team sometimes include 'editor, author, designer, photographer, illustrator, picture researchers and even the agent'<sup>32</sup>. A book cover is not a personal art work, and the designer needs to consider both the genre and the market for the book when developing an effective design. Different genres have

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<sup>30</sup> *The Principles of Great Book Cover Design*. (2019). Retrieved from <https://www.silverwoodbooks.co.uk/learning-zone/the-principles-of-great-book-cover-design>

<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

<sup>32</sup> Davies, G. (2004). *Book Commissioning and Acquisition*. London: Routledge, p.95.

different design styles. This success of this cooperative work lies in the editor's communication ability. As Davies puts it, 'the editor must, with the author (and probably marketing and production colleagues) go through every illustration in the book and the text to which it is tied'<sup>33</sup>. It is an unavoidable communication process in the team to agree with the design, the colour and the illustration of the cover design. Each meticulous detail is crucial in this team work.

#### 2.4 The Book Cover Illustration and Style

In Andrew Haslam's *Book Design*, the author mentions that there are three types of book cover: documentation, concept and expression. Documentation covers are 'designed from a documentary position seek, simply, to record what a book contains' (Haslam). It might just have the form of 'a typographic title or a selection of representative images from the pages' (165). Conceptual covers are based on 'conceptual thinking attempt to represent a book's content through visual allegory, pun, paradox, or cliché in an amusing fusion of image and title' (165). This kind of cover can bring readers 'a moment of euphoria' which is called 'a smile in the mind' (165). Some readers feel happy because they think they are intelligent enough to understand what the cover means. Readers usually subconsciously recognise the type of book that they like from the cover. Expressive covers are often used 'in relation to novels and short stories' (165). The purpose of expression covers is 'to evoke content, to hint at what is within and entice the prospective reader' (165). The expressive cover

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<sup>33</sup> Davies, G. (2004). *Book Commissioning and Acquisition*. London: Routledge, p.96.

manages to visualise the emotion of the content.

## 2.5 Typography, Layout and Colour of Book Cover

Typography is an important aspect of communication media. As time goes by, the functions of words are from expressing thoughts and meanings to creating aesthetic feelings. There is more and more emphasis on the use of typography in the design field now. As Lin, Pin-Chang (1986) puts it, words design need to have readability, special personality, aesthetics and cultural sense. The origin of Chinese words and English words are from long time ago. Chinese characters are from abstract pictures and develop to present characters.

Research from Rizvi et al (2016)<sup>34</sup> pointed out that ‘determining the genre of a book is a difficult task because covers can be ambiguous and genres can be overarching’, but they used ‘a deep Convolutional Neural Network (CNN) to predict the genre of a book based on the visual clues provided by its cover’. In their conclusion, colour matters and text matters: for ‘literature and fiction’, publishers usually use ‘green colour’ and ‘expressive fonts’. For their research method, they ‘presented the application of machine learning to predict the genre of a book based on its cover image’, and showed ‘it is possible to draw a relationship between book cover imaged and genre using automatic recognition’. The samples they used were all titles written in English, but this can still reveal trends in a specific area of book cover presentation. Books ‘can have also misleading covers’ because books can be part of ‘multiple genres’, but this research still show that most genres tend to present in a

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<sup>34</sup> Iwana, Rizvi, S. T. R., Ahmed, S., Dengel, A., & Uchida, S. (2016). *Judging a Book By its Cover*.



related range of colours and fonts.

### The Definition of Layout

In John Wiley & Sons' *Graphic Design School: The Principles and Practice of Graphic Design* (2017), 'layout' is defined as 'the organization of disparate material that makes up the content of a design'<sup>35</sup>. It also mentions that 'well-designed visual communications present information in a logical, coherent way, and make the important elements stand out'<sup>36</sup>. A successful front book cover should convey the most important meaning of the book in an obvious way. A good layout can tell a story with a logical structure with suitable colour.

In *Typography: Formation and Transformation*, Willi Kunz states that design layout not just conveys the objective information, but also expresses emotion from the layout<sup>37</sup>. When we look at the book cover or any design, the first impression is a visionary formation: including the space and the whole proportion, the form and the picture, the colour and the structure of the whole layout. The typography is crucial to the whole design: different typography creates distinct visual excitement and different function. The combination with typography and space arrangement in the design lies in the aesthetic sense of the designer. How to make the design easy to read and how to make readers feel comfortable and attracted by the design is all layout's art. The layout can be simple style or complicated structure, and every detail combining

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<sup>35</sup> *Graphic Design School: The Principles and Practice of Graphic Design* (Sixth ed.). (2017). John Wiley & Sons, p.40.

<sup>36</sup> *Graphic Design School: The Principles and Practice of Graphic Design* (Sixth ed.). (2017). John Wiley & Sons, p.40.

<sup>37</sup> Kunz, W. (1999). *Typography: Formation and Transformation*. Verlag Niggli.

together can make an attractive whole.

## The Principles of Layout Design

*In the Language of Graphic Design: An Illustration Handbook for Understanding Fundamental Design Principles*, Richard Poulin states that ‘visual principle can be described as formal and symmetrical, dynamic and asymmetrical, or radial’<sup>38</sup>. The following are some principles mentioned by Richard Poulin:

### Symmetry<sup>39</sup>:

‘Symmetry is a fundamental and timeless principle of visual perception. In visual communications, symmetry conveys balance, stability, and harmony’. When the design can be balanced, it can convey a state of equilibrium. When design elements are organised, it can create a state of visual balance and identified as symmetry. ‘A symmetrical composition is static, stationary, and balanced, with the negative spaces around its elements or the contours of its elements located around its central axis all appearing the same or of equal weight’.

### Balance:

‘Balance occurs when visual elements within a composition are equally distributed and arranged to communicate a feeling of stability and harmony’<sup>40</sup>.

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<sup>38</sup> Poulin, R. (2011). *The Language of Graphic Design: An Illustrated Handbook for Understanding Fundamental Design Principles*. Gloucester, Mass.: Hove: Rockport; RotoVision [distributor]. p.115.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid, p.125.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid, p.115.

Different visual elements can achieve good balance if they are arranged well. The author mentions that there are three types of visual balance: formal balance, dynamic balance and radial balance. Formal balance is like symmetry, which is the most common and easiest type of balance to achieve, occurring ‘when elements are arranged equally in a composition, appear stable or static, and are identical and reflect on another’<sup>41</sup>. Dynamic balance is like asymmetry, which is more interesting and difficult to achieve. It is created ‘when elements are arranged deliberately unequally in a composition and appear random and dynamic’<sup>42</sup>. Radial balance is ‘based on a circle and occurs when visual elements in a composition radiate out from a central, common point in a circular direction and their visual weight is equally distributed’<sup>43</sup>. Radial balance is a style with strong focal point, such as stars or sunflowers.

#### Movement:

The main function of movement in visual communication is ‘to guide the eye of the viewer through and around visual image’<sup>44</sup>. Visual movement relies on combining different visual elements, such as line, shape, form and texture to create the look and feel of motion. ‘Visual techniques, such as repetition and rhythm, can also enhance the characteristics of movement in a two-dimensional or (three-dimensional) composition’ (98). There is regular visual rhythm, flowing visual rhythm and progressive visual rhythm that can create different effects. A flowing visual rhythm can ‘convey a sense of movement and is often perceived as a more organic and

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<sup>41</sup> Ibid, p.116.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid, p.119.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid, p.96.

natural graphic form in its visual character' (101). A progressive rhythm 'is created with a sequence of compositional elements through a defined progression of steps' (102).

### Proportion

A good design should rely on the good proportion: proportion is 'the systematic relationship of one thing to another in any given composition'<sup>45</sup>(221). In Priya Hemenway's *Divine Proportion: Phi in the Art, Nature and Science*, she states, 'The whole is to the larger in exactly the same proportion as the larger is to the smaller'. Contemporary graphic designers or many artists use the gold ration as 'an optimal format for print and digital media' (225). Designers manage to find the visual design which could achieve pleasant feelings to the eye and bring the audiences' balanced and harmonious feelings, which has strong connection with the principles of proportion.

### Colour of Book Cover

Colour constructs our perception of images, being perceived and understood on different levels. Different people perceive colour in different ways and have different taste for it. Some colours can arouse emotions and some colours can create specific functions. A professional designer is a person who can grasp the key points of visual perceptions and employs the colour wisely. *Colour and Design* considers how colour is essential to cohesive experience of a spatial world. As the author says, 'Mentally,

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<sup>45</sup> Ibid, p.221.

colour light and space are inseparable. Human experience of the world is coherent, dynamic, and simultaneous'<sup>46</sup>(4). Everyone has different visual reactions in different space based on individual background.

## 2.6 The Background of Female Commercial Fiction

As the main genre of this study focuses on the female commercial fiction, the researcher will introduce a brief development of this genre. During the last twenty years, popular publishing has been transformed by the development of a number of new genres that have impacted significantly on the range and subject matter of the contemporary romance. Chief amongst these new genres is the phenomenon of “Chick Lit”, which became an important new manner of presenting content in the wake of the extraordinary success of Helen Fielding’s *Bridget Jones’s Diary* (1996). Contemporary Anglo-American ‘Chick Lit’ predicated its difference from ‘traditional romance on the sexual agency and consumerist choices of its female characters’, as well as on ‘their celebration of glamorous, materialistic and cosmopolitan lifestyles’ (Chen, 2010)<sup>47</sup>.

In the introduction to *‘Chick Lit’: The New Woman’s Fiction*, Suzanne Ferris and Mallory Young define “Chick Lit” as ‘a form of women’s fiction on the basis of subject matter, character, audience, and narrative style’. Before this, the novelist Chris Mazza, co-editor of *‘Chick Lit’: Postfeminist Fiction* (1995) and *‘Chick Lit’ 2: No*

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<sup>46</sup> Marilyn Delnd Barbara Martinson. (2013). *Color and Design*. Bloomsbury UK, p.4.

<sup>47</sup> Chen, Eva Yin-I. (2010). ‘Neoliberal Self-Governance and Popular Postfeminism in Contemporary Anglo-American “Chick Lit”’ *Concentric: Literary and Cultural Studies* 36.1. March 2010. p.254.

*Chick Vics* (1996), argues that she was the first to use the term “Chick Lit” in print, stating that her intention in using this term was ‘not to embrace an old frivolous or coquettish image of women but to take responsibility for our part in the damaging, lingering stereotype’<sup>48</sup>. “Chick Lit” provides a more realistic or even idealistic description of single women’s lives: the process of dating, their friendships, and their career life. Through some “Chick Lit” fictions, female pleasure and desires are depicted in a candid and bold way, transferring the traditional romance, which usually ends in the happily-ever-after marriage to Prince Charming, into a more diversified style focusing on the experiences of female protagonists. Beryl Bainbridge, five-time Booker Prize nominee, derides it as ‘froth’ which ‘just wastes time’, while Doris Lessing deems it ‘instantly forgettable’<sup>49</sup>. Despite being criticised by some people, “Chick Lit” still expresses the post-feminist spirit and liberates women in a humorous way.

Since the beginning of this new genre, ‘Chick Lit’ has been a popular topic filled with debate in cultural wars. The *Oxford English Dictionary* defines “Chick Lit” as ‘a kind of light commercial fiction addressed to British women readers of the late 1990s and early 2000s and subsequently’ (OED 2015). ‘Chick Lit’ discusses more possibilities of relationships. In ‘Chick Lit’, women have desire, and like to explore many avenues to satisfy this desire. The pleasure of the female protagonists does not just find its limit in one person, and these characters create more choices for their love and sex lives. In the HBO series *Sex and the City*, Samantha (Kim Cattrall) expresses

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<sup>48</sup> Mazza, Chris and Jeffrey Dessel, eds. (1995). ‘*Chick Lit*’: *Postfeminist Fiction*. Normal, IL: FC2.

<sup>49</sup> Ezard, John. (2003) “Bainbridge Tilts at “Chick Lit” Cult: Novelist says Bridget Jones Genre Is Just a Lot of Froth.” *The Guardian* 24, Aug.

her unapologetic libido, which expresses female desire in a brave and honest way. “Chick Lit” is a genre endowing a way to depict the honest thinking and sexual journey of women, focusing on the characters’ true feelings and weaknesses. Their pursuit of love seems to follow some patriarchal rule without obvious changes from traditional romances, but, in fact, it is a struggling process for them to get a balance and create their own road between the traditional and the newly possible lifestyle.

### Post-feminist Characters

The post-feminist characters are facing the dilemma. They try to be independent in economics and in emotions. Economic independence seems much easier than emotional independence, which is more complicated and includes lots of process to get to real sexual freedom. The ‘Chick Lit’ characters’ ambivalent attitude for creating a new road of independence from following the conventional heterosexuality has conveyed the post-feminist struggling for a new era for women. These protagonists, indeed, have more freedom to choose what kind of life and relationships they want, but face more challenges among these choices. As Angela McRobbie comments about Bridget Jones, these women can brazenly ‘enjoy their sexuality without fear of the sexual double standard’ (McRobbie, 38), which means the standard of traditional romance in which women need to be chaste before marriage whereas men can have unlimited sexual experiences. In ‘Chick Lit’, sexual aggressiveness and rich sexual experiences are touted. It is still a question whether these women become happier than before, but they try to be ‘post-feminist’.

According to Sarah Gamble, ‘in a society which largely defines itself through

media-inspired images, women are easily persuaded that feminism is unfashionable, passé, and therefore not worthy of serious consideration' (Gamble). Post-feminist now means 'not that women have arrived at equal justice and moved beyond it, but simply that they themselves are beyond even pretending to care' (45). The second-wave of feminism made efforts to get equal rights, with men, but post-feminists try to move beyond that. I think the existence of post-feminists does not mean that feminism has disappeared or that feminism is unfashionable and passé; rather, the new era and the new woman need some power which is different from previous times. Feminism and post-feminism are both processes for female power, just focusing on different levels and parts. Post-feminist style seems more attractive and appealing to more people outside academia and politics, due to its sugar-coated appearance. The post-feminist girls, like some famous female characters in chick culture – Carrie in *Sex and The City* or Ally McBeal – successfully capture the attention of mass culture especially because they are presented to mass audiences with the television series. Their images are like advertisements, like a masquerade hiding the stereotype of feminism. Their symbol has ambivalent meanings; their focus on appearance seems not so professional and to an extent violates feminism's stereotype, but their upper-middle-class urban female style with successful careers leads female readers to follow their example, wanting to work hard and become more professional.

The post-feminist characters care about their appearance a lot, and some concern with shopping, fashion, and consumerism leads to an arguably obsessive focus on skin-deep beauty'<sup>50</sup> (Ferris and Young, 2006). The overemphasis on

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<sup>50</sup> Ferris, Suzanne and Mallory Young, eds. *'Chick Lit': The New Woman's Fiction*. London: Routledge, 2006.



appearance led to criticism of 'Chick Lit' from some writers. It seems that women in these works are superficial and just care about these trivial things. Appearance, however, is not just shallow but has more meanings. The beauty and attraction of women has become their weapon in either a relationship or a career. This creates a new cultural pressure, such as Bridget Jones in *Bridget Jones's Diary*, who is worried about her weight all the time, keeping a daily diary. Post-love in this contemporary era is not just emotion; it is more complicated and competitive. Life is like a war and love is a war, as well. Beauty is not just beauty, which is a symbol of power. 'Chick Lit' employs a humorous style to express the power and the anxiety of these girls. The author of *Bridget Jones's Diary*, Helen Fielding, states that 'if we can't laugh at ourselves without having a panic attack over what it says about women, we haven't got very far with our equality'. The humour and the focus on beauty features in 'Chick Lit' style, which is like a post-feminist trying to represent something serious in a cheerful way, easily accepted by more people.

The humorous style of 'Chick Lit' does not mean that the works do not have serious worth. In publishing industry, it is one part of bestsellers. 'Chick Lit' also plays a role in academia. Cam Tatham put '*Chick Lit*': *Post-feminist Fiction* on his syllabus because 'I wanted to give students a sense of what had happened to conventional feminism, expressed through cutting-edge texts'<sup>51</sup> (Mazza 2006). In an email interview conducted by Mazza, Tatham further stated that 'Chick Lit' helped readers 'move beyond the too-familiar issues/questions of conventional feminism, de-

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<sup>51</sup> Mazza, Chris. "Who's Laughing Now? A Short History of 'Chick Lit' and the Perversion of a Genre". *'Chick Lit': The New Woman's Fiction*. Ed. Suzanne and Mallory Young. London: Routledge, 2006. 17-28.

territorializing views of victimizer/victimized' (Mazza 2006). Mazza (2006) thinks this genre is at the 'cutting-edge', but it does not completely move beyond the too-familiar issues of conventional feminism. 'Chick Lit' still focuses on many familiar issues of conventional feminism, but it has changed the attitudes, trying to break through some concepts hitherto taken for granted

"Chick Lit", unlike its easy-going reputation, conveys more complicated thinking and meanings of post-feminist. They are not just popular but also bring some reader's growth. This cheerful style gracefully expresses the post-feminist and post-love spirit, employing an optimistic and relaxing way to challenge the unclear patriarchal, complicated, and capitalist society. Significantly, cover design has proved an important factor in promoting 'Chick Lit'. The cover has been an important part of communicating the distinctive characteristics of this genre and brand of popular literature. This style can catch readers' attention because readers like to see themselves from fictions. More readers and more popularity mean that this genre can bring more commercial worth and hence overall financial importance to the publisher. This style also influences on the cover, which may result in the creation of a brighter and lighter style. When publishers choose to publish more commercial women's titles, they have commercial consideration but at the same time this phenomenon can reflect the society's development and readers' taste. When the publishers decide and design this genre's cover, they notice this cheerful and bright style, but still need to adapt to every different taste to make it with the best function as a book cover. The details of these discussions and deliberations is explored in chapter 4 which considers how publishers and designers conceive of the genre and work to produce marketable and

attractive covers in the context of the UK and Taiwanese publishing industries.

## Chapter 3. Methodology

### 3.1 Research Design

This study seeks to find out how publishers and designers work to achieve maximum impact and recognisability within their market, in order to promote the sale of their products and longer-term product recognition. In order to achieve this, a particular research design was developed to facilitate the gathering and analysis of detailed accounts of professional practice from current publishers and designers in the UK and Taiwanese publishing sectors. This study employed a qualitative approach to gain an in-depth and holistic understanding of publishing professionals' perspectives. Interviews were chosen as the most suitable research method for eliciting rich and detailed accounts of how publishers approach cover design. This is an established qualitative method which is discussed further below. In order to achieve this, a range of professional publishers in the UK and Taiwan were identified and contacted. The study documents the participants' thoughts and feelings about working within publishing and design, revealing their professional experience. The content of the interviews was analysed to identify common themes and issues as well as particular differences in practice across publishers and regions.

Owing to the Covid-19 pandemic, some planned in-person interviews had to be changed to e-mail interviews. While e-mail interviews cannot replicate the eye contact, body language and ability to develop a discussion so easily, they are still a valuable form of data gathering and can give the interviewee time to think about the answer to the questions. Interviewees analyse the questions and contemplate the answers and combine with personal experience to share experiences. The qualitative

research method employed here allows for a reflective analysis of the results that can offer up rich insights into the design process used by particular publishing houses in the UK and Taiwan. This interview approach is balanced with a comparative content analysis of a range of bestsellers' cover designs as examples of different design approaches.

### 3.1.1 Interviewing Method

Mishler (1986) thinks the interview is the mutual communication between interviewer and respondent. One side is to manage to find out the other side's thoughts and to observe emotion. This method has a clear goal and focuses on specific themes. There are two kinds of interviews: 'survey interviewing' and 'in-depth interviewing'. Survey interviewing belongs to quantitative research: survey interviews are generally large-scale interviews, where everyone is asked exactly the same questions and where there may be use of closed questioning, with limited answers while in-depth interviews are more exploratory, generally based on open questions and may not follow a strict structure. Face-to-face interviews have been recommended as a model of excellence by numerous practitioners in qualitative research (McCoyd and Kerson, 2006). The research undertaken for this project uses in-depth interviewing, emphasising the process between interviewer and respondent to build the mutual meaning of the subject. In-depth interview is not only just digging the thoughts from the interviewee but by interaction with each other, to create and build thoughts about the themes. When conducting face-to-face interviews, the researcher can feel the interviewee's expression, emotion, gesture, body language or

even identity and status' influence. As such it is important to take these into account when reflecting on, and analysing the data sets produced. The interviewer can observe the real situation and can ask follow up questions, seek clarification and ask the respondent for more details.

For this study, a 'semi-structured' interview approach was chosen. Before the interview, the researcher prepared the outline of questions. When conducting the interview, the researcher follows the outline and adjust to different types of 'open-ended questions' (McCoyd, 2006) to guide the interviewee to state deeper opinions about the research theme. It is not necessarily to completely follow the questions the researcher prepared in advance, and the researcher just needs to have a direction to follow, making the interview go naturally and comfortably. By proceeding in this way, the researcher interacted with professional publishers, in the process understanding more about how covers are commissioned and created from these interviews. In this context, semi-structured interviews have advantages over both structural and non-structural interviews. It can be easier to acquire some data which is not easily observed, such as people's feelings, emotion, which is a good way to find out more. Through conversations, sometimes the interviewee can express more ideas and thoughts that the interviewer did not consider, which leads to more surprising contribution. In addition to this, for the control of the interview, because of the prepared questions and direction, the interview did not go too far from the main topic, which could focus on the important points and decrease the mistakes. Before the researcher went to have interviews with publishers, the researcher had discussed and designed semi-structural interview questions with supervisors. During the interview

process, the researcher and supervisor followed the basic question structure and added some follow up questions to acquire more understanding than expected.

### 3.2 Subject/ Participants/ Introduction of Interviewees' Publishers

The researcher aimed to find publishing professionals to acquire information about their working practices and benefit from associated understanding. This research included different fields in publishing and covered different countries. The researcher interviewed the publishers and designers/ design lead, in both UK and Taiwan, to acquire knowledge and information about cover design in some publishers of these two countries.

For the choice of interviewees' publishers in the UK, the researcher and the supervisors decide to conduct interview with Hachette UK, Piatkus Fiction, Orion Fiction, Pan Macmillan and Headline Publishing Group. Hachette is a famous international publishing group, being 'the second largest trade and educational publisher in the world'. Hachette UK's companies and imprints include Headline Publishing Group, Hodder & Stoughton, John Murray, Quercus, Orion Publishing Group, Octopus Publishing Group, Hachette Children's Group, Little, Brown Book Group, Neon Play, some of which published women's commercial fiction. Moreover, Hachette had published many commercial women's fictions, and the research aimed to interview the editors with experiences about commercial women's fictions. Hachette was an ideal for this research's direction.

According to the website, the following is the basic information of Hachette publishing:

‘Hachette Book Group (HBG) is a publishing company owned by Hachette Livre, the largest publishing company in France, and the third largest trade and educational publisher in the world. Hachette Livre is a wholly owned subsidiary of La Gardère Group. HBG was formed when Hachette Livre purchased the Time Warner Book Group from Time Warner on March 31, 2006. Its headquarters are located at 1290 Avenue of the Americas, Midtown Manhattan, New York City. Hachette is considered one of the big-six publishing companies, along with Holtzbrinck/Macmillan, Penguin Random House, HarperCollins, Scholastic, and Simon & Schuster. In an average year, HBG publishes approximately 1400+ adult books (including 50-100 digital-only titles), 300 books for young readers, and 450 audio book titles (including both physical and downloadable-only titles). In 2016, the company had 214 books on the New York Times bestseller list, 44 of which reached #1.’

A second publishing company interviewed was ‘Pan Macmillian’. According to Pan Macmillan’s official website, it introduces Pan Macmillan is ‘one of the largest general book publishers in the UK, with imprints including Macmillan, Mantle, Pan, Picador, Boxtree, Sidgwick & Jackson, Bello, Tor, Kingfisher, Macmillan Children's Books, Two Hoots, Bluebird, Campbell Books, Macmillan New Writing and Macmillan Digital Audio. Pan Macmillan is part of Macmillan Publishers International Limited’. It was founded in 1843 and now the group is one of the largest and best-known international publishers in the world, ‘operating in over 70 countries.’ Now the group includes variety of books, including ‘books for children and adults in all categories and format’. For this research, it focused on the commercial women



fiction, which is one of the famous parts in Pan Macmillan, which had published many commercial women's fictions, such as Danielle Steel's *the Wedding Dress*, Sarah Hilary's *Fragile*, and many famous authors' books. The interviewee chosen was Wayne Brookes, Associate Publisher, who had experience with many commercial books, which had fit the research direction.

Another chosen UK publishing was Headline Publishing Group. Headline Publishing Group states in their website: 'Headline was founded in 1986 with a single promise at its heart: to publish the books people want to read. Sometimes, the simplest ideas are best'. Headline publishing has published many different kinds of books and with some of 'the UK's biggest-selling author.' They published fiction and non-fiction, with a 'highly commercial focus.' This commercial focus was an ideal for this research about commercial women's fictions.

With regard to the interviewees in Taiwanese publishers, the researcher sought to cooperate with the biggest chain in Taiwan. Cite Publishing Ltd is a Taiwanese publishing group partly invested by Hong Kong Tom Group, with a leading position in Taiwanese publishing. Cite group has nearly 40 publishers in Taiwan in 2018 and has many magazine companies. This group had publisher more than 70 books or magazines. The capital amount was 750,000,000 NT Dollars (about £ 18,750,000). There are about 1500 employees in this publishing company. The company's website can also provide more detailed information.

The researcher's aim was to compare some mainstream publishing companies in UK and Taiwan, so to find the leading group to have interviews for this research. Besides this, the second publishers interviewed was Rye Field Publishing, being the

leading literature and humanities publishing in Taiwan. Rye Field Publishing also belonged to Citi group.

The third publisher to be interviewed was ‘Linking Publishing Company’, which also has had literary magazines department and newspaper department. It was founded in 1974 and it belongs to ‘United Daily News Group’. United Daily News Group was founded in 1951 and had about 2000 staff now (in 2019). In 1988, Linking Publishing Companies published magazines to translate Western classics. In 2006, Linking Publishing changed to publish the works written in Chinese instead of translation. The company had focused a lot in Humanities such as history, literature, and sociology, and managed to make more Humanities seen by more readers.

For the designer part, the researcher had email interviews with a freelancer designer in Taiwan. The designers’ studio name is called ‘兒日設計’ [R S.U.N. Design]. He had worked in the leading publishing and bookstore, Eslite Bookstore. Eslite bookstore/publishing The Eslite Corporation was founded in 1989, with revenue NT dollars 11000 million and capital NT dollars 1,6000,000,000. There were 1057 staff in 2017. This company focuses on bookstores and publishing, with some department stores and retails. In 4th August 2015, CNN chose 17 ‘World’s coolest bookstores’, Taipei Eslite bookstore belonged to one of them. This designer when interviewed was cooperating with many publishers and this bookstore at the same time.

### 3.3 Data Collection Procedure

#### Procedure

Data collection took place between 2018 to 2020. Before the interviews, the researcher asked their permission for interviews and asked their permission to record them. There were some interviews from email as Covid-19 situation. In the UK, the researcher and the supervisor went to the publisher's company (Hachette UK) to have interviews with participants. In Taiwan, the researcher went to interview the employees in publishing in their companies during their office hours. The Taiwanese designer interviews were through email. Every individual interview took up to an hour and was recorded by the smartphone. After interviews, the researcher transcribed verbatim and translated Mandarin (Chinese) into English. Two UK interviews were through email as well, due to considerations relating to Covid-19 safety.

#### Storage of Data

The audio files of recorded interviews and transcriptions of the interviews were stored securely as research data. All interviewees were asked if they wanted their names to appear in the thesis. The participants' confidentiality was maintained according to their personal choice.

#### Funding

This research was fully funded by 'Taiwanese Government Full Scholarship for Studying Abroad'. The Taiwanese government encourages their researchers to undertake interdisciplinary research and transnational studies. It is anticipated that both the research process, and subsequent comparative analysis, will bring energy and inspiration to Taiwanese cultural and creative industries, which can in turn lead to

enhanced sales and profits. The United Kingdom has a long and rich cultural history and tradition of design aesthetics, from which Taiwan can benefit. Marketing strategies in the UK are similarly well developed; sharing what is learned with Taiwanese publishers offers them opportunities to learn and benefit. Some e-book publishers in Taiwan have advanced interaction technology, which might usefully influence UK publishing or wider applications of technology. The researcher hopes that through this research process, both countries can learn from their research partners' strengths.

### 3.4 Data Analysis

During the analysis, through a detailed process of thematic analysis, the researcher read through the interview transcripts, summarising the informants' views, grouping these summaries, and allocating comments more precisely under headings. The data was then re-examined in its entirety and coded. During coding, the headings were revised and refined to more accurately reflect the data, and categories were renamed or subdivided, to reflect the nature of the informants' comments more precisely. Through this iterative coding process, new themes and issues emerged. The next chapter will employ the thematic analysis to analyse the interviews' results: the themes include design style, designers, authors, marketing and sales as well as digital and physical books.

In addition to the analysis of the qualitative data drawn from the interviews, the next chapter also includes a comparative analysis of book covers. It includes Taiwanese and British top 100 bestseller on women's fictions cover, which can

provide a more practical perspective to understand how publishers understand the real market's taste and hence how books are presented. In addition to bestseller comparison, the research also compares the same book with UK covers and Taiwanese covers. By reviewing the real examples, we can see differences more clearly and explore the associated rationales.

The researcher employed a content analysis method to compare the book cover of the bestseller women's fiction in the UK and Taiwan. In David L. Altheide's *Qualitative Media Analysis*<sup>52</sup> (1996), describes the data process is to 'perform data analysis, including conceptual refinement and data coding' (p. 41). Arthur Berger vividly links popular culture to the four theories – 'semiotic theory, psychoanalytic theory, Marxist theory and sociological theory' – in *Media Analysis Techniques*<sup>53</sup> (2014), there are detailed analysis about content analysis. Content analysis is a popular method because it can be used to determine the frequency of particular elements within a given data sample. It can be used to analyse the presence of words and phrases or in this case, the presence of particular design features such as colour, image and even font style. It is important to identify the categories to be analysed in advance and to record the content analysis in detail. This ensures that the process by which the analysis is carried out and any conclusions drawn from the research can be tested and potentially replicated in further studies. The researcher chose the most popular online bookstore's bestseller to compare, which can reflect the most readers' taste. For Taiwanese bestseller list, the researcher chooses Books.com.tw' [博客來網

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<sup>52</sup> Altheide, D. L. (1996). *Qualitative Media Analysis*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

<sup>53</sup> Berger, A. A. (2014). *Media analysis techniques* (Fifth Edition.). SAGE.

路書店], which is the first and the biggest online bookstore and has the complete bestseller list. For the bestseller list in the UK, the researcher chose Amazon online bookstore, which has updated the bestseller information hourly, giving readers the latest information. With the frequently updated data, the list can represent popular trends. In this research, the chosen bestseller list was based on 27th May 2020. The book covers chosen were from the book covers chosen in Amazon UK 'Fiction: Women's Writers and Fiction' section and from the fiction section in Taiwanese bookstore. By comparing the bestseller list book covers, it could observe the wider prevailing within cover design within these two countries. For the purpose of this content analysis, the categories used to analyse the front covers, were drawn from the elements identified in the interviews. For examples, colour choice, word size and illustration proportion. Through this analysis, readers can have more understanding with different styles and design thinking.

## Chapter 4: Thematic Analysis

In this chapter, the research will use different themes to analyse interviews: including design style, role of designers, role of authors, role of marketing and sales, understanding of different international market as well as the presentation of both physical and digital books. Every theme includes analysis in the UK and Taiwan, and concludes with comparative analysis. The final two parts will include real examples to compare, and the examples chosen are from the bestsellers and some English books written by UK authors and with translated versions in Taiwan. By comparing with the real examples of book cover, we can see more clearly what are the difference between these two countries' versions of the same book.

### 4.1 Information of interviews in the UK and Taiwan

the UK interviews

	Interviewee	How ref in text	Company	Interview Time
Interview 1	Anna Steadman (Senior Commissioning Editor) Anna Boatman	AS  AB	Hachette UK  Piatkus Fiction	30 May 2018  10:00

	(Publishing Director)			
Interview 2	Harriet Bourton (Publishing Director) Rabab Adams (Head of Design)	HB RA	Orion Fiction Orion Books	30 May 2018 14:00
Interview 3 (by email)	Wayne Brookes (Associate Publisher)	WB	Pan Macmillan	16 September 2020
Interview 4 (by email)	Sherise Hobbs (Editorial Director, Fiction)	SH	Headline Publishing Group	25 September 2020

#### Taiwan interviews

	Interviewee	Company	Interview Time
Interview 1	李季鴻 (Li, Chi- Hung) Chief Editor	Cite Publishing Ltd.	19 <sup>th</sup> February, 2019
Interview 2	林秀梅 (Lin, Hsiu-Mei)	Rye Field Publishing	21 <sup>st</sup> February, 2019



	Editorial Manager		
Interview 3	胡金倫 (Woo, Kam Loon) Editor-in-chief	Linking Publishing Company	15 <sup>th</sup> March, 2019
Interview 4	倪旻峰 (Ni, Min-Feng) Freelancer	兒日設計 [ R S.U.N. Design] Studio Freelancer	18 <sup>th</sup> March, 2019

## 4.2 Thematic Analysis

### 4.2.1 Design Style

#### I. In the UK

From the interviews, editors and designers both think that design for commercial female fiction needs some special style. The masculine and feminine style make a big difference. The interviewees identified a number of characteristics that they considered typical of cover design for the female market. As well as distinguishing a gendered market, they also noted generational distinctions within women's genres as summarised below.

Feminine style	Colours	Style
	lighter, friendlier, curvier (AS)	make an image stand out image (AS)
Book about love and marriage /romance	warm and inviting (HB)  attractive, warm and enticing (SH)	appealing and romantic (AS)  feature a woman in a dress looking out of the window or looking interesting (AS)
YA / younger romance	lime green or bright orange (AB)	
Older Woman's Fiction	beige with pastel accents (AB)	garden (AB)

In addition, the interviewees thought that cover design played an important part in distinguishing genres. For women's fiction, it reflects that the design will convey the 'feeling that it is a woman's story' (AB). Sometimes the editor will brief to the designer team very specifically what they want for the cover, like 'I want a cover with white type (reversed out of a solid colour) and a girl walking into church' (HB). The editors would give the creative team 'as much information as they can on the brief' (HB). The publishers aim to 'create a cover that reflects the novel's content and style of writing – e.g. accessible, commercial, suggests warm, relatable characters, an enjoyable story, an escapist novel set in a faraway place, for example' (SH). If the

designers can get enough information from the editors, they do not need to read the whole book necessarily.

## II. In Taiwan

According to the freelance designers who previously worked in the in-house design, the view is that Taiwanese design style is ‘diversified, multicultural and super open’ (Ni,2). He also thinks Taiwanese design is ‘not worse than Korean or Japanese design in Asia’ (Ni, 2). For photography, some photographers do really like ‘transparent and clean style’ (Ni, 2).

For women’s fiction, designers prefer to use ‘softer colour’ (Ni, 3) to design, but ‘different books have different design style’ (Ni, 3). The design is not always the same style. It will change according to different books and different markets.

In Taiwan and China, design focuses on the ‘visual’ and the market is ‘more and more competitive’ (Woo, 4). The cover is like the appearance. How to become competitive relies on ‘the appearance’ very much (Woo, 4). Some people criticise Taiwanese design is ‘designing too much’ (Woo, 4). In Taiwan, publishing is filled with freedom and everyone can publish any book, which makes the market become very competitive. It also makes design full of more varieties. For marketing or for self-expression, it makes design style very diversified and designers have much passion making the work perfect.

For design style, it is ‘not necessary for them to follow the way which made them successful before’ (Ni, 1). It depends on the book. From many interviews in Taiwan, they show that publishers give a lot of freedom to designers and authors and

encourage them to do what they want to do. They also care about the sales and the market, but the sales' consideration is not the most important reason for these editors and designers to follow. They have passion and ideal for their every decision.

### The Importance of Design

All editor/manager in Taiwanese publishing interviewed for this research stress the importance of book cover design. Li said that all editors and authors care about cover design very much (Li, 1). He used *Twilight* as an example to present the cover and the title's influence on the success of a book. When it had a not attractive cover or the cover which cannot represent the book, it was not sold in more than 1,000 books in Taiwan. When it is used as the film cover, it was totally sold very well. Interviewee professionals use many real examples to show how important the book cover is in Taiwanese book market. 'Book cover does help a lot because sometimes you just get that feeling' (Li, 6). Li analyses Taiwanese readers buy or read books based on their 'feeling'. The book cover design can make it easier to be seen by the customer. Taiwanese 'believe brand very much' (Li, 8), so when the book with brand or special design, customers can see that more. In Taiwan, as there are many books published all the time, it is impossible for the bookstore to display a book for a long time. Book cover becomes a crucial role for attract customers in a short time.

### III. Comparison

In the UK, during the briefing for a cover design, the publishers or authors

speaks more specifically what they want, like ‘I want a cover with white type and a girl walking into church’ (B1). In contrast, in Taiwan, the style is ‘diversified, multicultural and super open’ (Ni,2). Taiwan has much freedom for designers to create what they want. The result is that some editors or managers think that Taiwanese design is ‘designing too much’ (Woo, 4). For artistic creation space, Taiwan might be very ideal. For more practical commercial consideration, the UK procedure is more organised and with more mature marketing consideration.

#### 4.2.2 The Designer

##### I. In the UK

###### 1. Different Versions

When it comes to various versions that the creative directors have got, they will ‘share it with the editor’ (HB). For this creative director, she said that she probably sends all of them for consideration, even the ones she does not think are necessarily working because she wants the editor team to see ‘everything that’s been done’(HB). The editor will give design team more feedbacks and designers can do a little bit more work before they present it at the art meeting. In Hachette, they have the art meeting weekly. They will finally decide which version they want. They discuss these details at the art meeting. In Pan Macmillan, editors ‘do a lot of research into our [their] audience, their age, where they buy their books, what they watch on TV etc. (WB). Before editors briefs the jacket to the design team, they have to pin down first is what

area of women's fiction we are aiming at and our audience (WB,1). The final version they choose is 'a joint one between the sales, marketing and editor' (WB,1).

Sometimes publishers get 'a variety of avenues' (WB,2), but sometimes they just get only one design with different colours, fonts (WB,2).

In most interviews in the UK, the publishing professionals said that 'the Sales Director and Managing Director make the final call' (WB,5). From the perspective of the publishers, 'the sales team have to feel confident that this cover will be well received by retailers and the book-buying audience, so it is always a sales call at the end' (WB,5). Design thinking usually is connected with commercial consideration as the publishers belong to business. Sales team understands the market and is always the main team to decide the final cover.

## 2. In-house Designer and Freelancer

For the in-house designer, the team does not choose the same person to do female fiction. They like to make designers to change to do different design because 'it's always good to get a fresh eye' (HB,3). Some designers who do not normally do female fiction can bring the projects to 'get a fresh idea and a new approach' (HB,3). Designers observe many things around them all the time. Designers 'have their eyes open all the time' and 'apart from going into bookshops and looking at books', they look at 'packaging' (HB,3). On designers' desks, they have little postcards or little things they've torn out of magazines for 'inspiration' (HB,3). They often have folders and things that they've seen with 'nice colour combination' or 'a pattern' (HB,3) to inspire them.

In this interview, the creative directors express that they prefer in-house designers because it is ‘easy to communicate’ (HB,5). They will do as much as they can to use in-house designers but still need to give some work to a freelancer. Sometimes budget also decides situations even though some freelance designers are brilliant at certain things. In-house designers and freelance designers’ percentage is almost ‘fifty-fifty’ (HB,5).

### 3. Designer, Illustrator and Photographer

Book cover design is quite ‘a specialised area’ (HB,3) even though designers might do other things as well. The illustrators sometimes take different projects for different books. Kate Forrester, being an illustrator, does a lot of woman’s fictions, including ‘Jenny Colgan’s covers’ and ‘Cathy Bramley’s covers’ (HB,3).

Designers can do many things together. In the past, in publishing, ‘there was a very clear area between the illustrators who did illustrations, photographers who did photography, we did the design, put it all together and those lines have been completely blurred now’ (HB,4). For book design, the designer does ‘typography’ instead of illustrator or photographer. Illustrators or photographers would only focus on the element of the cover and the image.

## II. In Taiwan

### 1. The Status of Designer

Whether the designer is famous or not influences the designer’s price and status

very much. If the designer is quite new in this area, they don't 'ask a lot' (Li, 3). The variation in price between a junior designer and senior designer can be '5 to 7 times difference' (Li, 3). For example, one famous book cover designer is Ho, Chia-Hsin. In the beginning, one cover is about 8,000 NT dollars but when it becomes famous, his cover price becomes 40,000 to 50,000 NT dollars. Famous cover designers are sometimes very picky with the paper quality. For instance, one famous cover designer, Wang Chih-Hung, 'indicates that which special paper to use' (Li, 3) and that special paper is very expensive. Their personal portfolio is also very expensive, too. However, many publishers love some designers' design and 'still pay and follow what [they want] to do' (Li, 3).

## 2. Different Drafts' Decision

In these interviews, most of time publishers ask the designer to design 2 to 4 drafts for author and publisher to choose the final cover. In general, the publisher will ask the designer to make 3 versions to choose (Li, 4). There are sometimes some exceptions. It happened to one designer who made 30 to 40 drafts to choose (Woo, 2). Recently, 'few designers will do so many for you to choose' (Woo, 2). Designers nowadays prefer to have more cases, which is more worth for them. Sometimes, when designers have made 3 or 4 versions for you to choose, you know this is not suitable, which is 'time to change' (Woo, 2) the designer. It means that this designer is not suitable for this publisher or this book.

In these interviewed big publishers, basically all editors team make the final decision of final book cover. Sometimes they will let 'the whole company staff to



vote' (Woo, 1) for the final decision. In these companies, sales/marketing department is important but the editorial department has the power to do final decision. Marketing team considers the market, 'but editors have more knowledge in certain kind of books' (Woo, 1) and understand more about the 'book's direction and content' (Woo, 1). Editors decide more in Taiwanese market.

### 3. In-House Designer or Freelancer?

During these interviews in Taiwan, these big publishers in Taiwan all use freelancers as their designers. These designers sometimes do not just do book cover design. They are also 'asked to do book content design' (Li, 3). They sometimes do 'the whole project, including printing and paper fees etc, all included and charge about more than 100000 NT dollars once' (Li, 3). There are many different ways for publishers to choose the designer. In 'Linking Publishing', editors can choose designer 'by themselves' (Woo, 2). Editors 'can pick up the designer they like or the style which fits this book's style more' (Woo, 2). They all do this by their experience and their feelings. If the designer's style is not suitable for this book, these designers won't choose them as designers.

The designer interviewed expresses that there are advantages and disadvantages to be in-house designer or freelancer. The advantages of being the in-house designer are colleagues. When designers have something they don't understand, they can 'ask them and get the answer immediately' (Ni, 1). The disadvantage is that 'the time is not free' (Ni, 1). In contrast, to be a freelancer, the advantage is the time is very 'flexible' (Ni, 1). The disadvantage of being a freelancer is that it's more difficult to

distinguish what is working time and what is personal time, so this designer expresses that he doesn't 'have holiday/ weekend feelings' (Ni, 1).

#### 4. The Choice of Designer

For editors, how to choose the designer is 'based on experience and memory' (Li, 5). Designer's fame and popularity influence their worth very much. When a designer becomes more popular, more publishers will find these famous people to do more design. Sometimes if the communication between designers and publishers or authors becomes very bad, they might decide to stop cooperation. For one designer interviewed, he thinks that 'if it is really hard to communicate with them, I would choose to stop cooperation' (Ni, 3). For the publishers, the situation is also similar. If they find the designer's style is not suitable for that book, they also choose to stop working together. It relies on long-term cooperation and understanding with each other to create the suitable works.

### III. Comparison

In Taiwan, it seems that the designer's price can have big range. The price of a designer can be '5 to 7 times difference' (Li, 3), depending on their level of fame and experience. In these interviews in Taiwan, they are all big publishers and know other big publishers, stating that most publishers prefer to use freelancers even they are more expensive than in-house designers. In Taiwan, editors have much freedom to 'pick up the designer they like or the style which fits this book's style more' (Woo, 2).

In contrast, the publisher that the research interviewed in the UK, when there are many versions the designer has done, the creative director will ‘share it with the editor’ (HB,1). It implies perhaps that in UK companies there is more internal collaboration over covers than in Taiwan. Taiwanese designers just get the briefing and then do the work that they like, and sometimes they even give up the project because of insisting their own ideas. From the interviews, the researcher notices that designers or authors might compromise with the publisher more and always have a weekly meeting in the UK. In Taiwan, publishers respect the editors’ choice and give them much freedom to do what they want. This might create some amazing products but it also might be quite risky because they do not always communicate very much with the whole team.

#### 4.2.3 Editors

##### I. In the UK

###### 1. Communication with Authors

From the interview, it can be concluded that a book’s author has strong opinions on the cover design ‘every time’ (HB, 8). Some authors have details about the book cover in their minds. When designers communicate with authors, it is a little bit like the cover meeting in the company: the author might have an immediate love to the cover or they might think that they like it but want to ‘change a few small things’ (HB, 9). For publishers, they have different attitudes to big brand authors and new unknown authors. If the author is a big brand, and hence has more choice in the

matter of their cover design, it may be that the publisher is not ‘going to be able to persuade them’ (HB, 9). However, if a new unknown author really doesn’t like the cover, the publisher does not think that the new author has the right ‘to refuse a cover’ (HB, 9). Both the designer and the editor in the interview have the same opinions for author. The author’s opinion is ‘coming from a personal place’ (AS, 4). The author thinks that ‘It’s my book. I have a very strong picture of how it [the book] was’ (AS, 4). But the authors are not the expert for this and do not understand the market like a sales department and director. The publishers listen to the authors’ opinions and that’s always a ‘very hard conversation’ (AS, 4). The publisher and the author need to negotiate all the time.

For one interview, the data demonstrates the key publishing team discussed the creative brief, and the editors also ‘invites the author to contribute their own ideas to the cover brief if they would like to’ (SH, 5), expressing that the author is not the most important part to decide the final cover.

## II. In Taiwan

### 1. Communication with Authors

A designer commented that publishers do not ‘care about who is the author’ (Ni, 2). They just ‘design according to the book itself’ (Ni, 2). Every author is equal to most designers. For editors, the communication with authors is very important. ‘The process of the discussion is a difficult part’ because editors need to ‘make everyone satisfied’ (Li, 4). Designers might get angry and some authors ‘have strong desire to control everything’ (Li, 4). The art of editors is to make a best option amongst all

different people.

When discussing the book cover with the author, they will say they are not happy with the cover. The editor will ask the author ‘which part you [they] are not satisfied’ (Li, 4) and let authors understand they also need to respect the designers’ profession. They can ‘change a little bit’ (Li, 4) according to the author’s thoughts but cannot change everything because authors are not designers. The best result is that everyone is happy with the final version and that makes editors feel satisfied and fulfilled. The successful book lies in author, editor and designer’s happiness.

It also happens when the author insists on their opinion and finally the publisher accept that. In Rye Field Publishing Company, once the publisher and the designer both prefer one cover and they think that is more suitable for Taiwanese market. But that Chinese author insisted the other choice is better and explained the reasons to all people. Finally, the author ‘successfully persuade’ (Lin, 2) them and they choose that one as the cover. The importance of communication is the key point to decide the cover and no one will be the only one to decide the cover.

## 2. New Editors and Experienced Editors

When you are a new editor or reader, the first time you read some new genre ‘you feel very excited’ (Li, 1). New editors are sometimes ‘very passionate’ (Li, 1). New editors can make some ‘amazing works in the beginning’ (Li, 1). However, if the editor wants to be a very good editor, they need experience and it is impossible to burn passion forever. Based on the editors interviewed for this research project, all are all still passionate with their job, but experience has given them confidence in how to

make the products better.

### 3. The Importance of Editors' Team

In Taiwan, for the book cover or most things about the book, editor manager or chief editor 'has the power to make the final decision' (Li, 5). They are responsible for the outcome in sales. Marketing department is not the final one to decide everything, which is quite different from the situation in UK.

In the case of the publishers interviewed, they all mentioned 'editors' team is the leading department, and marketing/sale team assist us[them]' (Lin, 2). However, they also said if 'they can use their marketing strategies to sell very literary books' (Lin, 2), they also want it very much. It might be a direction for Taiwanese publishing to learn more. They think that if editors had more commercial sense, it might significantly help the book sales.

### 4. The Professional Satisfactions of Being an Editor

When the book 'is sold well or the book wins honour or prize' (Woo, 5), that makes the editor most happy. The prize is like 'the best choice of book' or 'the best book' (Woo, 5). Editors in Taiwan are 'passive' and authors are 'powerful and manipulative' (Woo, 5). When authors are 'more strong and stubborn' (Woo, 5), 'how editors persuade authors' (Woo, 5) becomes very important. This process is challenging. When editors make it and make the good book, this brings them much satisfaction.

### III. Comparison

In the interview with a Taiwanese designer, he stated that the designer ‘does not care about who the author’ is (Ni, 2) and just ‘design according to the book itself’ (Ni, 2). For both editors in Taiwan and the UK, they both think new authors are different from experienced and famous authors. To one designer interviewed, he thought they care about the work itself more than the authors. It shows no matter where they are, editors’ role is very different from designer’s role. Editors should listen to the authors’ opinions and that’s always a ‘very hard conversation’ (AB, 1). Editors always need to challenge to be a good communicator between author and designer. A little bit difference between the interviewed publishers in the UK and Taiwan is that Taiwanese editor team is the main team deciding everything and ‘has the power to make the final decision’ (Li, 5). Editors also respect authors, so if in these Taiwanese publishers, the author can persuade editors to change to the cover the author likes, if they have strong evidence to support their thinking, the editors also accept that. UK respects the experienced or famous authors more, and Taiwan sees every case as an individual and gives the new people more chance to do.

#### 4.2.4 Marketing and Sales

##### I. In the UK

###### 1. The Importance of Sales Department’s Opinions

From the interviews in Hachette, one can reflect that the editors and the designers both emphasise the importance of sales director and marketing director in

deciding the look of a book. Before they decide a final cover, they listen to retailers' and bookstores' comments. If they are not satisfied with the cover or have some difficulty in communication amongst different teams, they will not choose this cover, which has shown that the opinions from the market plays the most crucial role during the process of making the final cover's decision. They even express that if they ignore the comments from marketing colleagues, 'you've actually potentially hurt the book' (AB, 3). They think that sales director knows the market most, so their opinions are very important and they are speaking from 'a position of expertise' (AB, 4). To decide a final cover, it is never a personal decision but how the book sits within the market for which it is destined. The sales director comments on a cover based on their understanding for the market. They might say it is 'too upmarket for the supermarket' or 'a bit too downmarket for Waterstones' (AB, 4). The sales are 'more likely to express strong opinions' because they are the people 'on the front line' (AB, 4). For the final decision, 'the Sales Director and Managing Director make the final call' (SH, 5). In every interview in the UK, all stressed the importance of sales.

The designer also shows that the feedback from the sales director and the marketing director is very significant because 'that's how it works in the shop' (HB, 2). Those interviewed did not think that the authors are the experts for the market. Sometimes authors might provide the valuable opinions, but they are not always the people who understand the market and sales. Aesthetics and overall M harmony of design is less important than achieving a jacket that will secure sales. More importantly, it is how the book cover can say to the readers and not just something that is 'a beautiful and crafted created representation of what is in the book' (A6).



## 2. Readers

The publisher also cares about the reader: sometimes for the important books. When the editors consider publishing one book, they will ‘read their reader reviews’ (HB, 12) and see what readers saying about the book. To understand more about readers, sometimes the editors also organise the focus groups of readers to comment the book and the cover. For example, when they carried out a market consultation project on refreshing the branding of bestselling author Cathy Kelly, they had three focus groups, with eight women in each group. These readers in the groups are ‘loyal readers of Cathy Kelly’ and ‘had read at least two books’ in the past two years (HB, 12). The readers also did read a lot of other commercial woman’s fictions. The editors spent ‘two hours with each of those groups’ asking these groups questions and ‘doing various exercises’ (HB, 13). The event was set up by a ‘market research company’ (HB, 13).

After the focus groups, publishers would show them a lot of covers and get many feedbacks from them, like the authors’ name should be ‘big and bold at the top’ or ‘we just want to know what the new book is called and what it’s about’ (B13). Publishers can find out a lot from them about ‘what was important about reading those books’ and ‘what the key messages were’ (B13). To put the readers’ comments together is like a ‘re-assure way’ (B13) and it is a good chance for publishers to ‘hear from real readers about what’s important to them’ (B13).

## 3. New Authors

Before the publishers choose the new authors' works to publish, they usually think about many questions, such as the following. (AS, 2)

1.	Do they have a significant social media platform?
2.	Are they going to be talking to everybody about how excited they are about their next book?
3.	How many books do they put out?
4.	Do they publish four or five books a year?
5.	Is this a satisfying read and a good fit within the anticipated genre?

The publishers want to know a lot about the new author before they publish their books. Eventually and the most importantly, the publishers still stress the importance of sales. The final question is about how to 'explain to sales why this book is more exciting than all of the other books' (AS, 2). The new book needs to have 'a unique pitch' (AS, 3) and can show sales something new to catch the readers' eyes.

When the publisher chooses the book to publish, they will look at it to see if there is anything else similar that year. They also consider if sales in another larger company have 'anything similar for that year' (AS, 3). The editors might have personal taste and love for some specific books, but they never neglect the importance of sales and marketing.

#### 4. International Market

About the international market, 'Australia is the biggest export market of

commercial fiction' (HB, 5). Australia has a quite different market and 'their covers are quite different' (HB, 5). It is a mark of a very successful cover if overseas publishers 'buy the right' to use the UK title because 'it had been such a success' (HB, 6). Australian publishers are 'very specific' about 'what they like and don't like' (HB, 6). Australians are probably doing what English 'were doing ten, fifteen years ago' (HB, 7). They like 'photographs of big faces, very soft colours, pastel sort of colours, lots of blue skies' (HB, 7). They sometimes use 'two images' (HB, 7), which was popular in the UK but now looks very dated and so is rare. The old fashion style might 'have eyes at the top and a landscape at the bottom' (HB, 7). Australia is closer to the American market than English market geographically, and it also tends to 'reflect their cover style' more than the UK style (HB, 7).

For UK publishers, when adapting titles that they are planning to export to the US or import from the US for the UK market, the UK often adapts the American 'image' but uses the UK 'typography' (HB, 7). US have certain 'fonts for novels and fiction titles' (HB, 7). Many books like crimes and thrillers 'travel from the US to the UK' (HB, 8) but there is not a huge amount of woman's fiction that travels over from the US. For example, Sophie Kinsella has large audiences in the UK but 'has no profile' in the US (HB, 8). Nowadays, the common situation is the global market essentially has the same image but has slightly different colours or typography.

When the publishers decide to publish some books from other counties, they will try to see if it 'has been a success or looks like it will be a success in another country' (SH, 6). One international success might create another success, and this relies on experience to decide the market. Before publishing a foreign book,

publishers will check and do research to make sure the market will accept it.

## II. In Taiwan

### 1. How to Choose Book to Publish

In Taiwan, editors get some book details regularly, which is called 'Book Information' (Li, 7). Publishers cooperate with some agencies which provide foreign books' information. The agencies collect the book information and translate this information into Mandarin version, and then send this information to every editor that they know.

Another way is that editors go to find authors or authors submit their works to the publishers directly. Editors' intuition is very important. The initial period of a writer is the most important for editors to find their potential. 'You should develop a writer when they begin, then they are yours' (Li, 7). Editors' experience and intuition to distinguish whether a new writer is a good investment or not decides the success of editors. If an editor cannot find a new author's potential, maybe this author will belong to other editor's or maybe they never make any new work anymore.

Sometimes publishers choose books to publish 'based on the market sales' (Woo, 1). Some 'are based on the political position to publish' (Woo, 1). For senior editors, they have much experience and their prediction is more correct. However, they cannot always fully predict a book's potential. They enjoy this process and that's one reason why they enjoy their jobs.

When choosing the books to publish, Taiwanese publishers ‘focus on the content most’ (Lin, 2). They usually ‘find some professionals to listen to their opinions’ (Lin, 2). These professionals are also writers and ‘understand some genres more deeply’ (Lin, 3). These professionals are ‘a little bit like consultants’ (Lin, 3). Another way for editors to choose the book to publish is to ‘ask other editors’ (Lin, 3). Every editor has some area they understand more. They understand ‘that genre’s writers and books more: their position, their popularity, and their quality’ (Lin, 3). In Taiwan, there is a new publisher called Delight Press, which has created a success in a short time. In the beginning, this publisher was an e-commerce company and sold computer books and textbooks. When they begin to make literary books, they ‘make much effort to understand this area’ (Lin, 3) and do much research to finally make a great success. It is impossible to rely on ‘luck’ forever. This company starts from e-commerce business so that’s also why they have more experiences about marketing and choosing the books which are more likely to create commercial success.

## 2. Readers

For Taiwanese readers, ‘brand’ plays a very crucial role. They love the book or the author that they know. When customers ‘feel familiar with them’ (Li, 8), they want to buy them. Famous brand has brought familiarity, which enables readers to make a swift choice. Authors, publishers, and designers are all like brands. If they are famous, they can easily attract more customers. Bookstore also follow this rule. They usually reserve the premium space for famous and high selling titles.

## 2.1 Women's fictions' readers

If the target readers are female, the marketing is a little bit different. Women's fiction's target readers 'are almost all female readers' (Li, 6). Many of this kind of story is based on 'female romance' (Li, 6). The protagonist is an ordinary female, in some situations, some 'powerful rich men' pursue these girls. For the readers to read this genre, they 'like to see themselves in the book' (Li, 6). This kind of commercial fiction needs to create 'an atmosphere to make readers immerse themselves in this' (Li, 6). These writers or TV directors, most of time are female. As a female, it 'might be easier to describe the experience and the structure of social influence' (Li, 6). In the biggest online bookstore in Taiwan, they do readers' analysis, including gender, political background and education background analysis. Women are more emotional than men, and to attract to women takes more emotional marketing strategies.

## 3. Self-Publishing

In Taiwan, because it is an environment with much freedom, anyone can publish any book if they want. The government does not ban any book and there is 'no limit for any speech freedom' (Woo, 6). Some publishers, as an addition income stream, may charge a service for helping people to self-publish. For the famous publishers or bigger publishers (including the publishers interviewed during this research interview), they rarely do self-publishing. If the book 'does not match our[their] brand's feature' (Woo, 6), they won't accept it. The big and famous publishers have 'the process of evaluation to ensure the quality is stable' (Woo, 6).

In the interview with an editor, he thinks that self-publishing is ‘a tricky process of earning money’ (Li, 6). Some publishers can help authors publish their book if they can pay everything by themselves. If the books are not sold well, some publishers even ask the authors to buy these books back. This is the action of using author’s determination to get published for commercial advantage, so that is why some famous publishers don’t want to do this in case it will negatively influence their brand. Some self-publishing publishers also make efforts to go to many social media to find some potential authors and ask them if they want to pay to publish their own books, building on a widespread dream for all those who love writing or wants to become famous. In Taiwanese environment with much publishing freedom, it is everyone’s freedom to publish their own book, so that is also one main reason why there are so many books published in Taiwan.

##### 5. The Process of Selling Books

Before the books are published, the publisher would discuss with some big bookstores and retail outlets and advertise the books to them. The bookstore let publishers known how many they will order. If they want this book very much, they will give the publisher a big number to them. Even if they don’t want this book so much, they are generally still polite and will say that they want 3 books or some small amount from the publisher. It needs experience to evaluate how many books they need.

If the bookstore cannot sell those books, they will return books to the publisher ‘in one month’ (Li, 6). When the books are returned, it becomes the publisher’s

problem. They need to put the books in the stockroom, which also ‘takes money to rent’ (Li, 6). After time goes by, climatic conditions generally mean that the books will become ‘rotten and broken’ and become yellow—and hence unsaleable. If they cannot find other ways to sell, they will need to destroy the stock. That is why editors also need to understand marketing in case they will lose money because of wrong evaluation with the printing amount.

## 6. International Market

In Chinese language market, Taiwanese overseas market mainly includes ‘China and Malaysia’ (Lin, 4). Sometimes Taiwanese publishers ‘buy the copyright from China’ (Lin, 1) and sometimes just negotiate ‘to buy the copyright from Chinese writers directly and translate the language into traditional Chinese’ (Lin, 1). No matter local books or translated books, ‘the books relating to films or TV play a crucial role’ (Lin, 1). Publishers even compete to buy some famous films or TV books’ copyright. When Taiwanese publishers buy this genre’s book, ‘most of time’ they use ‘the same’ book cover to evoke customer’s memory more easily. If the publisher buys the film copyright from other countries, mostly the contract is ‘6 years’ or the longer one is ‘eight years’ (Woo, 3).

When Taiwanese publishers buy foreign books, it depends on the situation to decide if they will keep the same book cover. If it is a film book, it will keep the film poster to invoke readers’ memory. Most of time, ‘children books or picture books’ usually ‘keep the original cover’ to ‘keep the original feelings’ (Woo, 3). It is unusual for the authors to insist the same book cover ‘because language is also different’



(Woo, 3). Regarding to the rule of changing book cover, it depends on the contract the publisher sign with the foreign publisher. Now ‘90%’ want to see the new cover

(Woo, 3). The original publisher wants to check if ‘there are mistakes of book names’ or ‘if there are any element that they don’t want to see’ or if the new publisher ‘change their original book title’ (Woo, 3). For Taiwanese designers making translated books’ cover, they think ‘there is not big difference’ (Ni, 1). Only the translations books need to be processed, ‘the deadline is rusher’ (Ni, 1) for the designer to make a book cover.

### III. Comparison

In the UK, the publisher cares about the marketing and sales department’s opinions very much. From the editors and art director the researcher interviewed in the UK, they all expressed how important marketing and sales are. In contrast, in Taiwan, the editors do care about marketing and sales, but they still see some publishing ‘lies on the worth’ and sometimes they ‘are based on the political position to publish’ (Woo, 1). Sales’ result can bring much happiness to the publishers in Taiwan, but sales is not the top and only reason that the publishers make their decisions.

For the new author, in the UK, the publishers analyse the market and compare with other books, and listen to sales opinions and manage how to ‘explain to sales why this book is more exciting than all of the other books’ (AB, 2). In interviews in Taiwanese publishers, they are all big leading companies, but the editors are more romantic to develop the new author and find their potential: ‘You should develop a

writer when they begin, then they are yours' (Li, 7). Taiwanese editors are very passionate to find the new interesting authors with potential and have many ways to encourage and find the new author. In Taiwan, publishers dare more to gamble. It is good for some potential new authors because they might have more chances to be read by more readers. But it is also a little bit risky for the company's sales because it seems sometimes Taiwanese editors and readers care about 'content' (Li, 3) more than sales. In contrast, the UK researches what readers think by 'market research company' (HB, 13), which shows that the UK publishers do care about marketing and sales profoundly.

#### 4.2.5 Digital and Physical Books

##### I. In the UK

From the interview, the designer team expresses that they 'rarely do two separate covers' for digital and physical books. Sometimes they will just 'do e-book covers only' (RA, 8) if they do not have a printed edition. For the priority to make e-book cover, they will try to 'keep the costs really low' (RA, 8) and make the size 'small' and the style 'simple' because readers will only see very small images on websites and direct selling mechanisms.

For different genres, there are different percentage of digital reading. On contemporary romance, it's around '75 or 80 percent' (AS, 7) readers choose digital books. But some companies like 'Neilson don't do e-books' (AS, 8). On historical romance, it's digital and physical is about '50, 50' (AS, 8). Many non-fictions would

be '90 percent paper and 10 percent e-book' (AS, 8). Different kinds of readers have different needs for physical book and e-books. From the interviewee, Kindle is designed for 'very heavy readers' (AS, 5) and it tends to be 'woman of age 50 plus' because they are unlimited. When using Kindle, readers can change 'the font size very easily' (AS, 5) so it is easier for older people to read. For the romance's book covers, publishers sometimes did paper cover when they 're-packed and re-titled and aimed it Waterstones' (AS, 6). Sometimes the publishers do some changes for a specific opportunity for the retailer. Sometimes they do e-book cover first. After six months, if they think they might have market for the retailers, they might change the cover for 'the smaller, mass market format' (AS, 6). The marketing department decides the cover.

The use of social media also influences the digital market and helps the sales. If an author 'already has a strong social media presence', this can increase and 'help their sales' (SH, 6). In general, the digital version is not different from the real version, but digital advertisement or social media's power influence the sales very much. Sometimes the publisher 'publish the digital edition in advance of the physical edition' (SH, 6) in the hope of 'building a buzz around a book' (SH, 7) before the physical version is published. The digital version and the physical version can help each other to bring more sales.

## II. In Taiwan

In Taiwan, 'there are more and more people choosing digital' (Li, 3) books to read. In Taiwan, electronic books are '30% off the physical books' (Li, 3). For readers

who do not mind which version, the better price is a good attraction. Besides this, digital books 'save the space' (Li, 3) and are more convenient to carry.

Digital cover is usually the same with the physical book. For some pictures' books with 'fixed layout' (Li, 4), which is more difficult for readers to read from different devices. If it is 'fluid layout', it will be easier and the size will change according to the different tools to read.

Some e-books readers are very different from physical books' readers. The digital books readers 'still haven't surpassed the physical books' readers' (Lin, 3), but they are 'growing very quickly' (Lin, 3). E-books can have 'banner' or some special projects to advertise, which make more people see the book. 'Teenagers' are an important group for e-books and 'romance readers' are also heavy digital books' readers because romance is like 'consuming products' (Lin, 3), which are only read by readers and readers do not have strong motivation to collect them. For designers, they 'use different ways to design digital and physical cover' (Ni, 2). When designer design digital book cover, they will consider if the size and font of the words are clear enough for readers to read. For designers, they will try to get a best balance between aesthetic worth and practical use.

### III. Comparison

In digital books area, there are not big difference between Taiwan and the UK. It is a growing market and more and more readers tend to use electronic devices in both countries. The slight difference is that in the UK, Kindle seems the most popular devices and most readers choose this as the digital device to read. In Taiwan, there are

more different devices and there is not any dominant device yet. It is like Taiwanese style with much variety, customers always have much freedom to choose, which creates quite different market from the UK market. It is also a trend that social media celebrities have influenced the market and can increase sales as immediate advertisement.

### 4.3 Comparison of Book Cover in the UK and in Taiwan

#### 4.3.1 Comparison of Top 100 Bestseller in the UK and in Taiwan

In this chapter, the researcher will employ the content analysis method to compare the book cover of the bestseller women's fiction in the UK and Taiwan. The researcher chooses the most popular online bookstore's bestseller to compare. For Taiwanese bestseller list, the researcher chooses 'Books.com.tw' [博客來網路書店], which is the first and the biggest online bookstore and has the complete bestseller list. For the bestseller list in the UK, the researcher chooses Amazon online bookstore, which has updated the bestseller information hourly, giving readers the latest information. In this research, the chosen bestseller list is based on 27<sup>th</sup> May 2020. The book covers chosen are from fiction section in Taiwanese bookstore, and the book covers chosen in Amazon UK are from 'Fiction: Women's Writers and Fiction' section. By comparing the bestseller list book cover, it can make the cover research with a more visible evidence to represent the trend in these two countries.

Top 100 Bestseller list<sup>54</sup> in Fiction: Women's Writers and Fiction in Amazon UK,

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<sup>54</sup> The reference link: [https://www.amazon.co.uk/Best-Sellers-Books-Fiction/zgbs/books/62/ref=zg\\_bs\\_nav\\_b\\_1\\_b](https://www.amazon.co.uk/Best-Sellers-Books-Fiction/zgbs/books/62/ref=zg_bs_nav_b_1_b)

which is the genre closest to women's commercial fiction, and the researcher will focus on the commercial women's fiction to analyse the data. The data changed hourly, and the following date was from 27 May 2020. Top100 Bestseller List in Taiwanese Books.com.tw. The data updated every day, and this date was from 27 May 2020. The full list details can be seen from the following (also in appendix 1):

Top 100 Bestseller list<sup>55</sup> in Fiction: Women's Writers and Fiction in Amazon UK and Top100 Bestseller List in Taiwanese Books.com.tw

**Image removed for copyright reasons**

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<sup>55</sup> The reference link: [https://www.amazon.co.uk/Best-Sellers-Books-Fiction/zgbs/books/62/ref=zg\\_bs\\_nav\\_b\\_1\\_b](https://www.amazon.co.uk/Best-Sellers-Books-Fiction/zgbs/books/62/ref=zg_bs_nav_b_1_b)

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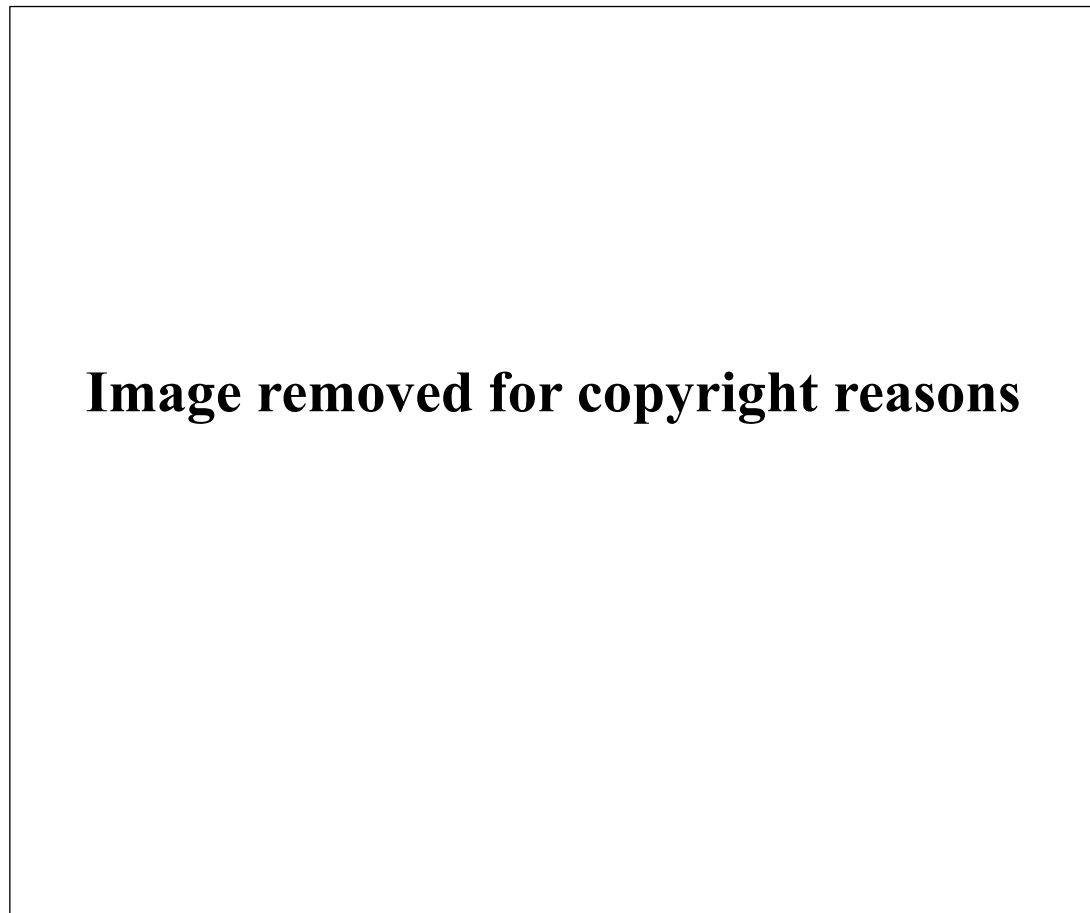
**Image removed for copyright reasons**

App Top100 Bestseller List in Taiwanese Books.com.tw

The reference link:

[https://www.books.com.tw/web/sys\\_saletopb/books/01/?loc=P\\_0002\\_002](https://www.books.com.tw/web/sys_saletopb/books/01/?loc=P_0002_002)

The data updated every day, and this date was from 27 May 2020:



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Colour:

From these bestseller covers, it can be seen that there are different fiction cover styles in Taiwan and in the UK. For the background colour, many English books have green background: 32 percent books in the list have green one, which is the same discovery from the interview. In Taiwan, some women's fictions have pink background, with 11 percent books have the pink colour on the book cover, but in general there are no preference for background colour. Taiwanese fictions have more varieties in the choice of colour. In Taiwanese book cover design, we can see many books with empty space, like book 7 with the empty space in the middle, book 13 with empty space on the bottom, book 15 with empty space on the top, and many others also come with empty space.

## Layout and Title

Taiwanese design has tendency to keep empty space, and this aesthetics concept is influenced by Japanese simple, austere beauty. From this English women's fiction bestseller list, this genre does not include much empty space. They express the atmosphere of light, cheerful with rich layout. The style does not waste the space, but Taiwanese style sometimes like to keep space for reader's imagination, creating simple aesthetics.

In this list comparison, they show that almost every English bestseller amongst these has very obvious book title. For Taiwanese bookseller, they are slightly different: many books on the list do not have clear and sharp book title on the cover. In Taiwanese culture, people like to use indirect ways to express things, which also influences the concept of design. In Taiwanese design market, sometimes designers like to create imagination space, which can arouse readers/ customers' curiosity and might attract people to buy or read it.

## Illustration

There is one common trait that both can be seen in the market of UK and Taiwan. For women's fiction, they both have the illustration of one female image. For example, UK's No.58 and Taiwan's No.17, these two covers both have female illustration, which conveys the clear idea to readers to represent their protagonist is female and it is a story about the female. This is the clear way to express the theme and content. It might be not the most artistic way but it is a practical way to express



the most important information of the book.

Amongst these 100 bestsellers in Taiwan, most of writers are Taiwanese writers, but there are more than 10 books which were written by Japanese writers. Many other genres also have lots of Japanese books, which reflects that Taiwanese book market is profoundly influenced by Japan. Taiwan had been colonised by Japan for 50 years in history. Japan had built many buildings and set up many schools in Taiwan, so Taiwan has been influenced by Japanese aesthetics in architecture, design and literature.

Many different cultures influence Taiwanese culture, but Taiwanese style like to keep its original style, which can be seen from the cover style. These bestseller covers in Taiwan includes many different languages: Chinese, Japanese, English and Korean. When designers design these covers, they still keep the original languages no matter readers can recognise the original language or not. English bestsellers seem to prefer to use translated language only, which is easier for readers to recognise and understand the book. In contrast, Taiwanese market likes to keep the original style and language to keep its original features and originality.

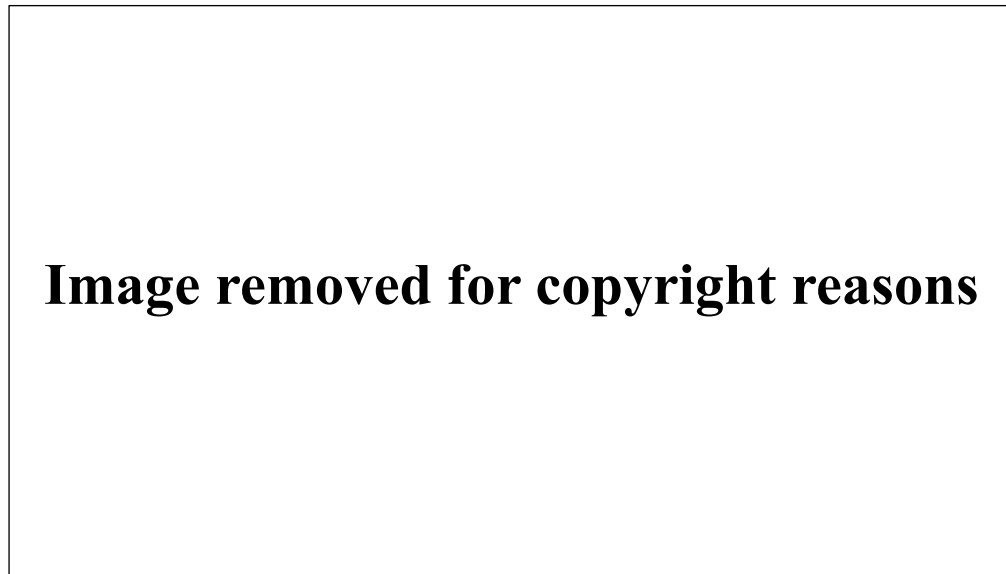
There is another point shown from this bookseller, Taiwanese readers do care about the importance of book cover. For example, this bestseller list Top 1 and Top 3 of Taiwanese bestseller fiction books, they are the same book but just have different book cover, then bringing two totally different sales volume. This phenomenon reflects that Taiwanese consumers do care about the cover of the book, so publishers sometimes will do different book covers to attract different consumers at the same time. For old books, publishers also like to design the new cover to make new impression with readers, such as Taiwanese list 31, 33, 61, 70, 71, and 98. From this,

it reveals that it is common for publishers to change the cover when the book is published again after the first version. Although there are different aesthetic styles in the UK and Taiwan, these covers represent that both markets care about the importance of book cover and pay much attention on many details.

#### 4.3.2 Comparison of Ten Book Cover in Taiwan and in the UK

In this section, the researcher will use 10 books, which were originally published in the UK, and later Taiwanese publishers published them with translated versions. These can lead readers to see the real examples show the difference design style for the same book. These differences include colour, illustration style, title size and font, and different design thought.

Book 1: *The Shelf* (Published on 9 July 2020)



Title

The Taiwanese translation usually keeps the original language to keep its originality. It usually has two language titles to deal with translated books, which also makes it easier for readers to notice the book is a translated book.

Colour

The colour choices seem significant and indicative of general points about the markets – UK much bolder colours; Taiwan much more muted.

Book 2: *Cross Her Heart* (Published on 17 May 2018)

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#### Image Style

The UK version has very strong and vivid contrast colour to express the style. The Taiwanese one employed a woman without face illustration to symbolise the story, which gives consumers much space to image what happened in the story. The UK style is clear and strong, but the Taiwanese one is implicit and unclear, with softer colour.

Book 3: *Less* (Published on 1 Jan. 2017)

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#### Illustration

The covers have some similarity in terms of the figure of the generic man in suit/business man. The different interpretations offered by falling in one and holding onto balloons. Both versions use similar illustration, and in Taiwanese version, the man even does not have expression. It is a Taiwanese culture which likes to use symbolic ways to express the ideas.

#### Book Introduction/ Title

In Taiwanese cover, it is not like UK cover, which focuses on the real content. Taiwanese cover uses very strong sentence including swearing words to express the

strong emotion. It writes ‘我下定決心了, 我要戒掉他媽的愛!’ [ I make up the decision. I will be fucking quitting love]. This can show the Taiwanese style is very emotional and passionate and many readers like this kind of way of expression, which makes people feel appealing and lively.

Book 4: *Love, Nina: Despatches from Family Life Hardcover* (Published on 7 Nov. 2013)



**Image removed for copyright reasons**

Illustration/ Photo

The UK version has a photo of the author from the period at the centre; the Taiwanese version has a hand drawn illustration of ‘London’ street. The idea of letters though is clearly visible through the hands signing the picture. The UK version follows the real story and presents the readers a real picture of the story. The Taiwanese style uses typical symbolic style, which can give readers more imagination. Besides, Taiwanese style do like original creative illustration, which gives readers to have a pleasure to collect books as art work.

Book 5: *Forever Blue* (Published on May 15, 2016)

**Image removed for copyright reasons**

#### Image

These two book covers have totally different style, and it is even difficult to think they have the same content. The UK one uses very masculine style's picture. The Taiwanese has very romantic style, and it even has not clear background, which is another one to leave readers with imagination.

#### Colour

The British one uses very shining yellow and white colour to express its strong feelings. The Taiwanese one uses pink and red heart to express very feminine style. The UK one is closer to the real story development. The Taiwanese one is designed

for Taiwanese market, in which readers prefer the softer style.

Book 6: *The Music Shop* (Published on 13 July 2017)

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Style

The UK one stresses the ‘music’ part in the book cover, and Taiwanese one stresses on the ‘shop’. The figurative cover in Taiwan to very abstract one in UK can express the very different styles. For the shops in Taiwanese illustration, it can show that they focus on the details and colourful styles, but still do not draw it very clearly, always leaving readers space of imagination.



Book 7: *Before I Go to Sleep* (Published on 14 Aug 2014)

**Image removed for copyright reasons**

#### Design Style

This book was adapted to the film, so in the UK, the publishers used the film cover to increase the consumers' impression. The Taiwanese one has no image, only with words, which makes the titles become impressive. The translation of Taiwanese title is very different from the original. The translated title is '別相信任何人' [Don't Believe Anyone]. The repetitive titles on the book covers emphasizes the feeling that 'not believing anyone'.

Book 8: *After I've Gone* (Published on 15 June 2017)

**Image removed for copyright reasons**

Illustration/ Title

The UK one and the Taiwanese one use totally different illustration, but both give readers much space to imagine. In Taiwanese title, the spine has the full titles but the main cover's 'gone' has been gone, which is a style to express 'gone'. Taiwan likes to use hidden meanings to express the situation. The face in Taiwanese illustration also with mixed styles, with shadow and a not clear face on the left, which is a typical style to arouse readers' interest. The UK one has very clear titles and author's name, which can make readers immediately focus on it.

Book 9: *Happiness for Humans: the quirky romantic comedy for anyone looking for their soulmate* (Published on 4 Jan 2018)

**Image removed for copyright reasons**

#### Illustration

The UK one uses simple style to express love: the heart exactly expresses love. In contrast, the Taiwanese heart is a very small one hidden in the title, and still uses illustration to convey the characters. The hidden heart is also hidden in the book spine's title, which is a small red heart. Taiwanese like to use the cute and small pictures to express many details.

Book 10: *Miss You: The Hottest Book of the Summer* (Published on 20 April 2017)

**Image removed for copyright reasons**

Illustration:

The two books both have stressed the big titles and use special styles to express the titles. The UK one still keeps its simple and clear style, and Taiwanese one also still keeps the small pictures and icons to express the cute style. The Taiwanese design usually includes many small details: the woman in this cover is far from the man in this cover, and they look at different sides, meaning it is difficult to meet. The focus on details is also one focus of Taiwanese design style.

Comparison of These Covers:

## Title/ Author's Name

The ten books the researcher chose were all published in the UK first, and there were translation versions in Taiwan after that. There is a main difference between these two versions: the UK version all make the author's name very clear to be seen, but the Taiwanese versions of these ten books, the authors' names are all very small and it is difficult for readers to see them very clearly. The UK book titles are usually very big and very clear, but Taiwanese ones are not totally big and clear, which more focus on the whole book design. In some Taiwanese books' design, it seems that the whole picture is more important than the title itself. This style can show the differences between these two countries. The UK uses simple and clear style to focus on the most important points: book titles and author's name, but Taiwan focuses on the design style and the whole layout more than telling what the book is.

## Illustration

From these examples, they also represent that Taiwanese designers like to use illustration to express the book. The UK versions use more simple style, and sometimes even can just have title only to express the key point, such as Book 2, 8 and 10. For women's commercial books, Taiwanese design prefers to have lighter and warm colour compared to UK versions, which have different style according to the content to change its style. Taiwanese style does not exactly express the content. For example, Book Five, *Forever Blue*, UK version adopts to follow the original story style to create the book cover, but Taiwanese version is totally different from the original style.

Taiwanese designers design these covers with quite a lot of details, and the cover is like the product, which is not necessarily connected to the content or the author. The designers show more personality and style by creating the cover, which is like a personal design product. UK versions, which are a little bit different from Taiwanese versions, UK designers do connect the content with the cover. The book title is always very clear as it is basic commercial consideration, which is easier for consumers to understand what exactly the book's content is. In contrast, the book title is not necessarily big enough as the UK books' style, the whole design is more important for commercial consideration for Taiwanese book cover designers.

These books are all published in the UK first, and translated in Taiwan and published later, so the book cover designer can see the original version. Even though designers see the original cover design, it does not have much similarity with the original one. This can reflect that designers in Taiwan like to create their own design and care about the details, such as the book spine, which is connected to the main page, making the whole design complete. Design in Taiwan is like art, which is beyond the commercial and cultural meanings only. This way to design can make unique design but it might also cost too much money and take much time to make it. More commercial design is the direction that Taiwanese publishers are making effort to make publishing with more possibility.

## Colour

The colour choices seem significant and indicative of general points about the markets – UK has much bolder colours; Taiwan uses much more muted. The UK

colour in the book has some striking colour, which can catch the consumer's notice more quickly. Taiwan does not use the bright style and prefers to use warm and lighter colour to gradually lead consumers to the book's world. The lighter colour in Taiwanese book covers can make design like telling readers a story. It is not such brave colour with more and more stories hidden in this softer style.

### Image

Sometimes the UK uses the real pictures to express the real situation, but from these examples, Taiwan totally chooses to use illustration to represent the original creative style. The UK design can be very realistic to showcase the reality of the story. Taiwanese design must represent the designers' original idea, which shows Taiwanese have very strong desire to express the self and difficult to use a real picture to express the original books' focus. It gives the designers more space to do creative design, but it does not make the best advertisement effect especially some film fictions, which might be more with commercial worth when it uses the film cover.

### Conclusion:

According to American Psychological Association, there is one article in *Journal of Experimental Psychology: General*, 'Effects of colour on emotions'<sup>56</sup>, it concludes that blue, blue-green, green, red-purple, purple, and purple-blue were the

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<sup>56</sup> Valdez, P., & Mehrabian, A. (1994). Effects of color on emotions. *Journal of Experimental Psychology: General*, 123(4), 394–409. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0096-3445.123.4.394>

most pleasant hues, whereas yellow and green-yellow were the least pleasant. Green-yellow, blue-green, and green were the most arousing, whereas purple-blue and yellow-red were the least arousing.’ The conclusion’s evidence ‘available from studies that have used a variety of colour stimuli (including coloured objects, rooms, or clothing), when interpreted within the PAD Emotional Model, tends to be consistent with results obtained in the present studies’ (Valdez, 1994). In these examples of UK book covers, most of these covers have blue and green colour. Based on this Psychology’s research, publishers follow the principle to choose the most arousing and the most pleasant colours. According to the interviews from the publishing professionals, they also express green is very popular colour to do this genre, which also expresses UK publishers do lots of research for details of marketing.

In these real book covers’ examples, they show the different styles in these two countries. Taiwanese designers focus on the pictures and the whole style, and UK designers focus on the authors’ names, and titles are usually very clear to see. For this genre, it is very easy to tell the book is women’s fiction from the cover from the UK’s book covers. For Taiwanese women’s fiction, it is not easy to distinguish its style from the cover directly. When the UK designers design the book cover, they follow the genre’s style and publisher’s recommendation a lot, which makes the more similar styles for the same genre. Taiwanese design pursues original and variety, which makes it not so easy for consumers to tell the genre from the style, which is a situation that can see designers in Taiwan do not have so strong commercial consideration. In contrast, the UK design for this genre is full of commercial thinking: with clear titles and authors’ names, which can catch the consumers and readers attraction. Both of



designs can reflect the two countries' publishers are quite mature. These real examples combine with the professionals' interviews, expressing these two countries' different focuses. The UK has strong commercial thinking, but Taiwan pursues to express their strong self and unique style. Both countries can make publishing industry with more future and endless possibilities.

## Chapter 5: Discussion and Conclusions

### 5.1 Conclusions

In the beginning of the study, the researcher mentioned the main research question is to find how different commercial considerations and the process of publishing influence the decision of cover design for commercial women's fiction in the UK and Taiwan. Through the professional publishing's interviews and detailed analysis of real book covers, the analysis has shown how the UK market focuses on the market and that Taiwanese market focuses on more what authors' and designer's preference than the market's need. The present study is preliminary research on commercial women's book over in the UK and Taiwan, but its relevance to marketing and design style can also be seen.

In the beginning of the research, the researcher pointed out five main research questions, and here are the conclusions to respond these questions:

1. The primary research question is to find how different commercial considerations and the process of publishing influence the decisions relating to cover design for commercial women's fiction in the UK and Taiwan. From the commercial angle, Taiwanese market is not very mature for business consideration, and personal taste is usually above the commercial consideration. This can bring the designers and publishers more freedom to do the books' style they like, but it also can waste some

time and money during the process, which is different from the UK market. Genette (1997) shows that ‘once the possibilities of the cover were discovered, they seem to have been exploited very rapidly’<sup>57</sup>. When contemporary publishers have found the cover can influence commercial success, they focus on the covers more. The UK focuses on the commercial effect, but Taiwan makes book cover as one way to express creation and personal idea, which also sometimes makes the cover very different from the book content. The UK and Taiwan use very different ways to design covers, but both care a lot about the importance of the book cover. This comparison study has made some Taiwanese publishers the researcher had interviewed with want to learn more marketing strategies from the UK. The Taiwanese publishers agree that if the marketing works, they can bring more knowledge and idea to more people. Taiwanese are very happy to learn more marketing strategies and gradually build more commercial awareness, which can combine business with publishing, making more good books read by more readers.

2. What are the different commercial women’s fiction’s book cover styles (including colour, font, illustration) between Taiwan and UK cover design, and what might account for these differences? Based on the interviewed Taiwanese designer has put it, Taiwanese design style is ‘diversified, multicultural and super open’ (Ni,2). In the UK, even the art and design team, they respect the opinions from marketing and sales’ departments. From the bestseller lists, they can show that Taiwanese design has more various styles and designers design different styles for the same genre. In the

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<sup>57</sup> Genette, G. (1997). *Paratexts: Thresholds of Interpretation*. Cambridge University Press.

UK, the cover has more similarities amongst the bestsellers, as the UK publishing interviewed considers marketing part more than Taiwan and tends to follow the past successful pattern. The results indicate that the UK publishers pay more attention in sales volume but Taiwanese publishers focuses on what thoughts the books can bring and what the book can influence readers. Taiwanese history has mixed Chinese, Japanese and American culture, which has made Taiwanese design and publishing with diversified and multicultural style. Taiwan is the first and only (2021 so far) Asian country with the legal same-sex marriage, which is pursued by people. This cultural and historic phenomenon shows that Taiwanese people love to spend time pursuing rights and ideal, which is similar to publishing situation: people do care about sales, but the ideal is always more important than the profit.

3. What are the publishing industry professionals' practice and associated opinions? In the UK, with the mature commercial focus, publishers usually give designers very clear direction to design, and designers usually follow the team's direction to design. In contrast, as being not commercial enough, Taiwan designers have more freedom to express their own creation. In Taiwan, from the interviews with publishers, they express they do not usually have clear briefing and direction for designers, so designers usually can create whatever they want. From the interviews, they also express if designers cannot accept the publisher's taste or publishers do not think designer's design fits the book, they usually choose to discontinue the cooperation. These can showcase that the UK publishers take a more complete process to decide the book cover. Taiwanese publishers, however, do not have a specific standard process to decide the cover, which might waste more time as some

covers might be rejected after the long process, but they might have more chances to create more special cover design as the designer do not have too many guidelines for them to follow.

4. What are the processes of making book covers within the specific cultures within which they operate, and more widely? While the UK has its own strong and commercial market, it also has a significant history of exporting titles, Taiwan is a country that contains a mixture of different nationalities and cultures, and is seeking to create and harmonise a unique and mixed style. From the interviews with the UK publishers, every publisher emphasises the importance to communicate with sales team and marketing team. The opinion of the sales team and marketing team are the main process to make the final cover of the book cover. In contrast, in Taiwan, the sales team and marketing team are not the teams to make the final decision. The editorial team is the one which decides the final decision, but editors also respect the opinion from the author and the designer a lot, which makes design with more varieties as designers do not just follow the successful formula of the past. They like to create the new style and usually have many personal opinions, which also makes communication become a challenge for editors. Based on the interview with Taiwanese designer, the designer said that Taiwanese design style is ‘diversified, multicultural and super open’ (Ni, Interview). Combining the perspective from both designers and publishers, these show that designers in Taiwan do have much more freedom to create what they want and what they like.

In conclusion, both the UK and Taiwan have very mature markets of publishing, just with different focus. A major finding is that decision-making in

publishing in the UK focuses on marketing and sales department, but the editorial team has the main decisive role in Taiwan. The UK focuses on sales and marketing more than Taiwan as sales and marketing can influence the sales, which is a main focus for the UK. The idea focusing on marketing and sales also influences Taiwanese publishing during the process of interviewing Taiwanese publishers. During the process of seeing how the UK publishing deal with book cover design, Taiwanese publishers learn the way that focusing on sales and marketing can have more readers and customers, which can make the books seen by more people.

## 5.2 Limitations of the Study

This research interviewed publishers was done in a very limited number of publishing professionals from limited number of big companies in Taiwan and in the UK. The professional opinions might be only limited in some companies, which might be different from some small or independent publishers. Moreover, this research focuses more on the book cover of women's fictions, which might be a little bit different from other genres. Besides this, the Covid-19 pandemic meant some interviews had to be changed to email interviews, which can show the answers with more contemplation, but this made researchers lose the chance to have direct interaction to observe the whole industry. The interviews conducted before the pandemic made the researcher have the chance to go to their office and observe the style. The UK publishing companies looked very business style and in contrast, the Taiwan publishing offices look very academic style, which might partly reflect the

different publishing culture in these two countries. The bestseller list from this research was just part of covers, which just represented part of the market and could not totally represent the whole market. In addition to this, the bestseller list was from online bookstore, which might be a little bit different from the physical books' market. This selection might cause some limitations of this research.

### 5.3 Suggestions for Future Research

The present findings contribute to the field's understanding of the various forces acting on publishing professionals as they make book cover or other marketing decision. One such force is the impact of commercial profits. Publishers prepare a product for sale and so instructed design fits with that objective. The present findings also confirm previous evidence that Taiwanese publishers have copious freedom to publish the books, design the cover and choose the author and designer. Future research could consider investigating how readers react the design and do more research on readers' and market's reaction.

This research has collected some publishing professionals' opinions and represents the different consideration in the UK and Taiwan. However, these comments and thoughts all come from the publishers' staff. The analysis of bestseller lists and book covers' comparison are based on the researcher's analysis. The readers' response also can be evidence in books sales. During the interview process, Harriet Bourton of Orion explained that publishers involve readers in focus groups when thinking about new designs, which also can be a direction for future research. Further

research could be conducted on readers' analysis as well as focus groups for readers, and researchers can conduct more interviews with different designers. While this study has its limitations, it is hope that it can serve as a basis for further study in book cover design, publishing and designers. The researcher also hopes it can encourage publishers and designers in Taiwan or in the UK to understand how different markets present the same content in order to appeal to their local consumers. The researcher personally has brought more commercial consideration and practical consideration about publishing to Taiwanese publishers. For Taiwanese publishing, an understanding of how other markets emphasise commercial consideration and strategies, their approach could perhaps be adapted so that books can be seen by more people and would have more influential power. In summary, a book cover is not just the protection of a book, but it is an art, an inspiration combining aesthetics with the book content, and a commercial marketing strategy.

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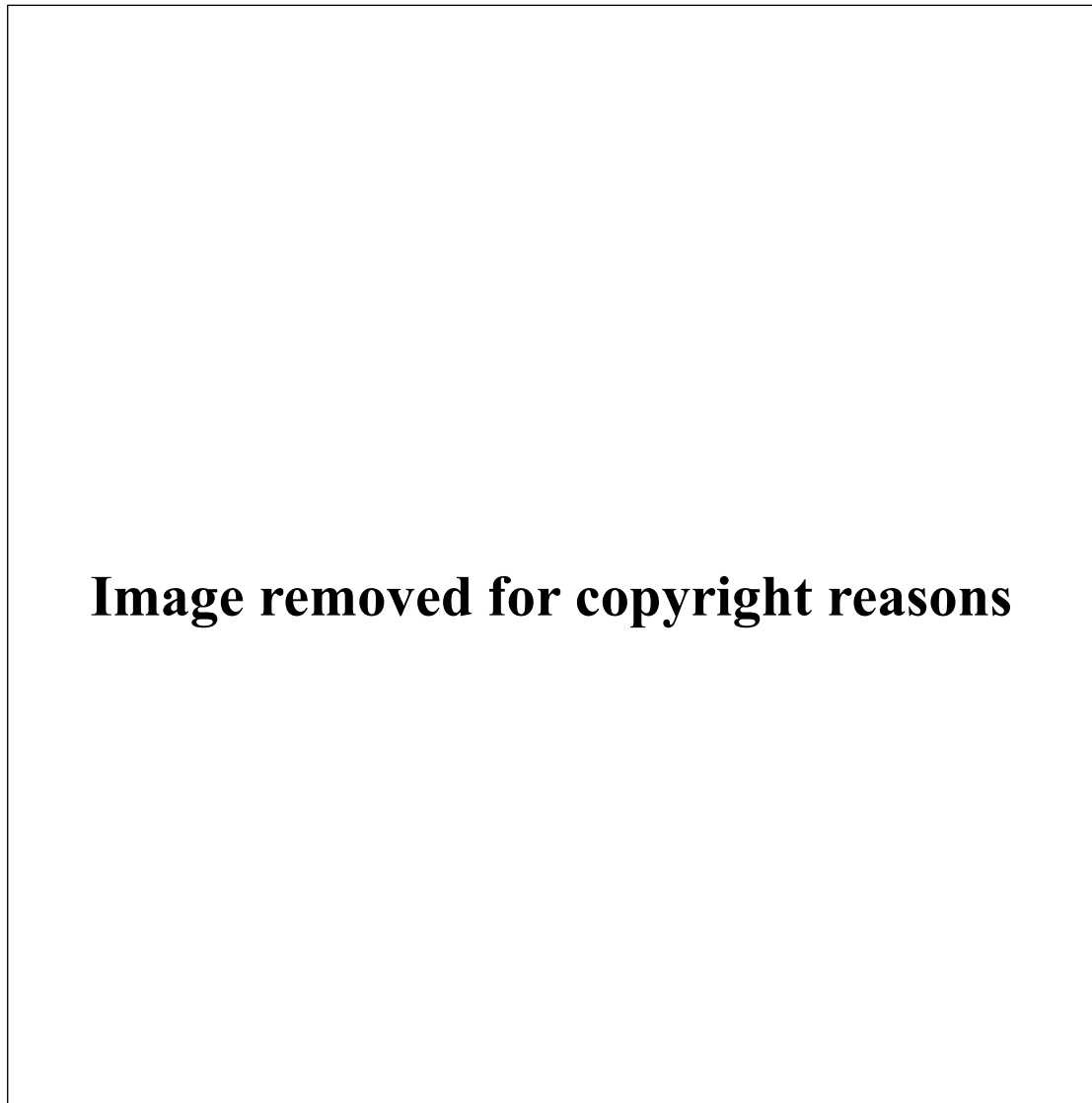
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Appendix 1: Top 100 Bestseller list<sup>58</sup> in Fiction: Women's Writers and Fiction in Amazon UK and Top100 Bestseller List in Taiwanese Books.com.tw

The data changed hourly, and the following date was from 27 May 2020:



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<sup>58</sup> The reference link: [https://www.amazon.co.uk/Best-Sellers-Books-Fiction/zgbs/books/62/ref=zg\\_bs\\_nav\\_b\\_1\\_b](https://www.amazon.co.uk/Best-Sellers-Books-Fiction/zgbs/books/62/ref=zg_bs_nav_b_1_b)

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App Top100 Bestseller List in Taiwanese Books.com.tw

The reference link:

[https://www.books.com.tw/web/sys\\_saletopb/books/01/?loc=P\\_0002\\_002](https://www.books.com.tw/web/sys_saletopb/books/01/?loc=P_0002_002)

The data updated every day, and this date was from 27 May 2020:



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## Appendix 2: Interview Questions

Questions for Interview with designers or art director in the publishers

1. When you design the book cover of books and translated books, what are the considerations do you have? What is the difference between the local market and international market?
2. Being an in-house designer or a freelancer, what is the difference and what are the different considerations when designing a book cover?
3. Do the publishers prefer to follow the past successful formula for cover design or do they prefer to create the new style?
4. Do you think the design in Taiwan is more conservative? From your experience, do Taiwanese designers like to learn Japanese, European or American style? Do Asian prefer cute and brighter style?
5. When commercial considerations have conflicts with artistic ideas, what do you deal with that? Do you have any exact example?
6. Which department is the main role to decide the book cover? When they ask you to create a cover, do they usually give you a clear direction to follow or do they just let you decide what to design?
7. How much time averagely does it take you to finish one book cover?
8. When the book is written by a very famous writer or by a new unknown writer, is it very different?
9. Who is usually the final one to decide the cover? How many drafts do you

prepare mostly?

10. When designing the digital cover and physical cover, do you take different ways to create? What are your different considerations?

#### Questions to the Publishers (Editor Manager)

1. When the main target readers are female, what are some different strategies to market this genre (commercial female fiction)? Is there any special taste for the cover for this genre?
2. When you choose some books from other countries, does the publisher prefer to choose the same cover or prefer to change it? What reasons make this decision? Is it very expensive to buy the cover copyright?
3. How do you decide a book cover finally? Do you usually ask designers to design different versions and choose one? How does it work? What is the procedure to decide a version?
4. Why do publishers choose to change the cover design? Do you have any example that you change the design of cover?
5. Who are the main target readers for contemporary romance?
6. What are the marketing strategies for 'Chick Lit'? Are they very different from other fictions or similar? Are they similar to women's magazines?
7. When you create an e-book, do you use the same cover as the paper version or a new one? Why?
8. How do you define your company's direction? What is the special feature of

your company?

9. How much influence of the book author affects the graphic design of the cover?

As a communicator between the designer and the author, how do you communicate with them?

10. Who is the final one to decide the cover? How many drafts do you usually use averagely?

11. What is the difficulty to have an electronic version?

12. Is digital publishing replacing the paper market? How do you think about it?

13. How has digital publishing influenced female fictions? Does it also influence some writers' writing style? For example, some publishers choose some famous bloggers and collect their articles to create a book. Is this a safer way to publish a new author's book?

14. When you negotiate with the books from other countries, what kinds of problems have you ever faced? How did you begin considering to publish some books?

15. When you publish the foreign books, do you publish the original language version or publish the original language and the translated version at the same time?

What are the advantages to publish at the same time or at different times?

16. As the publisher plans to publish e-book version and paper version, do you publish them at the same time? What are the advantages and disadvantages at the same time and at different times?

17. Do many readers of female fictions change to use digital methods to read romance? Or do they prefer to use traditional versions?

### Appendix 3: Transcription of Headline Publishing interview in the UK

Name: Sherise Hobbs

Company: Headline Publishing Group

Position: Editorial Director, Fiction

1. Q: When the main target readers are female, what are some different strategies to market this genre (commercial female fiction)? Is there any special taste for the cover for this genre?

Ans: The cover is really important as most readers select a book by its title, cover image, cover strapline and blurb. We aim to create a cover that reflects the novel's content and style of writing – e.g. accessible, commercial, suggests warm, relatable characters, an enjoyable story, an escapist novel set in a faraway place, for example. Colours are often attractive, warm and enticing. Type is often large, vibrant and friendly, with lots of movement. A cover that will stand out and attract a buyer in the supermarket or on Amazon.

2. Q: When you choose some books from other countries, does the publisher prefer to choose the same cover or prefer to change it? What reasons make this decision? Is it very expensive to buy the cover copyright?

Ans: If the original cover is strong and works for the UK market, we would prefer to keep it, so that there is one consistent universal look for a book. This helps

with marketing a book. Sometimes we might use the same image but change the title and author typestyle. Cost of using the image can be reasonable to very expensive, and if it was very expensive this might lead us to source our own cover image.

3. Q: How do you decide a book cover finally? Do you usually ask designers to design different versions and choose one? How does it work? What is the procedure to decide a version?

Ans: The designer can be briefed to come up with several cover looks and they bring them all to a cover meeting where the editor, company directors and Managing Director see them and discuss them. Sometimes the cover is approved quickly but sometimes there are many rounds before it is approved in-house. Then the author needs to see it and approve it, which can sometimes be a time-consuming process. Occasionally a cover is approved by the company and the author, then we do some cover testing and learn the readers aren't connecting with it, so we might change a cover in that instance.

4. Q: Why do publishers choose to change the cover design? Do you have any example that you change the design of cover?

Ans: If sales of a title are lower than expected we might change the cover. Or if we want to refresh an old title to give it a new look to find a new audience for it, perhaps in digital. Or if we publish a book in summer with a summery cover, then choose to repromoted in winter, we might give it a winter cover. Here are some examples:

5. Q: Who are the main target readers for commercial women's fiction?

Ans: Mainly female adult readers from any age from 25-65. Although of course there are some teenagers who read it, and some men, we market it at adult women. These can be women who read to escape their world, or to learn something about a different time or place, women who want a 'comfort read' or to laugh or cry, to be taken out of their ordinary lives or to read a good love story. We are marketing to women who often want to read about a female character they can relate to who are able to do something exciting, so the reading experience becomes a kind of wish fulfilment. Sometimes these readers are short of time, for example, busy mums, but sometimes they have lots of time, such as women who might be retired.

6. Q: What are the marketing strategies for 'Chick Lit'? Are they very different from other fictions or similar? Are they similar to women's magazines?

Ans: First, the term 'chic lit' has for some time been regarded by the female readers who appreciate it, and the authors who write it, as patronising and offensive. They would argue, why should fiction written by women for women and about women's lives be seen as any way lighter and less significant and 'worthy' than fiction written by men about men's or women's lives? The term 'female-led fiction' (or indeed female-driven narratives) is being seen as a potential alternative for the more derided term 'chic lit'. The marketing strategies for female-led fiction will be similar to the strategies for literary fiction in that we are marketing to women who buy books, recommend books and talk about books. Women's weekly and monthly



magazines are a good place to advertise commercial, accessible female-led fiction, so is Facebook, Instagram and Twitter.

7. Q: When you create an e-book, do you use the same cover as the paper version or a new one? Why?

Ans: We use the same cover so that there is one recognisable look for a book but we need to ensure the eBook cover reads well in thumbnail so occasionally they are simplified (e.g. sometimes for the eBook cover, author quotes might be removed as they can't be seen in thumbnail size, title and author fonts might be sized up and colours brightened).

8. Q: How do you define your company's direction? What is the special feature of your company?

Ans: Headline is a commercial publisher. We aim to understand readers, what drives them to buy and read books and where and how they read them. We publish the novels people really want to read; the books that keep them reading into the early hours, with worlds people want to escape to and with characters they can relate to. The Headline imprint is a highly commercial entertainment house; here we publish authors both genre defining and genre defying – both long-standing brands and exciting new talent. The category bestsellers on Headline transport, entertain and make readers feel – they consistently satisfy the ebook addict and have instant appeal to the casual supermarket shopper. At Headline Review we publish fresh, smart, female-led commercial fiction and page-turning,

emotive, conversation-starting reading group fiction, and, as part of Headline Fiction, we're the proud home of the best storytellers in the business. Eternal is Headline's romance imprint, a list within which any romance fan will be sure to find their heart's desire. Eternal has made its name publishing a mix of New York Times bestsellers and exciting new talent across historical, paranormal, suspense, contemporary, erotic and new adult romance.

9. Q: How much influence of the book author affects the graphic design of the cover? As a communicator between the designer and the author, how do you communicate with them?

Ans: The editor fills in a creative brief for the designer telling them in a nutshell what the story is about, who is the market for this book, and also providing cover comparisons from other authors in the market which could be useful. They will say who are the key retailers for the book (e.g. a traditional bookshop chain such as Waterstones, a supermarket chain such as Tesco or Asda, or Amazon) and also say whether we think it has a market in a major international territory such as Australia as well as in the UK. The creative brief is discussed by the key publishing team and signed off before the designer starts work. The editor invites the author to contribute their own ideas to the cover brief if they would like to.

10. Q: Who is the final one to decide the cover? How many drafts do you usually use averagely?

Ans: The author is consulted but ultimately the publisher has the final say on the

cover, and the Sales Director and Managing Director make the final call, as the sales team have to feel confident that this cover will be well received by retailers and the book-buying audience, so it is always a sales call at the end.

11. Q: What is difficulty to have an electronic version?

Ans: Not difficult.

12. Is digital publishing replacing the paper market? How do you think about it?

Ans: Although a lot of the market for paperbacks has moved to digital, we are still seeing a rise in print sales. Hardback publishing is still strong, especially in non-fiction and children's, but also in adult fiction. Recent examples of strong hardback sellers are THE TESTAMENTS Margaret Atwood, THE THURSDAY MURDER CLUB by Richard Osman (a commercial fiction debut by a TV personality in the UK) and TROUBLED BLOOD by Robert Galbraith (commercial crime – Robert Galbraith is pseudonym for JK Rowling).

13. How has digital publishing influenced female fictions? Does it also influence some writers' writing style? For example, some publishers choose some famous bloggers and collect their articles to create a book. Is this a safer way to publish a new author's book?

Ans: Some of the most successful authors in digital write more than one book a year, which Kindle owners love because they can binge-read a series in a short space of time. If an author already has a strong social media presence (or builds one up),

this can help their sales, for example, the debut novel by popular UK YouTuber Carrie Hope Fletcher ALL I KNOW NOW became a print and digital bestseller, as her fans all pre-ordered the book. This also applies to Non-fiction, with lifestyle titles especially, and examples of YouTubers utilising their platforms to become bestselling authors are Joe Wicks, Mrs Hinch and Pinch of Nom.

14. When you negotiate with the books from other countries, what kinds of problems have you ever faced? How did you begin considering to publish some books?

Ans: If a book has been a success or looks like it will be a success in another country, that would be a factor in us deciding to acquire it. For example, WHERE THE CRAWDADS SING had been a New York Times top ten bestseller for many weeks before a UK publisher bought the rights, and it was then a huge bestseller in the UK, Australia and Ireland.

15. When you publish the foreign books, do you publish the original language version or publish the original language and the translated version at the same time? What are the advantages to publish at the same time or at different times?

Ans: It is always preferable to publish a book in translation close to the publication date of the original edition, so that you can capitalise on any buzz surrounding it in its original edition. However, it takes time to translate a book, and so often translated editions come several months or even a year after the original edition is published.

16. As the publisher plans to publish e-book version and paper version, do you publish them at the same time? What are the advantages and disadvantages at the same time and at different times?

Ans: We do usually make the digital editions (ebook and audiobook) available on the same date as the first physical edition goes on sale, so that readers who prefer reading the digital format can get the book straight away. Sometimes we publish the digital edition in advance of the physical edition, in order to build up a strong number of Kindle reader reviews for a title before the physical edition goes on sale, to help people browsing the physical edition with their buying decisions, and build a buzz around a book before physical publication.

17. Do many readers of female fictions change to use digital methods to read romance? Or do they prefer to use traditional versions? Why makes this situation?

Ans: Many readers of female-led fiction and romance fiction have moved from the physical format to digital in the last 5-8 years. Kindle books are often cheaper and voracious readers can load them up at once with a multitude of titles. When a reader has finished one book, they can very quickly order the next book in the series, for example, or by a similar author, and start reading straight away. During the Covid 19 crisis, when bookshops were closed and women who usually buy books in the supermarkets weren't visiting the shops as often as before, we saw a significant spine in our eBook sales.

#### Appendix 4: Transcription of Pan Macmillan in the UK

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Wayne Brookes \_\_\_\_\_

Company: \_\_\_ Pan Macmillan

Position: \_\_\_ Associate Publisher \_\_\_\_\_

1. Q: When the main target readers are female, what are some different strategies to market this genre (commercial female fiction)? Is there any special taste for the cover for this genre?

Ans: This really depends on the area of women's fiction the book is in, although each book is treated individually. The editor briefs the jacket to the design team who then interpret that brief in their own way. What we have to pin down first is what area of women's fiction we are aiming at and our audience. We do a lot of research into our audience, their age, where they buy their books, what they watch on TV etc. Audience segmentation helps steer our jackets in the right direction.

2. Q: When you choose some books from other countries, does the publisher prefer to choose the same cover or prefer to change it? What reasons make this decision? Is it very expensive to buy the cover copyright?

Ans: This depends on the country of course. Some countries jackets work in our market, but others won't, and again this is done on a book by book basis. Sometimes it can be very beneficial to have a uniform look across the board, especially if a book is really starting to sell well in a certain territory. However, that really depends on if

that jacket is a natural fit for our market. When it comes to the cost of using another publisher's jacket, I don't believe it's expensive, but there is a negotiation to be had there.

3. Q: How do you decide a book cover finally? Do you usually ask designers to design different versions and choose one? How does it work? What is the procedure to decide a version?

Ans: The editor briefs the jacket as we're the one who has the close contact with the author and has edited the manuscript. At this stage we've already thought about our audience so that also goes on the brief. Then a designer will bring various interpretations of that brief to the meeting. The final decision is a joint one between the sales, marketing and editor. Often we get a variety of avenues shown to us, but sometimes it may only be one design with different colours, fonts etc.

4. Q: Why do publishers choose to change the cover design? Do you have any example that you change the design of cover?

Ans: If you mean why do we change jackets from country to country, then it's quite simply because the markets are entirely different. What may work in one market does not work in another. If you mean why do we change jackets every few years etc., well that's to refresh the look of an author. If sales decline, we need to see if the packaging is still appealing. The audience could very well have moved on, and we need to find them again.

5. Q: Who are the main target readers for commercial women's fiction?

Ans: I'm presuming you are talking about age groups here? We target all areas of women who read which is where understanding your audience is paramount. What jobs do they do, how do they travel to work, what magazines do they read, and where do they shop? We can use that information to make sure we choose the right places to market and sell our books.

6. Q: What are the marketing strategies for 'Chick Lit'? Are they very different from other fictions or similar? Are they similar to women's magazines?

Ans: Marketing is an ever changing landscape, at one point outdoor campaigns were king, but that sort of advertising doesn't work for all authors and genres. Women's fiction is no different to other genres. We need to pinpoint the hook of the book and make that work in all the marketing we do.

7. Q: When you create an e-book, do you use the same cover as the paper version or a new one? Why?

Ans: Sometimes we have to enhance the E book cover so it stands out better online. You tend to only have a small image to look at, and E sales are a huge part of our business. It's extremely important that when we design a jacket the imagery works for all formats. We sometimes change it completely, but more often we just change colours and sizing.

8. Q: How do you define your company's direction? What is the special feature of



your company?

Ans: Pan Macmillan is a publisher of first class literary and commercial fiction with some of the biggest selling authors in the UK on our list. Our biggest feature is that we are small enough to make a difference and big enough to compete with companies three times our size.

9. Q: How much influence of the book author affects the graphic design of the cover? As a communicator between the designer and the author, how do you communicate with them?

Ans: Authors are always shown a jacket that the rest of the company has agreed on. If they feel it's not right then the editor will feedback to the team and a discussion will occur. We always try to meet in the middle, but most of the time authors feel that jacket design is not their forte and rely upon the publisher to do what's right. The editor is the main port of call for an author and we act as the middle person between the author and other departments. However, if an author really wants to talk direct to a designer about the direction of their novel, that would always happen, but it would be the editor who arranges it.

10. Q: Who is the final one to decide the cover? How many drafts do you usually use averagely?

Ans: We can go backwards and forwards many times before we all agree on the right approach. Who gets the final say is actually in the contract. Usually it's the publisher who has the final say so as we know the market, but we do involve the

author at all stages of the process. Everyone needs to be happy at the end.

11. Q: What is difficulty to have an electronic version?

Ans: There are no difficulties with the E version. We think about both formats at the beginning of the process. We see images on screen now in our cover art meetings, so we are basically seeing what a cover will look like as E book before it's an actual physical edition.

12. Is digital publishing replacing the paper market? How do you think about it?

Ans: Not at all. Digital sales hit their height a few years ago, and then steadily declined and have now plateaued. However, print sales started to rise again. My theory on this is that most got bored with the technology. Reading on a screen is not a particularly nice experience in my opinion, whereas the smell of a book and a bookshop is intoxicating.

13. How has digital publishing influenced female fictions? Does it also influence some writers' writing style? For example, some publishers choose some famous bloggers and collect their articles to create a book. Is this a safer way to publish a new author's book?

Ans: I wouldn't say that digital publishing has influenced female fiction. It's simply another format to sell, which some elements of society prefer to physical books. Some areas of the genre sell better in E than they do in physical format. Suspense for instance is big on E as well as in print. Putting articles together by a well

know blogger still has a huge element of risk as you are banking on a fan base to go and buy the book. The book has to bring something different to the consumer otherwise they will just read what they can on social media. You need to offer exclusive material, and just because the author may be well known as a celebrity or indeed a blogger doesn't always guarantee success. It's a different form of publishing, but you need to have the right person to publicise and front it.

14. When you negotiate with the books from other countries, what kinds of problems have you ever faced? How did you begin considering to publish some books?

Ans: We usually get alerted to foreign language titles via literary scouts and we usually get sample chapters in English to read first. If we don't, that makes it tough as we really can't make decisions on something we don't understand. Very often there will be members of the team who can read certain languages and they can give us a report. The biggest problem I feel is getting the right translator who can get the feel of the book right and convert that into English for our market. The book needs to come alive in English as it does in its original language and not fall flat. It's not just a case of a word for word translation, it's about hearing and amplifying the voice of the author in another language. That's tough.

15. When you publish the foreign books, do you publish the original language version or publish the original language and the translated version at the same time?

What are the advantages to publish at the same time or at different times?

Ans: If we publish a foreign language novel, we only publish the English

language version. Other languages will be sold to different publishers around the world, usually by the author's literary agent. Sometimes we publish simultaneously but certain languages do take longer to translate so it's not essential. The English language version will get sold in many countries as well as the home language version, but by different publishers. We also sell our English language versions to other publishers who then translate our books into their languages.

16. As the publisher plans to publish e-book version and paper version, do you publish them at the same time? What are the advantages and disadvantages at the same time and at different times?

Ans: We have to publish the E version the same time as the first format of the physical edition, this is contractual between the publisher and the E retailers.

However we can release an E version before the physical, just not the other way around. The plus side of having an early digital version is that you can build reviews via the online retailer which may help with the sell in of the physical edition. If you have a debut author, getting an E price promotion is a good way of bringing an audience to that new author.

17. Do many readers of female fictions change to use digital methods to read romance? Or do they prefer to use traditional versions? Why makes this situation?

Ans: I'd say this depends on the area of women's fiction they are reading and the age group. Sagas for instance don't sell well in E, but they sell well through supermarkets in the paperback format and the age of the reader is fifty plus. However,

some romantic comedies or serial type books can sell much better in the E format but the age range is much lower from the twenties upwards.

## Appendix 5: Transcription of Hachette in UK

Hi, I work on commercial fiction.

Q: Oh yes, so this includes every commercial fiction?

A: Very much women's, quite a lot of romance. Not literary so kind of not sort winning the booker but very much straight down the line some crime but sometimes a little bit of paranormal, some vampires, all kinds of romance, sagas, mysteries as well.

Q: For example what kind of famous ones? Which famous ones?

A: On our list is Norma Roberts, who's quite famous. There are loads of people called, there's JR Ward, Christian Fean, Jeremy Kenyan, all kinds of big vampire sort of ones. Charlene Harris, she wrote the True Blood series, we published her, big publisher and she's got a new series coming out. I do a lot of historical books and a lot of historical fiction of all kinds. It depends if you read any kind of Georgette Hayer, sort of historical romance. If you like Julia Quin or Stephanie Lawrence or Lisa Kleypas, there's a lot of them. They all write different historical stuff.

Q: When you design a book cover or logo for books like English books or translated books, when your main target readers are female so what are some different strategies

to market this genre? For commercial female fiction, is there any special taste for this genre for woman?

A: Yeah, I think there probably is actually. We often say some covers look too masculine or too feminine. I do think it does still make a difference. There are certain colours that look more feminine that generally tend to be a bit lighter, friendlier, curvier text. I think the most important thing is probably an image. I would say for some of the larger officially women's commercial fiction, you're trying to actually be non-specific in gender, you're just trying to make a stand out image. If you're very specifically aiming at readers of historical romance, there are various things you can do. So there a certain type of type that be very appealing and very romancy, twirly and fun that says this book is going to be escapist and there will be some romance in it and it tells the reader what to expect and also you probably want to feature a woman on the front, not always but 90 percent of the time I would say, we would maybe have a woman in a dress looking out of the window or looking interesting. If it's a saga, they do very much tend to be aimed at woman. So you would probably again have a woman on the front because this is the woman's story and maybe that's the key of woman's commercial fiction that you are looking at through the eyes of the heroine.

Q: Would there be particular colours that you'd use to indicate age of the readership or would that not be so relevant?

A: Yeah, maybe. It's funny thinking. I wouldn't necessarily think these are the colours

aim that at a certain readership but YA and certain kinds of younger romance, that kind of stinging colours, that kind of lime green or bright orange, there's something about those that seems a bit younger but now the marketing, right now, that means contemporary YA were all aimed at younger readers. If you're looking at fantasy, I don't think there's such a big difference but more kind of crossover, you might go for something where you probably wouldn't have a person on the front because you're actually not saying this is the age of the person. You might have some really evocative image like Victoria Abigard that did some very well selling books on the red thorn and they've all got a crown that looks like it could be worn by a woman but with some white background and bit of blood on it. You've kind of got this feeling that it's a woman's story but with effort and it's got that spread of age ranges. Older women's fiction like this, sort of Gill Mansel but older than that, where's there's an awful lot about gardens and there might be a garden and it's got that gentle, very, very lovely read. That's a little bit quieter perhaps in the way that it comes across. I feel that of those get tarred with this beige background, like everything's sort of beige with pastel accents, the Maeve Binchy effect.

Very interesting.

This is strange thinking.

Q: How do you choose some female fiction to publish and if that's a new writer, who will decide to publish or not?



A: Well we would, actually but how would I decide it? It really depends on the genre. In some of the romance we do, how good the author is speaking to their readers actually matters more than lots of other things. A lot of romances are well written, a lot of them are really fun. But you also want an author who really enjoys kind of being the face and the voice of that series of books and the character, so you would look to see do they have a massive social media platform? Are they going to be talking to everybody, all the time about how excited they are about their next book? How many books do they put out? Do they put out say four or five books a year? Is that actually good in the current genres? So you look at things like that and often they can actually be more important than the content of the book. Maybe it's different for crime series, it might be more similar for crime series as well. You're looking at a romantic comedy and you're only looking at getting one a year from the author, it's a combo of; can you see how you explain to sales why this book is more exciting than all of the other books that are in that incredibly crowded genre. Does it have a unique pitch? Is there something about it where you can say, I don't know, she gets on the plane, she meets a guy, she has a night with this guy on the plane and then gets to work and discovers it's her new boss. It's sort of a very new premise but it's something where you can hand the book off, that kind of says this is what this book does so you'd look for a nice clear pitch and you look for writing that makes you laugh. There's a bit of instinct in that, there's a bit where you just love it and you want to tell other people about it.

I think when people get into publishing and I certainly thought if you read a book and if you love it, you can buy it but it doesn't really work like that because you're not just looking to see do you love it but will it fit in your list, your selection of books, do you have room for it, do you have anything else similar that year? Do sales in another larger company have anything similar for that year? You might have a wonderful crime thriller. I don't know, based on losing your first love, they come back but actually they're a serial killer and it's very creepy and very engrossing. But if you've got a similar coming out in January, you can't ask sales to do the same pitch within the same period. There are loads of other little things.

Q: Who actually makes the decision finally about which cover you're going to go with? So you say you've got an instinct but are there arguments?

A: Yes sometimes. It depends on the level of the book. So if you've got a book where it's by an existing author, there are lots and lots of books in the same series, you know it's going to perform to a level, and you know what it does, probably people aren't going to fight very hard on we think it should be tweaked like this, they're not going to bother because it's not worth the argument in some cases but for a debut of a book where there are huge expectations, it's a whole load of different conflicting opinions. I would say though, everything, actually it's in that letter, absolutely everything can change. You can all like a cover then you take it to Tesco and they say they don't like it. That's going to change a lot so one of your key retailers, whoever that is, say you're aiming at Waterstones and they don't like it either, it's going to matter so that

can make you re-think everything.

Q: But is it your decision as the person or are you having to convince your colleagues?

A: Yeah, we'd have to commit. If you really wanted to I guess and you can say this is the cover we are having but that would do the book any good service. That certainly would do you any good service because it's not going to be you selling that book and it's not going to be your forcing people to put books on the shelves. So if you ignore the advice of your sales and marketing colleagues then you've actually potentially hurt the book.

And it's never as personal as but my favourite colour is green, I love this green colour and the sales director saying I only like pink. I'm talking about that never happens. I'm talking about this is how I think we should position the book in the market and if the sales director is saying that doesn't look right with the other books that are currently in the market or I know that this retailer will think it's the wrong approach or it's too upmarket for the supermarket, is a bit too down market for Waterstones, they know their stuff so you have to listen to this. It's not as personal as everyone arguing about whether or not they like the cover, it's "is this the right cover for this book"? Does this cover represent this book? You absolutely want to listen to your colleagues in marketing, sales and publicity. Because they're speaking from a position of expertise, it's not a personal opinion. Sometimes you get the odd personal opinion.

The meeting you're talking about is editorial and marketing is it or are there other people there too?

Sales.

Pretty much all of the stakeholders that are going to have to take the book.

Publicity aren't in it?

They are sometimes. Maybe they are actually. They don't tend to talk as much. I feel like it sales that are more likely to express stronger opinions because they're the ones on the front line.

And then even within sales, they are home sales and export sales so with the kind of non-fiction I do, very often the export audience for the book will be quite different to the market at home and if it's a book we think will sell better in export than at home, then that's going to change who we are listening to.

Q: How about the author? The author has an opinion for the cover?

A: They very much do.

Q: Maybe the retailer wants something but the author totally different, maybe usually happens?

A: That definitely happens, that's always a very hard conversation. They have consultation not approval, that's usually what's in the contract. So meaningful consultation but we don't give them approval except in very rare big brand author instances because we know the market. The author, in the nicest way possible, is coming from a personal place. It's my book, I have a very strong picture of how it was and it's important that they are happy, of course but they're not saying I'm a sales director and I'm an expert and this is what I think so it's about managing those expectations but we absolutely listen to them.

Sometimes they are right.

Sometimes we've come up with something better as a result of something. Sometimes it's gone through the meeting and we've gone: "yeah, great" and then the author says absolutely not and then you go back to the meeting and re-brief it, come up with something new and yeah often you think, yeah that is better than what we had before, often not but...

Yeah it's true

Q: So you need to negotiate all the time?

A: If you show them the first cover and they say they absolutely hate this, it will go back and try and something new but you know, three tries in, you have to kind of say, you know, look, we need to ...

Q: Who are the main target readers for contemporary romance?

A: Woman. Not so much men. 92 percent woman. The ages vary a lot more than people think. People tend to assume everybody's older who reads romance but they really don't. It's everything from 16 all the way up to 100. Depending on the kind of romance, the kind of contemporary romance, it can vary. If it's really super sexy then might be probably more aiming more on-line than readers who buy on-line more. They used to be slightly younger but actually I'm not sure that's as true as it was because there's a whole load of 60 plus, 60 to 80, 60 to 70 plus perhaps who are buying a lot on Kindles and they tend to read more on Kindles than younger generation who tend to read more on their phones so...

I read something interesting about the Kindle being the first piece of technology were the early adopters were woman of 50 plus. Every other piece of technology, iPhones, iPads, is young men who it's becomes the latest must have gadget for but because the Kindle is designed for people who are very heavy readers that's woman and that tends to be woman 50 plus...

Ah because they have unlimited

And other silly things like you can change the font size very easily so actually yeah the Kindle is something that is the first piece of new technology that I read in an article ages ago where the highest percentage of early adopters were older women.

Q: Are you having to think about that in your current meeting that will this work when buying on-line?

A: Yeah and on a 'phone not just a desktop. We've got used to thinking about a desktop but actually there's all these statistics from Amazon about the vast majority of Amazon browsing happens on a 'phone rather than on a desktop computer so the cover really has to work, it's a literal postage stamp thumb nail.

I'll compare of the covers, if I've got say a few options, I'll look at them all in thumbnail size before making the final call because especially for a lot of romance titles, e-book is the primary market.

Q: That was another one of your questions, when you create an e-book, do you use the same cover as your paper versions?

A: Mostly not always. I always try to because, how do you sell it Amazon? You don't really want lots of images as one page on Amazon. If you switch to paperback and it looks different to the e-book, for your average, straight down the line romance title, it

would be silly to try and do different covers because e-book is often the primary market so what would be the point of doing an extra paperback cover. We did when we kind of re-packed and re-titled and aimed it Waterstones. Because we thought it was a book that would work in Waterstones, but often in those packages we got mistakes. Sometimes I might change it up but only if there's a specific opportunity for the retailer. Otherwise we sometimes do if the author is Australian or American and we are using a different cover for the first format which is the format we do in Australia and Australia really like the book, often we will do more of an Australia focused cover and e-book first and then six months later if we also think there's a really big chance for UK retailers, we might change the cover of the B format for the smaller, mass market format that's our biggest way here of getting sales then perhaps do an e-book. So that is rare. I think usually it's more trouble than it's actually worth. It's obviously just fiction.

Q: When it comes to briefing the designers, is it you that does that and how much information do you provide? Are you wanting to get their creative juices flowing and not be too prescriptive or are you trying to be focused on?

A: Again it varies. There are some books where if it is a niche offered by us, we the editors are the experts in that market and the designers, some of them are not keen on doing it but mostly they are not, that's not their job to be so for those ones. Yes we have to be quite prescriptive because you need something that is not a beautifully created representation of what is in the book but will say to readers this is what you



are going to get if you click on this book. You want to reassure rather than excite I suppose but then for other books, actually one in particular that when through today, we had an author who we thought was really strong, but we needed something that crossed a great deal of emotion in a way that the cover beforehand wasn't really doing, wanted a kind of heart breaking feel to the story, and we got loads of brilliant designers actually and I essentially put on the brief something along the lines of that which is less specific than I normally am but I said look, here are the themes and we want to go photographic. I would normally say we want to go photographic or illustrative because they will define the steps to go but we needed a connection between these two people and want to feel that there is something very powerful between these two people and lost and then because they are so creative they came up with a lovely image on that.

Q: Do you expect them to read the book?

A: I would be very excited by everyone reading the book, that sounded incredible but I think we have a lot of books at Little Brown, in pre-actress alone we publish 200 books a year and we just represent one small section. There're another 10 big books on top of that. The woman who sits next to me, she has 100 books, two times fiction in print and we are part of a larger division called PCR which is in turn in Little Brown there is one design team and we put out what 1000 books a year or around that so the idea of having or reading everything. If there is some reason I had a really lovely book about a year and a half ago where I didn't get the time to read it, you kind

of have to stand over them and be like but sometimes it's worth it because you do. If the tone is what makes it special, that's really hard to put across without having read it. I think that's really rare.

Q: So your own writing skills are really, really important on how to describe something to design?

A: But also the browser, the reader, the effective reader won't have read the book either. I sometimes think it's the editor's job to have read the book and to have steer it in a direction but also you don't want either senior some in marketing or a designer to be too stifled. There's a risk that I catch as an editor all the time that you write the copy of everything that happens in the book and you make it progressively more interesting. I think there's a risk of that with the cover. Actually, you want an appealing and intriguing cover, and you don't have to have read the book. We give them enough information that they've got a sense of where it will sit in the market and they've got the bare bones of the kind of book it is and actually you want them to have as much freedom an instantly appealing book not one that basically represents what happens in chapter 4.

Especially if there's a twist to the book or a really interesting bit in it that because you've read the book and you look at the cover, featuring that thing, you think that's so clever and you show that on the cover but to a reader. We had a book a few years ago called *The Butterfly in The Dark* that we ended up changing the title of because it

was very evocative, it was a beautiful title but the cover didn't say to the reader at all that this was a crime thriller. It had a very pretty, very evocative image that meant nothing. I think we actually fell in love with it. I think it's really easy to get it wrong the closer you are to the book.

Q: There's one issue perhaps we can send it to you afterwards, there's the breakdown of physical versus virtual reading because you mentioned 92 percent in woman of buying. Do you have any sense of how many are reading digital versions and how many are reading print?

A: It depends on the genre. On contemporary romance we're around 75 percent on digital maybe 80, it's that high. There were some stats from a few years ago from RWA for romantic writers, a big one in the US, the biggest romance thing in the world basically and they do and also Books Can, they did a big romance report a couple of years ago.

But on a more granular level, we know all the e-book sales for all of our titles and print sales on a book by book basis, we just login and have a look and get a sense of the proportions.

A lot of the non-fiction I do would be 90 percent paper and 10 percent e-book. It really does depend on the kind of book it is.

Ah yes because sometimes, e-book is easier and some book you still need the physical book. It depends on the reader as well and for some print is really important. I'm still not quite sure why but there is a thing where, maybe because it's a badge of honour like a status thing, like identity where a physical book is more importance. And also, some people just don't have Kindles and reading on your phone isn't very nice.

Appendix 6: Transcription of Orion interview in the UK

Q: How does the design team work with editor team?

A: The editor briefs the design team about the cover, then the design team takes it over and works with the designer. So the editor and the designer are not talking directly to each other (unless they are in house in which case there is quite a lot of liaising).

Q: So you'd be briefing the designer?

A: If we were using an out-of-house designer.

Q: Do you usually use in-house designer or freelance designers?

A: It depends, it varies between. We try and keep as much as we can in-house and obviously everything else goes out to outside freelance designers.

And we'd do all the art direction and liaising and then talk to editorial if we need to, to get more information if we need to that we would pass on to the designer outside.

Q: So at what stage do they come back to you? Do they come back with several versions or just one?

A: Usually it's several. Sometimes loads! Occasionally just one but generally just a couple of options and sometimes really varied actually, we'll get loads of different

designs. It depends on the brief. Because if the editor said very specifically, I want a blue cover with white type and a girl walking into a church, then that's what you'll get. If you brief quite openly and say it's a book about love and marriage and it should feel warm and inviting and be illustrated, then you'll see various different interpretations of that broader brief. but then the design team are our conduit then between the designers whether they are in-house or the freelance designers so it's not that I'm... Rebab is the one taking on the brief and working with the designer first hand whoever that may be and sometimes that's you isn't it?

Yeah.

But it wouldn't be that I would be directly instructing the designer as we're going along.

The editors would just give us as much information as they can on the brief that we'd need without reading the whole book necessarily although we will do that and any other relevant information that we would need, you know, titles that are similar or the market we are aiming at, that sort of thing, all that's on the brief. We will pass all that information on to the designer.

Q: When it comes to these various versions that you've got; how do they get shown to editorial? Do you have a meeting? What happens?

A: The first stage is that we would share it with the editor, whether it's Harriet or one of her team. I would probably just email you with all the options. I'd probably send all of them actually even the ones I don't think are necessarily working because I want Harriet to see everything that's been done but then I might say I really like this one, what do you think? And she'd come back to me with her feedback and then we'd sort of hone it down to what we think is working maybe do a little bit more work on it before we present it at the art meeting.

The art meeting happens weekly and Rebabs team lead that meeting so Rebab and Lucy (who is our creative director) chair that meeting, present the visuals that are due to be shown, explain/recap the brief, this is what we were going for, this is the visual that we're working with, the finishes that we might want on there. If we want any specials like oil or this is what you need, or we might want to print it on special paper, anything like that. So we would discuss it at that stage. And then we get feedback from the sales director and the marketing director.

At that meeting?

Yes, so they're all there.

Q: Do they see the things before the meeting? Or they just see them at the meeting?

Do they have to do their feedback their and then?

Hmm.

So it's how it strikes them instantly?

Instantly yeah.

Which is part of the process presumably?

Yeah because that's how it works in the shop. We usually get quite constructive feedback immediately.

You can almost always tell how a cover's been received can't you? Because if it's immediate love then you usually get a "whoooo!" from [;]'Paround the room and if it's silence they are chewing it over. We're quite good at interpreting what people are thinking.

So by the end of the meeting, the decisions are made?

Yes. The decisions are made and I suppose the options are you either yes, it's approved with only a few tiny little changes here and there or there is something there to work with, but it needs more development or people have agreed the approach isn't working and they want to abandon that and pursue something else.

You wanted to talk about woman's commercial fiction, don't you?

Q: Do you have some special design for woman's fiction? Like a cover or something.



We don't have special designers, expert designers.

It depends which books right? Different books have different situation. All of the people in the design team work along a variety. But there are some freelance designers do some specific genres. As in the team that tends to pick up some areas more than others and yet they kind work more broadly.

Even within female fiction, you can obviously, there are so many different styles, some very commercial, some more literary, some more conceptual covers. There's lots of different ways that we might approach a cover and so depending on that the relevant designer will work on it.

Not always actually, I think we try and vary it so everyone gets a chance to work on a bit of everything.

But certainly in-house, it's not that there's one designer and if there's a woman's fiction book, it will always go to that designer. I mean that would be quite boring for a designer.

With a designer, everything can start to look very similar, so it's always good to get a fresh eye. We've got some designers who don't normally do female fiction but it's quite nice to give them projects sometimes to get a fresh idea and a new approach.

What sort of products do they look at apart from books because I noticed somebody of there had a packet of crunchies on their desk or it might just be that that's their breakfast or they're looking at products.

So designers have their eyes open all the time and apart from going into book shops and looking at books, we look at packaging.

Q: Even a designer's desk looks so different from an editor's desk, doesn't it?

Because I've noticed that all of you will have little postcards up or little things that you've torn out of magazines. Books that you like but you aren't necessarily reading.

A: Just for inspiration. Exactly. I would keep covers, little things and that just on our desks. We will always have little folders, bits tucked away, things that we've seen that are nice colour combination or a pattern or something, things like that, just for inspiration but always got eyes open, you can't help it really and other designers will do the same, there's wallpapers or exhibitions, sure it was the same for you as well.

Q: Is that different with internal designers as opposed to external designers? Do you find that external designers who might be working, are they mostly book designers, cover people or working on other things?

A: Pretty much everyone specialises in book covers, they might do other things as well but generally they will be very proficient at doing covers because it's quite a

specialised area.

Sometimes the illustrators take on projects for different things. Kate Forrester, who is an illustrator who does a lot of woman's fiction, she did the Jenny Colgan's covers, she did Cathy Bramley's covers.

You sort of recognise her style very easily. She's been commissioned to do...

Actually, I was thinking of it more from the designer's point of view but the illustrators absolutely will work, the artists will work, will do all sorts of things.

Can you... I think you need to be completely clear about the difference between the designer and the illustrator.

Yeah. The lines are crossed as well. When I first started in publishing, there was a very clear area between the illustrators who did illustrations, photographers did photography, we did the design, put it all together and those lines have been completely blurred now.

A lot of designers will do the whole thing, illustrate, maybe take photographs or take their own photographs, manipulate them in photoshop.

So now the designers need to be able to do many, many things together?

Absolutely, yeah, absolutely so sometimes we will create our own illustrations. Sorry, I've forgotten what your original questions was.

I was just picking up all these roles together, and what about, typography? Is that added by the designer, the illustrator or you?

Always the designers but it can be us.

The typography would always be for you.

It's very rare that the illustrator or photographer would do the typography.

If you think of it I suppose not as a hierarchy in terms of seniority but illustrators or a photographer would only be focussing on an element of the cover. So, obviously, the photographer would focus on, just be thinking about the image but they wouldn't be thinking about the type or where the shout line would sit.

The only thing that they might think of would be the area. We are quite good when we brief them that they must think about leaving space for titles, author otherwise you're going to have a jumble of imagery and nowhere to put your lettering. That's something that they'll bear in mind but they won't ever try and design.

They won't be doing the type and the illustrator would be doing a similar thing. They'd know what space they'd have to leave or what they had to work around as a sort of template shape, the title length, if they'd be a shout line and to leave room for a quote and so on but they would just be thinking about the illustrative elements of it and then the designer is seeing the biggest picture, view of that cover. They're thinking about the colours and the finishes and the type and what the messaging that needs to go on the book will be, do we need to account for a sticker? You know, that the retailers going to put on the book. They'll be thinking of all of the different elements.

The spine and the back as well so not just the front obviously, the whole package.

And the designer is the person in house?

Yeah.

So do you use freelancer here? More in-house designer or more freelancer.

Errr... a bit of both.

What's the different consideration?

I think probably at this point, it's slightly more in-house than it used to be just because of the sheer number of books that we do but yeah, it's almost fifty, fifty.

Which do you prefer?

We obviously would like to do it in-house.

Ah yeah, because it's easy to communicate.

Yeah but also because it's nice for us to do as much as we can in-house. Obviously, physically, you can only do so much. You don't want things to suffer, to make sure we spread the work out so it's manageable, you know, you would give it to a freelancer.

Sometimes there are freelance designers who are brilliant at certain things. They would be perfect for this job so as long as the budget allows, you would...

And because we are briefing cover designs a year before publication date, that's the cycle so the beginning of each month, the editors brief their covers so at the beginning of June 2018, we'll brief the June 2019 covers. So the art team have got to balance all of their workload with covers that are still in progress and then the covers that are being briefed and some months might be slightly quieter, other months like June, which is a big summer month, will have lots of books in it so it's not feasible that the in-house art team is going to be able to work on all of those cover briefs so that's where matching them up with freelancers based on the different projects and who would be a good match is a necessary part of the process.

You've been looking into a lot because you are studying cover design in Taiwan

compared to here and quite a lot of books in Taiwanese are exported from the UK.

Can you talk a little bit about whether you're bearing in mind international attitudes to cover design when you're commissioning titles that you think will sell overseas?

I think the only market is in Australia that we are... so we will, Australia have quite a different market, their covers are quite different that we might do so sometimes if Australia are taking a really large number of titles and number of books then we will try and tailor it for the Australian market but if we can bridge the gap and do something they'll take and we can use as well then, but that's the only other country that we would...

Australia are the biggest export market of commercial fiction so as Rebab says, if we're going to place a really sizeable order of the book and it justifies them having their own cover that's very specific to their own market then the team will work on one for them.

And what would a sizeable order be? Would that be confidential information?

It's not confidential. It would have to be upwards of five or six thousand.

Oh gosh, that's less than I thought. And when it comes to selling rights for your titles, I know with Eleanor Oliphant, actually a lot of the overseas publishers bought the right to use the UK title because it had been such a success, is that something you sort

of aim for?

Yeah that makes a good bit of money for us so our rights department will do that, yeah. Often foreign publishers will want our work.

Because that happens quite a lot in Taiwan doesn't it?

Yeah.

They will use either the US cover or the UK cover.

Ah, yes. They just use that directly.

And then you just adapt it to your...

Ah yes, sometimes, yeah.

Sometimes we choose a different one, design a new one. It depends, yeah.

So fifty shades of grey had the same.

Yeah, fifty shades, the same.

So it had the UK cover.

But, who's the other one you've been looking at?

Kinsella?

Yeah, Sophie Kinsella. Yeah, the same.

Is that something you'd have borne in mind? I know it wasn't you. Is that something you'd have borne in mind when you were doing the cover in the first place?

No. The primary market is the UK. The secondary market is Australia and, in some books, it's almost the other way around, isn't it? Like, Nicky Pellegrino for example.



Australia pretty much dictate what we do.

Yeah because her sales there are huge and here in the UK, they are very small so we design the cover to suit what they want and we fit in around them as opposed to them trying to fit in around us. Australia are very specific aren't they about what they like and don't like?

Yeah, very specific.

Can you give us a hint of what that sort of thing...?

Yeah so VR fiction for instance, they are probably doing what we were doing ten, fifteen years ago.

So they kind of like photographs of big faces, very soft colours, pastel sort of colours, lots of blue skies. Sometimes they will have two images, top and bottom which we used to do but we very rarely do that now.

Actually, that's so mature.

So you might have eyes at the top and a landscape at the bottom. So the typography that they tend to go for tends to be a little bit different from what we tend to use now.

We look at it and think it tends to be a little old fashioned.

So that's I mean, it's what we were doing ten, fifteen years ago.

So that kinds of fits with attitudes in Australia doesn't it? I've only been once but it stuck that they were behind the curve on sexism and misogyny. I was quite surprised at attitudes we were hearing. It felt quite old fashioned.

And because Australia is closer to the American market is to our market geographically, it also tends to reflect their cover style more than ours, doesn't it? And, I'd imagine that's a similar situation for Taiwan, they probably end up using...

Yeah in Asia it's a more similar style.

US covers maybe?

Yeah, quite different.

Yeah, the US covers are very different to ours.

So that's one thing we do occasionally do is take a US cover, don't we?

Hmmm.

Occasionally we use it exactly as they've done it. Quite often we'll adapt it so we'd have our own typography on it but use their image.

So the typography would be different to the US and here?

It often is isn't it? That is often the thing we change.

They have a very specific way of doing their covers, they use certain fonts. They often have a novel, fiction titles...

On the front?

Yeah so they often have the title and then say "a novel". We might sometimes just strip their typography off altogether and just do our own typography but maybe use the imagery if it works for our market, sometimes we do that.

Well that's what we often do for example, this isn't woman's fiction, because there isn't, lots of crimes and thrillers travel from the US to the UK but there isn't a huge amount of woman's fiction that travels over. Sophie Kinsella is an example of one that does but we have some really big brands here who have large audiences in the UK but have no profile whatsoever in the US but brand authors tend to have one central cover approach then it gets adapted ever so slightly for every market doesn't it? So Michael Connelly for example, we developed the cover and then maybe not with the latest one, but with more recent ones, we all use essentially the same image but everyone's put a different type on, maybe slightly different colours but the image itself has been

fairly global from the US to the UK to Australia. That was the case for “Two Kinds Of Truth” wasn’t it?

Yeah, that was the American image, yeah.

Q: The digital version and the physical version, do you design different ones? The e-books and the physical books. Is that different?

A: Sometimes. Every cover that we do, has an e-book. Sometimes we will just do e-book covers only. That’s if we’re not doing a printed edition. That’s becoming more and more the cause, that we’d do e-books only.

And for those the priority is to keep the costs really low to make sure that they work at a very small size because obviously you’re only seeing them very small, yeah and keep it quite simple.

It’s very rare that we’d have an e-book and print edition and we’d give them different covers. I can’t think of an example where we’ve done that recently. Very occasionally we might just simplify it or change the colours slightly so it’s more legible when it’s reduced. But it would only be a minor thing. We’d very rarely do two separate covers.

Q: Have you ever met an author when they have a very strong opinion on the cover design so they are unhappy or very happy?

A: Every time.

Because the author is quite important.

Sometimes it's the media. It's a bit like the cover meetings, it's an immediate "yes, love it", sometimes it's a "yes I like it but can we change a few small things" and it will be incredibly precise, won't it? Like the person's eye colour or hair colour or shoes they're wearing. Because authors have detail in their minds.

Well I was going to say, they have different amounts of input that they're allowed to have more influence than others. If one of your big brand authors won't sign off on a cover then you kind of aren't going to be able to persuade them, but if a new unknown author really doesn't like it then you think, well, you kind of haven't really, aren't the right yet to refuse a cover.

Generally, it's fine but then you get those tricky ones. We've had some authors who've sent in what they think, how they think the cover should look and their cousins designed it and they've sent it in to us. That happens occasionally. We handle them diplomatically.

I think with newer authors, the difference is that the parity, the experience is not there so we all have a lot of experience with publishing and matching good covers to the right books. Publishing them well and taking them to market. If you're a new author, you have very, very little experience.

It's more of a personal thing with them.

It's going to be more of a subjective reaction rather than an objective reaction.

Whereas, I think, authors that are twenty, twenty-five or thirty books into their career have certainly absorbed over that time a lot of understanding about the market and their audience and their readership so they're coming at it from a slightly more objective standpoint than a just "I don't like it". I think that's why it's really important when you show authors covers like you say to present it to them positively but also to give them all the context for why you've taken the approach you have.

Our sales department have seen this, our marketing team have seen and agreed that this is what's going to work so hopefully from there on they understand that.

Q: Is there a new category of author speaking up the middle that's self-published and have some market understanding based on... are you observing that as a sort of category of author?

A: Some publishing's very, very different. So the sales publishing thing, I think that those authors learn how to make a digital cover work very effectively and you will prioritise different things for a digital cover that you would for a print cover simply because of the size is the first thing and Rebab touched on their ability so it's really important with a thumbnail on Amazon that you see the title at a glance and that it's

appealing and attractive whereas a full size print cover can take a much more intricate design or a complex illustration maybe, or a longer title even so I think the sales published authors learn how to work well within the world that they operate in, but they wouldn't necessarily understand why a cover would be attractive to the Tesco buyer or not, because that's not what their testing and getting experience with whereas they would probably be able to tell you really confidently whether that's a jacket that will get a lot of attention and really stand out on an Amazon page so it's sort of a different area of specialism I suppose.

Commercial female fiction I would use as the umbrella term for everything and I think romance as a sub-category of commercial woman's fiction.

Because what you'd expect from a romance novel very specifically is a love story between two characters. A prominence, a narrative prominence on their romantic relationship and you would expect certain traits, conflict, tragedy, you know.

A traditional one...

Yeah and at the end, a happy ending, it's probably what you're expecting. Think about fifty shades of grey, yes that was incredibly sexy but that was essentially the components of the book whereas commercial woman's fiction, sort of further away from woman's romance might feature romantic stories in it but that would just one strand of its canvas. I think the core commercial woman's fiction will primarily

focus on family relationships so it will typically be relationships with a partner, a sibling, parents, friends, children. Those are the sort of common traits.

So would that be the sort of Joanna Trollope type books?

Yes exactly. And the ingredient I think is true of every commercial woman's fiction novel is that it will feature a female protagonist going on a journey essentially, so I always think of that. In my mind, a commercial woman's fiction novel, looks like this, so you meet your protagonist and find out what's happening in their life, and then something happens that throws them into jeopardy, and they experience their low point and along the way, there are various events that bring change to their life and change to the story and then towards the end you have a "will it all come all right moment", a question mark moment, then you'll typically get your happy resolution. That is my woman's fiction map, very crudely drawn for you. But that is almost always, if you think of every commercial woman's fiction novel that you've read that is what's happening.

Like Kinsella. Kinsella, almost every one of her books follows this.

Something that happens in more contemporary woman's fiction and less so in the Joanna Trollops and Maeve Binchys is that mid-way through the novel something new happens, they'll be a big twist, they'll be a big reveal or some new drama and it will be quite a significant moment. I always think about a Richard Curtis films.



Or “Gone Girl”

“Gone Girl” exactly.

When you suddenly realise that there’s more than one narrator.

For that exact reason that has happened in commercial woman’s fiction is that, psychological suspense and the very female focused thrillers had this big booming moment, and all of them have got a mid-point twist and these things tend to filter though into the other genres, and that’s one of them so there’s quite a lot of woman’s fiction novels. You can almost open them halfway and find the game changing sort of event. That’s how I think of commercial woman’s fiction, all of those things, sort of have to be true for it to count and most broadly speaking, I would define commercial woman’s fiction as fiction about woman, by woman for woman.

Q: How do you meet your readerships or know more about them?

A: I think one important thing is to read voraciously in that area that you publish, so that you understand quality. You also understand the trend and what your competitors are doing. We spend a lot of time reading reader reviews. I found that incredibly insightful, Amazon, Net Gallery, Good Reads.

Oh, so not necessarily things that you've commissioned, just things that are out there?

Oh yeah, yeah. So authors that I'm interested in or someone that I would like to consider publishing, will go and read their reader reviews and see what people are saying about them. And then every now and again, in a very specific circumstance, we might do some consumer insight around a specific author so we did a big project on Cathy Kelly last Autumn. We had three focus groups of about eight woman in each group, one of them might have had ten but they are largely around the same size, and the three groups were people that were loyal readers of Cathy Kelly so had read at least two books in the last two years, people who had read a Cathy Kelly book before but hadn't read her recently so maybe had read a book five years ago and then readers who never read a Cathy Kelly book before but did read lots of commercial woman's fiction, and we spent two hours with each of those groups, asking questions and doing various exercises. That's always really fascinating exercise.

So was that setup for you by a market research company?

Yeah, yeah.

So you they had secured the sample for you to talk to?

Exactly, and we brief them specifically every step along the way about what it was that we were trying to get out of it, yeah. They were really good. I'm really struggling

now to remember their name but they were absolutely fantastic marketing company, they did it really well.

Q: What impact did that have on the way that you packaged Cathy Kelly? Position of Cathy Kelly?

The way we all prefer to use consumer insight really is to back up our instincts what already needs to be done. I think instincts kind of have to be your starting place and then consumer insight was adding a layer of refinement to those instincts. So we were all fairly sure that Cathy's readership was older than everyone was thinking that they were and that the covers should speak to a slightly older audience. And then after the focus groups, we'd shown them lots of covers, shown them lots of Cathy's covers, shown them lots of competitors covers and asked lots of questions and got lots of feedback. We found out from them what was important about reading those books, and what the key messages were. So it very much fed into what went on the final cover and what style the cover took, and what tone it had, and what those messages were that we were pushing so it was very much about family and love and warmth and that they were modern so those were things that we felt, those were the tick boxes that our cover had to satisfy.

And was that telling you anything that you didn't know already?

Not really but it very much brought it all together in a very re-assured way, and it is

important and refreshing every now again to step outside of the bubble and hear from real readers about what's important to them, because it's very easy to think that the things that are important to us as publishers are the same as to them, and they are often not at all. So the size of the title, we might think, or the size of the authors name even, we might think "oh, it's really important that Cathy's name is big and bold at the top" and they're like "oh no, no, no, we just want to know what the new book is called and what it's about". You're like "oh right, ok" so we made the title bigger and we put the shout line a bit more narrative, then sort of vague right at the top of the book and put Cathy's name at the bottom whereas before we would have had it the other way around so just little changes like that.

Oh quite professional.

What else do you have to ask?

Almost everything.

Q: So in terms of, how about recruiting other shopping lists of authors that you have that you want to publish?

A: Oh yeah absolutely, every editor I think has a wish list then as a team we strategically, they call it poaching, I tend to think of it as talent relocation. Poaching sounds a bit? Like you're doing something corrupt or illegal and I guess different

publishers go about it in different ways.

Yeah, maybe.

I always very much have my eye on authors that I'd like to work with and I think the key and why we have to read so widely to bring another publishers author over is to find the ones that are writing very good books but are being slightly mis-published. You know, they're not getting the covers right, or actually she does this really well in her books but that's not really how they are positioning that author in the market, or actually they're just not really getting much attention from that publishers as they've got ten other big authors in that area who get more focus, but maybe you've only got two, so there's lots more space on your list to give someone like that focus than there is there. So I always feel that with poaching that you have to feel that you can genuinely do a better job than the current publisher is doing, and have a very clear sense of how you're going to go about doing that, so yeah I have a wish list as long as my arm. In fact, one of the people on my wish list, I've just found out has moved somewhere else. I'm a bit disappointed about that.

Who's that or can't you...

Tana French, has just moved from Huder because she's just moved within her share so I couldn't pursue her particularly strongly. She's not commercial woman's fiction, she writes crimes books, sort of literary crime books and they are absolutely wonderful so

we're always watching and approaching and sending nice notes to authors whose books we like. We just have to be careful not to upset any internal politics.

You've got one more minute I think, one more question so what would you like to ask?

Q: Well let's do this one, when you're taking books from other countries, what part does the cover play in attracting your attention? Do you take much from other countries?

Do you mean to buy in?

Yes.

A: Hmm. We buy in from the US quite a lot but occasionally we do buy in from, you know, we might buy in from an Italian novel or a Spanish novel. Ben, one of the editors on my team, recently bought a Scandinavian crime novel that's translated and we're publishing it in English. Sometimes the cover will be an element, but sometimes they'll already start selling the book internationally before they've got a cover, but often what will happen is a book will become a home grown hit, and they haven't had success until that point selling the rights and then they'll go out again, so then you are very much factoring in the cover because it's giving you a clue as to how something, where it sits in the market, and what kind of story it is. And occasionally

with US buy ins, Rebabs said how we'll take in a US cover and almost use it exactly but change the type. Sometimes you'll buy something in kind of bit of a punt or opportunistically because it's doing fairly well in the US, and it has a great cover and you think, I think, we could take that book and make it work for our market purely because the cover is so strong, so that will happen occasionally as well.

Q: You mentioned film and other publishers, are there any other sources of imagery or design look that you pay particular attention to?

A: When I'm briefing a cover that isn't a straight forward commercial proposition, and there isn't a genre to follow or a particular series style to follow, I like to go the Waterstones in Piccadilly, and walk around there and get a bit of inspiration from the other books on the shelves because I recognise that in literary fiction, you can be quite experimental with a design because that audience are more willing to look for different set of cues, they'll care about what the review quotes are, or whether it's won any prizes whereas I always think of her as Mary from Macclesfield, who's my a typical commercial what paperback should I treat myself to in my weekly shop this week kind of customer. The set of cues that she's looking for are different to that, she wants to know if another author that she likes has endorsed it or if it's a best seller or what the shout line tells her about what the reading experience will be so it's a good reminder to go out and see how other people are going out, and doing that in fresh ways because otherwise you feel as though you're just trying to re-invent the wheel, so I like to go out and see what other people are doing.

But it's books mainly not Asda or Morrisons or...

It's mainly books. Occasionally I remember going, I was briefing a cover that was for quite an upmarket woman's fictions book, and I went to Liberty and took lots of photos of their prints and the patterns and things. And we ended up doing quite an elaborate pattern design cover for the book as a result, it didn't sell at all! It was really fun to do. But I do mostly look to books. What I have started paying more attention to is the posters and adverts that Netflix creates because their sort of selling in to viewers in the same way that Amazon are just want you to see. That poster for their new series and think "oh, that looks good!" and that's all they've got to work on really and word of mouth, so it's quite similar getting people to buy new books. Obviously, they have a subscription so they can just dip into whatever they want, but actually they've still got to get people in and watching to be meaningful, so I have started paying more attention to how they're composed, and often the adverts they have on the page, will look a lot like a book cover which I find really interesting.

That last little bit was particularly useful wasn't it?

Yeah.

Thank you very much.



No worries, I'm glad I could be of help. It's funny because you think day in and day out, you get to know this stuff so much, you forget what's interesting to the outside world!

Hopefully that was of some use.

## Appendix 7: Transcription of Citi Publishing interview in Taiwan (Chinese Mandarin)

李季鴻訪談

訪談時間: 2019.2.19 (二)

Q: 你有做國內外翻譯小說方面的嗎?

A: 我通常是做比較偏經典文學類的書籍，不過因為我們通常是集團開會，所以同事們做的書我們是會知道的。大家會一起開業績檢討會議，而檢討的話，大家所有的書都會拿出來，討論這本書為何會賣不好，但是也沒有那麼殺啦，大家通常都還蠻客氣的，因為如果你批評別人的批得很厲害，那輪到檢討你的書時不就也會那樣，所以大家基本上就是蠻客氣的，有時候書給不同的人去做時會差很多，編輯做久了之後你就會對某些類型熟悉，對市場的觀察也會變的知道如何，做久了你會和那個類型的讀者還有作者互動，你會比較知道這個圈圈的人，他們看到什麼樣的書會覺得很興奮，他們到底想看到什麼東西，就是新的刺激、或以前沒看過或幹麻的，就可以比較判斷的出他們口味如何，因為如果說某一種故事的路線或佈局是像的，像譬如說日本漫畫異世界轉身，因為現在也已經轉身到不行也已經有點厭煩了，但如果你只是一個讀者或新編輯的話，第一次看到你會覺得很興奮，你可能會覺得很好看因為你是第一次看到，可能不會覺得這已經是老梗了，這個人還來投稿，(你現在是主編了嗎?)，對，現在已經是主編了，所以有時候會帶到新編輯，(所以像你比較資深的是不是就和新編輯也更容易溝通?) 但是新編輯有時候都很熱血，應該說是我們靠的是比較不同的東西，像我們靠的就是和他們搏感情，但新編輯可能很多東西是沒經驗的，但是有時候他們的熱情都很夠，所以有時候他們前期是會做出好的東西，

你不可能人生一直都在跑一百公尺。

Q: 編輯和作者都很注重封面嗎?

A: 都很注重喔，作者幾乎都非常重視。我講一個笑話給你聽，這是一個真實發生的故事，台灣出版界有一個故事非常有名，就是<<暮光之城>>，大家都知道暮光之城台灣超賣的，賣好幾萬，(對，全世界都是)，不過他賣的原因是因為電影的關係，但是暮光之城其實在很早之前就被尖端選到了，因為當時尖端覺得這個故事有潛力，但是當時的操盤方式是，因為他們覺得那是一個愛情故事，他有點不知道該怎麼做，因為是僵屍呀、什麼東西的，當時他們就幫他做了一個封面，那個封面現在在博客來還可以查到，封面是那種少女、言情故事的封面，(所以他們一開始不是用那個原版的封面?)，不是，他們是用言情小說那風格的封面，後來才是用電影那個封面，他們原本這個版本賣不到一千本，用那個類似有點漫畫的封面，而當時的書名叫做<<吸血鬼達令 Darling>>，(天哪，這個書名(笑))，所以當時賣的超爛，就是一千以下非常爛的銷量，但後來突然間電影出了嘛，立刻那個三部曲，變成電影版後換用電影版的封面，就立刻暢銷賣了幾萬本，這應該是說電影一出了就不一樣了，但如果仍是叫<<吸血鬼達令>>那也是不行的啦，你現在去博客來網站查還是查得到的，所以這故事告訴我們如果文學的書要做的好的話第一個就是作者本身是受歡迎的，而且最好是要影劇化的，或號稱要影劇化的，通常都會這樣子的，他的故事模式是大家熟的，他可能不一定要原創的，譬如像宮鬥劇他一直出，但他可能是到某個程度都還是可以的，他是一個 genre，當他們像的時候但出現一些新的元素，譬如這個女主角可能怎麼樣，或是一些新的細節，而這些細節之前沒有出現過也可以，不過最重要的還是影視化是最重要的，因為如果沒有影視化的話誰要看?

這種東西影視化是有一點互為因果關係的這有可能這個作者在網路上是有名的。

Q: 所以網路也算是一種發掘新人的管道嗎?

A: 現在我們在網路上有一種叫做是 ip 小說，ip 指的是 intellectual property，現在有很多的網路平台就是專門給大家寫這種故事的，因為可能有些作者是沒有名氣的，所以現在有很多出版集團包括我們會提攻平台，這平台就是讓大家去寫，而很多人會來寫嘛，(所以任何人都可以寫?)，對，任何人都可以寫，就任何人可以註冊一個筆名然後在那裡寫，然後之後我們覺得這個不錯想要出版的話，我們會再去問然後讓他們在這出道，等於在這培養可能好的寫手，而另外一種作法就是說，利用這個人還沒出道時去看他的可能性，因為有些人已經寫紅了，他就是在你邊這邊紅的，而他的東西也是屬於你的，而另外一種方式，你擁有這個東西，而這個東西有好有壞，而這些東西綁在一起的時候，通常是大陸公司，因為他們比較有錢，所以他們會來這找劇本，這時候這些平台就會提供他們一些方案，這些方案就是說 bundle，bundle 就是網綁銷售，意思就是說一次賣給你 50 個，有好有壞，可是他們就是綁在一起，看你要不要，然後多少錢，但是在這種情況下有收入的話等於是寫的人也是有收入，所以他們會很高興，那如果說這種東西若又影視化的話收入就會又更高，然後他們就會更高興，但是這些東西的量和想要做的人真的非常多，所以其實出頭的人沒那麼多，當然說如果你有機會出頭的話那就很不錯，而且在台灣出道的話是相對簡單，因為台灣的人少，平台也沒那麼多，很多紅的都是這樣出來的，(有什麼是這樣出來的小說嗎?)，有啊，像之前很紅的那個 BL 小說“上癮”，不知道你有印象嗎? 那個就是一個 BL 故事嘛，那個就是網路小說改編的，其實很久以前

那個<第一次的親密接觸>，那時候就有了呀，那個當時也是超紅的。關於網路作者有一個八卦，他跑到 xx 出版社了，然後工作人員就拉一個群組一起討論，但也把作者、行銷、編輯等等各種相關的人拉進來，然後在那一起討論，然後作者很久沒有發言了，他們就忘記了，忘記了那位作者也在那群組裡，結果有次有個人就說有點擔心這本書，因為老師有點小過氣了，所以巴拉巴拉....(尷尬)。然後就後來發現作者也在那個群組裡，那個真的是尷尬到不行。(所以現在是很流行用線上群組討論嗎?)我覺得這是和個性有關係，每個出版社每位編輯的作法也都不同，但他們就是喜歡這樣。

Q: 作者是否都會有很多意見? 關於封面關於出版等等。還有設計師的地位和價位是如何? 你們的設計師通常是外包還是內編的呢?

A: 看有名還是不有名。因為每一個人出道聲音一定小的，今天如果我開一個東西二萬塊誰要理你，當然沒人要理你，通常這種關係都是第一個這個人是你培養的，通常是靠介紹啊或試用看看覺得不錯的話繼續用，其實和一般的合作關係是差不多的，因為封面設計這個東西不是每一個人都能勝任的，封面對於銷售是絕對有加分的，因為有時候你用很有名的設計師，但有名的設計師貴呀，(最貴可以多少? 一個封面)，最貴的話大概可以一個四五萬左右，那已經是很貴的了。像某個出版社他們就常用一個很有名的封面設計師何佳興，他就是很有名得了很多獎項，他就是屬於那種一開始還算便宜，(最便宜可以多少?)，大概八千吧，另外一個非常有名的設計師就是王志弘，他就是那種有名的貴，他那種貴就是他指定的用紙你就是要用那個，而且那個紙非常貴。先講王志弘他自己的作品集，他自己的作品集在城邦賣一本要五千塊，就是超貴的，王志弘是屬於那種四五萬塊錢，然後電子書的話另外算，而且他會傳 Line 訊息和你說

這個是授權費，授權給你使用的費用，下次要使用他還是會要再收費，下次還要再付喔，而且這個東西的使用權是他的，不過因為他們對他是非常的疼愛所以就隨便他，我來找一下你的作品集給你看。

Q: 封面設計師他們的工作主要是有哪些?

A: 封面設計師有時候不只是封面設計，有時候他們會同時要求內圍也是他做，會說整本書都是他做，他不是只有封面設計，而且有些人會等於是你把案子給我，然後印刷費、紙費等等全部包在裡面，可是一次我和你要十幾萬。

Q: 通常一本書你們會一次發幾本左右?

A: 現在通常是二千多，但我剛入行時大概三千多，有時會四五千，如果你很有信心的話，但現在通常沒有人敢這麼冒險了。

Q: 那你觀察現在電子書看的人是否變多了?

A: 現在有愈來愈多。而且電子書在台灣售價是七折，便宜很多，而且空間方和方便性。(電子書的封面重要嗎?) 也是重要啊，也是要看一下嘛，但是他的那個感覺不同，他其實是同一個東西只是把圖檔切過去，(所以電子書和紙本書封面通常是一樣的嗎?) 通常電子書和紙本的封面是一樣的，英國的圖文書好像沒有像台灣那麼多，所以好像電子版更多，但圖文書就是不一樣的，因為他的那個排版如果變成電子書就會跑掉，他這種有一種叫做版視，叫做 **fixed layout**，版視的意思就是這個版型是固定的，所以不管你放在什麼地方，它的版型就是這樣，流視的意思就是隨著你的不同的載具會跟著改變，你如果是遇到 **fixed layout** 那種的話，遇到比較小的字你根本無法看，因為你沒辦法放大，就

算可以放大，有時候和載具沒有合的話看起來也會很辛苦，而且現在的人空間愈來愈小了，所以就愈來愈多人看電子書。

Q: 你們會要求設計師設計不同的封面嗎？他們通常會提很多案嗎？

A: 我們通常都會請設計師先提案，要看各種設計師的配合度，通常一般都是提三個，但你可以看的出來有一些是亂做的，因為他沒想法嘛，(通常你們都會怎麼溝通？通常你們會給他們意見嗎或方向嗎？或是讓他們自己決定？) 其實要看每一個人不同的個性，因為有些美編他的特色是如果你開了條件給我，而你也給了我清楚的範例 **sample** 的話，我可以做出很像很像的東西，但是有些人是會看完這本書再做，有很多同一系列的會照著色版做一系列，但通常第一個會討論很久，討論的過程是一個困難的部份，因為你要到大家都滿意，而且設計師有時候是會生氣的，而且還有作者部份，因為有一些作者也是超級控制狂。

Q: 作者通常是最困難的部份嗎？

A: 這也要看作者在這個出版社的地位在哪裡，因為有一些作者要和我吵這個，我就會說那老師你是哪裡不滿意，因為當你很明確地說出請問你覺得哪裡有問題時，因為我們會要他們了解，老師我不是只有你一個朋友，設計師也是我的朋友，所以要尊重專業呀，因為今天你的角色根本也不是設計師，我們可以針對你的一些想法去調整，但對不起你們不能取代一些設計師，當然有一些設計師是做的蠻爛的啦，可以調整一些設計但是不能取代設計本身，(看來編輯最重要的真的是溝通能力耶)，是啊，像他們說我朋友用設計可是他們用不好，但這時候你要怎麼辦，當然你也不可能去羞辱或反駁作者太多，做到最後面最棒的結果就是大家都很高興，但這本書就是一本成功的書。

Q: 通常你怎麼選哪個設計師做這本?

A: 通常依靠經驗和記憶，這種東西就像很多在台灣的一些流行的東西一樣，譬如像那個蛋塔的梗，有時候同一個梗一陣子大家就會一直用，所以就會例如這個人做這本書這陣子很紅，就大家都會找他，但是過不久之後就又会通通去找別人，因為合作的東西就是這樣，有時候你去逛書店，你就一直看到同一個人的作品，他一直繼續做你就會一直有印象，所以要做這種書的時候你就會找他，但是有些設計師是你可能大概知道是誰，(那你們有自己的美編嗎還是都是外包的呢?) 我們沒有自己的設計師，我們都是外包的，(那你們有行銷的部門嗎?) 我們有行銷，像書展是業務部門負責的，(那通常業務部門會對封面很有意見嗎?) 通常業務部門他們會提出他們的想法，但說真的最後面的決定權還是總編輯手上，所以除了責編可能會因此而生氣。不過英國那邊好像就是很重視行銷，其實做什麼可能真的行銷也是很重要也是沒錯，我之前有看一本書有關做網站的書，他說你現在如果要做一個網站，有很多方面最後面要來誰來決定，行銷人員決定呀，因為這個網站是要賣東西的，你如果讓那些設計師去弄，可是設計師不擅長這個。行銷這種東西其實也是五花八門，有很多行銷部門的人他們是很傳統的，但也很多有很多有的沒的。

Q: 所以看來在台灣還是總編輯是有主要決定權?

A: 因為總編輯的角色像是老板，還是擁有最後決定權，當他說他決定的時候，其實表示他在業績上要付一定的責任，這當然就沒話說了，就是書後來如果賣不好，你的薪水不會因此減少。

Q: 女性小說類在封面和行銷上有何不同?



A: 女性小說針對的客群有點不一樣，你就想像有點像是韓劇的那種故事，所以他的故事屬性基本上是女性為主的羅曼史，或是有點像當時瓊瑤那類型的故事是有點像的，你可能只是個普通人，但是在一些情境下一些很有權力有錢的人在角逐你，以前我們在唸英美文學的時候，我的課本是這樣寫，從以前到現在的經驗就是“讀者喜歡在作品中看到自己”，因為他在談商業小說嘛，他說大眾小說為什麼會紅，因為讀者喜歡在作品中看到自己，所以這種商業小說他們就是營造出一種讓讀者可以把自己投入的一種氣氛，然後如果說作者搞不好本身也是女的話，那就更加分了，好像大部份很受歡迎的都是女作者，(好像甚至連那些很有名的劇的編劇也是女的居多?)，就是一種女性的想像的，因為就是當身為一個女性的這種角色，女性的角色被社會建構出來她的那個所經歷的情緒結構，會吻合的東西，女性處的位置的關係思維，所以辦活動的話十之八九是有影劇，不然你要怎麼辦活動? 女性小說幾乎都是女的讀者，男的幹麻看女性小說? 你可以去查博客來的年度報告，他每年都會做讀者分析，甚至有地理位置分析，中研院和博客來的合作，大家都很震驚，因為他們甚至做政治分析，偏藍偏綠的讀者會讀哪些書籍這些。

Q: 就你的觀察，封面在台灣書籍的重要性如何? 有關買榜的文化是如何?

A: 封面的確是有加分的，因為有時候就是你就感覺來了，大陸超級喜歡買榜的，他們的那個規模蠻大的，他們那個是有目的的一直買，每個禮拜每個禮拜一直買一直買那樣，(那是要怎麼買?)，就是你付錢給那個公司然後他們就幫你一直買，衝銷量，就等於你自己的書你自己買回來嘛，你愛買多少就買多少。

Q: 你們的書通常是寄賣嗎?

A: 通常是在書出之前，我們會去和比較大的書商廣告說我們要出這本書，不管

是他們對這書有沒有興趣，但這就是去引起他們的注意，他們會給你一個回應，然後會說我們這一家就是要下四百本或下幾百本一千本，因為倉庫是有限的，所以大家都儘量把倉庫會轉嫁給別人，但是他們會盡量叫一個量，除非他們很有興趣他們會叫一個八百一千的，因為一本書的印量也才二千多嘛，所以如果叫到這個量表示他們對這個書是非常有信心的，而且想要和你一起合作一起做大，不管他喜不喜歡，你只要報告給他，他就會給你一個量，但那個量也有可能是少的，譬如全台灣下個三本，反正他們這個集團他們就是這麼厲害，他不要不想下，就會說個三本或意思意思下個幾本，就下很少，像有些書再版書他就會想說你幹麻呀，也會愛賣不愛的，或你上一批我還沒賣掉之類的就下很少，這個量給你後再加上你本人的經驗和信心，然後你個人的判斷，有時候你會覺得可能這個書會超賣，這個都很難說有點不一定，其實編輯也要懂行銷，有些編輯行銷通路這三個東西他們的員工會互相轉來轉去，因為你是賣書給書店，而書店是賣書的嘛，有時就這樣評估然後決定一個印量，因為有時候書印太少是會虧本的，你不可能做這種事，當然也有可能你賣不掉那就更虧了，(書店買了還會退回給出版社嗎?) 一個月內就會退，因為你先把貨出給他他把錢給你，然後他實際上他有賣到多少錢你再把錢退給他，他再把書退給你，然後退書後就開始是麻煩的開始，而倉庫是要計價的，每本每月 0.8 元，雖然好像是很少，可是過一年後就會發現愈來愈麻煩，而且書會開始壞掉，因為有時候會變黃之類的，這也和設計師有關係，有些設計師就是會很喜歡用一些美術紙，但美術紙就是很容易壞，但一本疊一本的時候，會造成毀損，最後有可能要銷毀，而會計上銷毀算是損失嘛，所以你帳面上就等於是虧損的，反正他們有一個運作的機制。

Q: 一本書的作者版稅通常是多少呀?

A: 通常是百分之十。但也是會看當時你們的合約，有的合約可能也會說他要自購幾百本回去，自費出版他通常是一個很 **tricky** 有一點在騙錢的過程，有一本小說“販賣夢想的男人”就在講自費出版，你拿書來他就會說我現在幫你出，而且還會幫你做封面設計做什麼什麼，而且那個是會有 ISBN 的書所以是會經過國家圖書館的，到這裡為止都沒錯，他會幫你也送出去，只是過不久之後就會退回來，但是因為他和你的收費其實已經打平那個成本了，所以他就是等一段時間過後，就說這個書因為銷量不佳，所以必須要來銷毀，那他也沒有違約，因為沒有賣出去嘛，但是你可以自己自購回去，通常因為會捨不得，所以作者會再買一批回去，那賺的錢就更多了。因為你出的書要被銷毀了，而這是完全符合合約的，因為時間已到也不再續約了，因為這個約對我們的公司沒有好處，你如果要買的話我們就會幾折賣給你，如果你不要買的話我們就銷毀掉，通常他們還是會買，基本上就是那個想出書的夢想支持著這一切，然後就付了一筆錢。現在也有很多出版社看到我的粉絲頁然後來問說要不要出書。

Q: 你們出版社一般決定怎麼出書的? 選書過程如何?

A: 通常我們會得到一般書的資訊，那個叫做書訊，就是一些外國書的情形，外國書通常會有經紀公司 **agent** 代理商，然後代理商會定期去收集國外的書和資料，譬如說紐約時報排名前 10 的書，或是這家公司有另外再雇國外的員工，當然他可能不是真的雇，而是有某種人脈在國外，但他會定期去幫你巡視，他們叫 **hunter**，巡這些書並且推薦給大家一些書，那通常在國外出版社他有些固定合作的代理商，他們會去收集一些資訊，收集之後把大家可能會有興趣的，或是他們會定時產出，會依照那些 **agent** 本身擅長的領域，去寫這個書的中文介

紹給大家，譬如說某本書可能賣了 50 萬本左右，或是他剛簽下一個電影合約，當然那個簽了他不一定真的會拍，那個合約都是真的只是他不見得真的拍而已，所以他也不是騙人的，所以他就會做成一個中文的介紹，然後定期的發 email 到所有出版社的編輯的信箱裡面去，只要他知道有多少編輯他就寄給多少人，另外一種就是收作者投稿，或你自己去找作者，會一個拉一個，所有合作關係就是這樣，譬如現在 A 作者來投稿，然後這個 A 老師可能在這個領域是有名的，但後來你慢慢發現說其實有一些更值得探討又更年輕的人他們在做這個研究，然後也蠻有趣的，而且正要開始，我自己的感覺啦，你要趁很多東西剛萌芽時趕快去培養他，然後他就是你的！但你現在如果沒有照顧他，否定他沒有接受他，但有時候當然有的投稿是很爛的，但是如果今天有些好的東西你沒有看出來的話，以後就會被別人拿走，或者可能他就不會再做出東西了。

Q: 那有關讀者方面呢？台灣讀者有沒有什麼樣的偏好？

A: 台灣讀者都是這樣，你和他說哪些書多好多好，對他來說不如他看過的一個東西，他在電視上看過那個他就會買那本書，人都是這樣，所以為什麼我們會去買一些 Wakamoto 之類的東西，因為我們不知道其他的東西，所以看到覺得親切就會買，因為想要讀點東西就會去買些來看，台灣其實是很迷信名牌，所以能見度高的東西就會比較容易被拿到，因為書店也都不是陳列很久，而且很多大書店也不是放一些覺得很棒的東西，所以有時候他們選書的什麼時候，很吃那個採購本身的品味，當然採購有時候也會想辦法做一些很有感覺的東西，買一些很有感覺的書出來，可是畢竟是少數吧，除非那個東西很打動他，通常就是某種台灣意象啊，這類的可能就會有些非常的堅持。

## Appendix 8: Transcription of Rye Field interview in Taiwan (Chinese Mandarin)

麥田出版社編輯訪談

訪談對象：林秀梅 副總編

訪談時間: 2019.02.21 (星期四)

Q: 您好，很開心能訪問到您，上週的書展成功似乎看到台灣的出版業變得更有  
人氣，是否書籍排行榜對於整體銷售有著蠻重要的關係呢？聽說有些出版社會  
有些買榜的情形？

L: 銷售排行榜的重要性應該是在全世界都很常見吧。在台灣這是偶爾會見的，  
但在中國這個情形又更為嚴重。我們比較少買榜，除非一些特殊的情況有需  
要，而有些書店通路其實是無法買榜的；例如誠品書店其實不太讓人買榜的，  
有時你買超過五本書甚至兩本書他們就會注意了，擔心你是有買榜的嫌疑。

Q:那針對中國的書也是會和他們買版權嗎並改成繁體中文嗎？

L: 對，我們和他們買版權，有時候直接和作者談版權，並將文字改成繁體中  
文。

Q: 麥田出版社也是做很多小說或很多翻譯書，你們有特別針對女性小說當一個  
文類嗎？

L: 我們出版社做很多小說和人文書籍類，不過並沒有特別將女性小說當一個文

類，我們不會主打女性小說這一個主題，我們通常是分成翻譯小說和華文小說，華文小說就是以台灣小說和中國小說為主。台灣小說讀者通常分為二種，一種是讀名家經典作品為主，或文學性比較強，例如諾貝爾文學獎得主的作品類的，而另一種就是讀比較大眾類型的，比較大眾題材的，而這二種的方向我們會從作者的知名度來包裝它，或從小說的精彩度，而最主要的一種是影視相關的，不管是翻譯或非翻譯的小說，影視作品的重要性是很高的，由其是卡斯比較強或較受歡迎的影視，這個在全世界都是有很大影響力的，有時候大家會去搶那種影視改編的小說。

Q: 那有關於影視的小說，是否通常會直接使用影視相關的照片或海報當作封面?

L: 當然會，我們基本上是一樣的，除非是有特殊情況才會使用不一樣，因為那會讓視覺上聯想到。

Q: 你們在這部份電子檔和實體書基本上是使用一樣的封面嗎? 選擇封面上是否是蠻困難的?

L: 我們基本上都是使用一樣的封面，因為這樣視覺上會比較容易做連結，只有特殊狀況才會使用。封面的編輯是很吃編輯的心血的，尤其我們出版社本身內部沒有美編，我們都是外包出去的，給專業的設計者美編做。而外包就是需要找適合的，而我們如果是作者書，也需要聆聽作者的意見。但我們這邊的作者大部份都蠻好的，他們不會有強烈的意見，有一種作者是一開始會和你說他們希望什麼樣的設計，甚至有一種作者他們是自己設計封面，本身作者有自己的美感訓練他們就會自己設計。而一般來說我們會做二到三份初稿去讓作者選，

然後再和他們溝通他們比較喜歡哪一個版本。而我們一般給作者選之前也不會出一份我們自己都無法接受的。譬如我們最近就有和一位大陸作家合作，一般大陸作家比較沒有強烈意見，其中有一款我們很喜歡，而也覺得那個版本也會比較適合台灣市場，但作者就很明顯就比較偏愛另外一款，不過這位作者有說明他的理由，所以他最後成功地說服了我們，而我們也覺得那個 ok。

Q: 你們通常也會和行銷部門溝通嗎?

L: 會呀，現在的書出版前二個月前就會開始開會溝通，如果是一些大書的話，二個月就已經有一點慢了，有些甚至半年前有一些訊息就會開始一些討論，但是二個月前就是開始比較密集的討論。

Q: 在英國的情況，行銷部門似乎是很主要的一個部門，一切非常行銷導向，但在台灣我個人感覺好像編輯部門通常是處在一個比較主導的地位，請問你如何看待這情形呢？

L: 在麥田或城邦這，我們是比較編輯導向，然後行銷配合我們來協助，有些國家是比較商業或資本主義導向，和台灣是有點不一樣。不過如果他們可以把文學性很強的書，因為非常會行銷，所以賣得很好，那我們也是求之不得，我覺得我們台灣也許也可以往這個方向更加地邁進，他們可能在一開始初步地選擇上就已經評估是否有銷售市場的方向來做選書的考量，就已經踢除沒有市場的書籍。

Q: 那在你們這邊一般是如何挑選書籍出版呢？

L: 我們這邊的話以華文小說來說，我們最主要的也是看作品，看那個作品是不是我們想要的，我們也會去找一些專業人士來諮詢他們的意見，譬如有一些他們本身也是作家，但他們可能對某種類型的小說的了解也比我們更深刻更熟悉他，有一點像是顧問，另一種就是可能問其他的編輯，因為每位編輯有不同的熟悉的題材，那他們可能就會長期需要去理解那文類的哪些作者，哪樣的書，他的位置，他的暢銷度，他的質感，就是要去做功課啦。有些新的東西但就是要去摸索，但像悅知那個老板我就覺得他很厲害，因為他們之前從來沒有做過文學書，他們是電子商務公司，他們是電腦書籍或教科書的公司起家，但他們跨到文學作品這一塊時，他們真的很用心很用功地去研究去理解，因為不太可能不太去理解就能做出那麼多大作品，如果有也是憑運氣，但只是憑運氣頂多只能做到幾本，但是可以一直做下去就不是只靠運氣而已，他們的老板就是要求行銷要做出來，因為他們是電子商務公司開始的，所以這方面也是較有經驗，像有些他們買的电影有名的書的版權，那些也是要用比較高的金額去買。

Q: 你們出版社比較主要的導向是什麼呢？以文學為主嗎？

L: 我們都有，主要是文學和人文，或比較思想性和歷史性的東西，和一些國際關係議題的，他們也是我們麥田的一個悠久的文化，我們另外還有做一個比較偏生活方面的，就一些勵志的呀，或是一些比較影視的，其實比較綜合型的，但比較歷史悠久的就是人文類相關的。

Q: 那和其他的出版社會合作嗎？

L: 我們是集團的，就是城邦集團下面有很多個部門，彼此之間編輯和行銷部份是各自分開獨立，但會計和發行業務是有一起的，是整合在一起。



Q：有關電子書方面，在台灣閱讀比例高嗎？

L：現在有在成長當中，但因為我們的人口少，所以相對的那個銷售量就會比較保守，但是有在成長，但成長的速度還是蠻快的，而且有各種折扣或是包專案，好幾本書算多少錢，還沒有超過實體書閱讀的人口，但一直有在增加，這對出版業某種程度也是有幫助的，也算是一種宣傳，有一些在紙本書不太可能去做平台宣傳的，但反而電子書是可以做到了，因為電子書他可以做專案做 banner，這就可以幫你做曝光，而且客層不太一樣，這其實是一個加分的效果，像青少年十幾歲的就很愛使用電子書，或是特定像是羅曼史的閱讀者，可以大量在一個平台大量閱讀，而且那種算是一種消耗品，那種內容是消耗品，和一些圖片很精美的圖畫書像收藏品或是經典是很不一樣的。

Q：一般來說，電子書和紙本書會同步出版嗎？

L：我們現在都盡量同步出版，因為還是盡量增加他的曝光度，電子書的成本相對比較低，而且讀者群還在養，定價也比較低，折扣有時候也比較有多元變化，現在的黑白書，一般來說至少還是要印到一千本的量才不會賠，如果是彩色的書，至少還是要 1800 或 2000 是一定要有的規格，不然其實會賠錢。

Q：如果沒有賣完的書會如何處理？

L：就放在倉庫，或者要毀掉，還有另一種情況是就會低價賣到國外去，但那個會比較困難，因為要看有沒有人要和你買，買了會不會把你倒回來，倒回來是

比較不會，一般主要是有沒有人會和你買，賣掉是最好，我們一般是盡量不要擺著不要燒掉，最好的方式就是低價賣到海外看哪個通路會願意買。中文的海外市場有大陸或馬來西亞。不過這種在源頭的印量就會控管的比較精準，看那個大約的需求量，不能亂印不然印太多會擺在倉庫。我們有業務專業的同事會去和通路開會，通路其實會下量給我們，然後我們會參考通路下量然後再去評估需要印多少。而現在的成本也增加，所以售價也提高，印量又下修，現在小說幾乎都是要三百以上，還有也是為了因應現在的時代，什麼都漲所以書本也是跟著漲，整體消費也都是提昇，現在除了非常薄的書，不然三百以下讀者也會覺得那是怎麼一回事。

Q: 有一個很有趣的現象是國內的書展大部份都不賣書而是在談生意與版權，不過台灣好像是著重在賣書？

L: 其實大國的書展是都在談版權不賣書呀，我們台灣比較奇怪一點，我們這樣其實比較像賣場，你看像北京或法蘭克服大部份都沒有在賣書，書展是讀者採購的一個好時間因為折扣，現在有的出版社有時候也不願意去，因為他們覺得獲利不是很多，畢竟也是有人力成本的考量。

Q: 我想我們的訪談差不多大致就是這樣了，非常感謝您的幫助，協助我們了解出版業更多。

L: 不會不會，也非常歡迎你如果有回來可以來看看，另外我們的同事對翻譯小說有更多的理解，若你之後還有什麼問題也非常歡迎你和我們聯絡。

Appendix 9: Transcription of Linking Publishing interview in Taiwan (Chinese  
Mandarin)

聯經總編輯訪談

訪談日期: 2019.3.15

受訪人: 胡金倫

Q: 請問聯經是雜誌或是書籍的出版社? 聯經這個出版社的定位如何? 和聯合文學的關係是?

A: 聯經一直都是只做出版的, 做人文綜合性出版, 然後到了 2013 年因為聯合文學出版公司不做雜誌了, 他就把雜誌切進來, 所以聯合文學的雜誌是從 2013 年的 10 月 16 號到了聯經, 那原來那個聯合文學的就只剩書的出版沒有雜誌了, 所以這二個東西是不一樣的。聯經除了電腦書、教科書和課本之外, 其他都有, 算是綜合性的出版社, 早期是比較偏人文, 因為可能人文史頁數比較多所以看起來比較人文, 其實我們也有弄語言學習、童書、生活方面, 也有商管類的書。

Q: 通常你們都是怎麼選擇要出版什麼書的呢?

A: 其實不一定, 每個人的方向和決定都不一樣, 當然有些是從市場看銷售面, 有些是覺得有價值的你就要出版, 所謂的價值就是在他的思想和精神, 當然有一些就是比較市場性, 他是會很暢銷那種, 有些就是會用他的政治立場去選擇出版, 所以每個人的方式都不一樣。

Q: 請問您是總編輯, 那是指編輯部的嗎? 也有行銷部門嗎? 出一本書之前會大

家一起開會嗎?

A: 對，就是編輯部的，我們也有行銷部和業務部門，我們這裡行銷和業務是分開，還有財務部。出版前會一起開會，就是要怎麼行銷要怎麼去推。

Q: 那關於書籍封面，通常是哪個部門決定呢?

A: 通常是編輯部這邊決定，其實做出來之後會寄給大家討論，譬如說票選呀或問大家的意見，但最後做決定的仍是由編輯、我和總經理這邊，但有些可能是作者會堅持要這樣的設計，但有些不一定，有些是整個公司決定然後投票，有些就是會給一些意見然後總編輯決定。也不一定就是編輯部門最大，也有可能看不同的公司，也有公司可能也是特別重視行銷部門的，也是看情況。不過台灣出版社來說以編輯做決定的比例還是比較高，因為行銷方面是會朝市場性去考量，但編輯可能對這一類的書籍比較熟悉理解，他知道這個書的方向和內容，所以溝通方面有時候比較方便。

Q: 關於書籍封面選擇，作者是否也可能是比較困難的一部份?

A: 作者有時候會堅持一些理想或想法，但也有些不會，如果有的作者很堅持可能就會委婉的勸，如果勸到最後沒辦法的話，也是會不聽啊。所以有時候會有一些不是很理想的封面，但有時候因為作者會非常有他的一些想法，有時候會非常固執。

Q: 那設計師是否也會很苦惱?

A: 這也是有點沒辦法，情況如果是那樣，設計師可能就會有點像是交差了事。

Q: 一般來說設計師會做幾個版本去選呢?

A: 這個有點不一定，因為有時候設計師會先做一個，一個如果過關了那就 ok 了，有時候可能會做二個、三個、四個，也有過一個封面美編做了三四十款，但現在很少設計師願意做那麼多讓你挑了，現在每個設計師都很忙，他只是收你一個案子的費用，做了這麼多款他不划算，他倒不如拿去做其他的案子。

Q: 一般設計師是收一次而已嗎?

A: 一般是付一次錢。所以你如果做幾十款只挑一個，然後你可能花很多時間，所以你這個時間你還可以再拿來接其他的 case 呀。那如果其實做了三四款你覺得不適合，你就知道要換人了。

Q: 你們通常都怎麼挑外包的設計師?

A: 有很多方式。通常每個編輯自己去挑，挑磁場性比較近的或是挑這個設計師做的封面的風格和我這個書比較接近，因為有些設計師做的封面可能比較通俗比較流行性，不適合這家的風格的就不會去找他。

Q: 你們出版社有沒有比較偏哪一種風格呢?

A: 這個不一定。不同的種類有不同的風格，文學類的小說、散文或是非文學的也有，也有翻譯文學和華文創作，所以都不一樣，電影書都用電影海報去做，國外應該也一樣，因為有電影上演了嘛，如果電影好賣的話大家就會收集嘛。

Q: 影視類的書籍是否都賣的比較好?

A: 不見得。有時候電影賣的好但書賣的不好，有時候書賣的好但電影賣的不好，有時候書和電影都賣的好，或是都賣不好，所以那是不一定，那不是保障，我記得有個電影“怪物來敲門”(A Monster Calls)，電影賣的不是很好但書賣的不錯，像“享受吧，一個人的旅行”，電影賣的不好，書賣的很好，像饑餓遊戲，書賣的好電影也賣的不錯，像哈利波特也是二個都賣的很好，魔戒也是電影賣的好書也賣的好，所以很難說。像我們之前出過龍騎士，書賣的還不錯，但電影第一集賣的不好後來就不再拍了。像穿著 Prada 的惡魔，電影賣的很好書也賣的很好，所以很難預測。有些書在出版前你也不知他會不會拍電影，有些可能你在決定要不要做的時候你知道他要拍電影，或者是出版了之後你才知道他要拍電影，那你就祈禱那個電影會賣，書就會賣起來。

Q: 那要去和國外的電影買版權嗎？通常會買斷嗎？

A: 對呀，通常是大約 6 年的合作合約，有些可能會合作比較久就 8 年。

Q: 現在電子書的流量在台灣如何？和實體書比的情況是如何呢？

A: 在台灣電子書還是比身本少一點，台灣目前電子書的情況是沒有自己的自然載具，這就是比較不太一樣的，現在電子的流量是愈來愈多，下載率是愈來愈高，但是就是紙本還是比較多，這主要就是閱讀習慣不一樣，另一個問題就是台灣本來就沒那麼多人讀書嘛，那紙本書都不讀了何況是電子書。

Q: 但台灣出版的書蠻多的耶？尤其以人口比例來說。

A: 台灣出的書是蠻多的，但不是有個報導說去年台灣很多的人都沒讀書，但我覺得要看他們的採訪對象是誰，不過如果很多人都不看紙本書了更何況電子

書。而像書展很多人，但也要看買書的多不多，大家喜歡逛逛，但買的人變少，不一定每個去看的都會買。台灣的書展有在賣書也算是比較特殊的文化，因為大部份國外的書展都是談版權的。台灣的書展也是有談版權，只是是比較以銷售為主。在書展的談版權在二樓，有一個 agent centre, 有的是會直接來你的攤位找你和你約，有一些是會用 email 聯絡。

Q: 通常買外國書的時候，通常會換封面嗎？

A: 不一定。如果原來的封面很漂亮或原來的作者堅持要用那個封面，所以就不太一樣。有的作者會希望用原來的封面，但很少遇到很堅持的，因為語言也不一樣，但有的童書或者繪本有時候通常會用原來的封面，因為比較可以保留原有的感覺，但一般成人書就不一定，會看情況。

Q: 如果是在這要換封面，需要原本的國外的作家同意嗎？

A: 要看合約，有些合約說你後面做好後一定要給他們看，那有些不用，所以每個合約情況不太一樣，但現在百分之 90 都會要看一下封面，因為要看書名有沒有錯，有沒有一些他不要出現的元素，有沒有改他一些原來的書名。

Q: 現在的書封面好像愈做愈漂亮？

A: 在台灣啦，在台灣是這樣，現在其實中國那些書也愈做愈漂亮，因為我覺得可能台灣和中國有點以視覺為主，而且也愈來愈競爭，因為現在書愈來愈多，競爭愈來愈大，選擇性愈多，要如何在這麼多的競爭裡面突出自己，就是賣相，都是看外表啦。國外讀者就比較不太一樣，不知道是不是因為字體的關係，英文字或中文字的關係，所以他們的都比較簡單，因為中文又象形文字。但也有人說台灣的封面是設計過度，只是這也無可厚非，因為這是互相影響

的。

Q: 我對中國大陸的比較好奇，我以為他們沒有很在乎封面？還有他們好像比較多盜版？

A: 沒有，他們現在很在乎。因為其實民營事業是非常在乎的。盜版的問題在中國是比較嚴重，但在台灣是幾乎絕對沒這種事，有的是台灣書被大陸版友拿去掃描下載放在網路上，但台灣因為會去檢舉，但因為大陸太大有時候你很難去抓到，而且他們有那種人海戰術，一個人掃一頁就可以掃完了。

Q: 台灣和中國會互相做版權買賣嗎？

A: 就會台灣授權給他們出簡體版，然後大陸也授權給台灣做繁體版，類似這樣的合作。不過二邊的風格有點不同。

Q: 出版時通常發行人會如何決定？

A: 其實要看市場還有看書的屬性，而且看每個出版社，如果這是重要的書這是暢銷書，可能第一次的時候會印很多，但如果是一半一半你可能一開始印 2000 或 1500，但如果一些像學術的書，可能一開始就只印 1000 或 800 都有可能。然後也會和通路一起討論，如果通路沒有要那麼多你就不需要印那麼多，但有的時候是暢銷書一開始印太少，但書店反應很好，沒賣掉就退回來倉庫了。以後有機會再出貨，但很多退回來的很多都不能用了，可能會銷毀。但出版都很難預測，但預測也會錯。

Q: 您做出版業多久了？經驗是否會讓預測書籍更為精確？



A: 從 2002 年開始，所以也 17 年了。也沒有真的到非常久。但也是會有判斷錯誤的地方，有時候也是看直覺，但不一定每次都準。(做出版業好像都很樂在其中?) 也是會很快樂啦，但是也是有各種酸甜苦辣。

Q: 趕稿的時候有可能會加班或熬夜嗎?

A: 新人的時候會，但現在不太會了。因為編輯是責任制嘛，無論你加班或不加班在期限內把他完成的話，那就是看你平常怎麼去分配你的時間，你做不完你就把他帶回去加班。

Q: 身為編輯最會開心的時候是什麼?

A: 書賣的好吧，或是這本書得了什麼榮譽，得獎呀榮譽呀，這些是最開心的，通常是得到什麼好書獎呀或選書的那種是最高興的。

Q: 那找作者的過程是否也會蠻有趣的? 你們通常怎麼找作者?

A: 有些是自己投稿，有些就是要自己去觀察，而有些是他們已經在網路發表了，然後你長期關注觀察而你覺得他們寫的不錯，而當然有一些是本來就很有名的你要把他從別的地方挖過來，所以很多方式都有。(所以也有可能一個作者是在很多地方出版了?) 對呀，跳槽呀，不過當然是看條件嘛，如果他覺得這邊條件比那邊好的話，他就會去。有些人喜歡跳來跳去，而有些人就沒有特別想要跳來跳去。有些人就是喜歡固定一個出版社，有些人喜歡到處跑。不過當然是看條件啦，還有看大家合作的默契。

Q: 有關編輯的地位，在日本的話編輯好像很像神的存在，那台灣呢？

A: 在台灣不見得，我覺得在歐美那個編輯的位子和日本或大陸一樣，編輯的地位比較高，台灣的編輯有時候就會還好。因為台灣的編輯有時候是比較被動，而台灣的作者有時候又比較強勢，有時候作者會比較強硬，但是就是看編輯如何去說服作者，因為畢竟是一個合作關係，有時候就是編輯要和作者去不斷溝通去說服他，然後提一些理由是讓他們相信的。

Q: 如果是電子書和實體書，若是同時發行內容和封面會都一樣嗎？

A: 內容或封面都會一樣。他們會設定一下隨載具一下版面，但是內容是都是一樣的。電子書的定價也是一樣，只是不同的書店可能會做不同的折扣，但他們會自行吸收。但因為市場競爭所以大家一定還是會打折。

Q: 關於書的價錢有一直在漲你怎麼看？

A: 因為原物料也都上漲，但薪水沒漲，所以你會有一種書變貴的感覺，但其實是因為可支配所得的關係，而且現在書也愈做愈厚所以成本也有比較高。另外就是大陸的書也有在漲，因為他們以前比台灣低很多，他們不想要他們的書比台灣的低很多，所以現在也漲很多了，現在大部份都是 68 人民幣起跳。

Q: 台灣和大陸的書的品質相比？

A: 大陸一些人文文學的書，因為他們出版量大，還是有一些很不錯的。他們有些文學的書是愈做愈好。但至於翻譯品質那是另外一回事了。台灣的編輯對於文字、對於精確度是比較高一點，比較對把關。主要也是在台灣很容易會被挑毛病，因為如果不想要被挑毛病就要很小心。

Q: 你如何看待台灣的出版業與自費出版?

A: 每個國家的出版業都有一點不太一樣啦，台灣的編輯有他的主導權，所以權力算是蠻大的。台灣的閱讀人口少，外銷的不是太多，比起大陸有政府的支持，台灣的書外銷的是比較少，台灣的出版門檻低所以才出版那麼多，出版這麼多書某種程度也是太過自由的結果，因為出版很自由，所以什麼樣的書都有，我們尊重每個出版人的權力，也沒有什麼禁書，沒有所謂言論的限制，所以要出任何罵任何執政的人也是都可以。有些出版社要賺錢的以專門接出自費出版為原則，不過我們出版社是比較少，如果作者要自費出版我們會看那個書有沒有價值，和我們的品牌屬性有沒有 match，還是會有審核的過程，確保整個牌子的品質是穩定的。

## Appendix 10: Transcription of Taiwanese freelance designer (Chinese Mandarin)

### 論文設計師訪談

訪談日期(或 email 回答日期): 2019 年 \_\_3\_\_ 月 \_\_18\_\_ 日

受訪者姓名 \_\_兒日設計\_\_

受訪者工作單位或是接案設計師 \_\_\_\_\_

1. 當您設計台灣書籍或翻譯書籍的封面時，您有哪些考量呢？本土市場和國際書的市場有何不同？

Ans: 設計台灣書籍的狀況，這部份很吃作者胃口，因為每個作者的胃口不太一樣需要達到他們想像中的要求，有些要求可能很天馬行空，所以製做起來會困難一些，翻譯書籍的部份，因為大部分都需要送審，所以製做的時間我覺得會比較趕一些，相對於本土作家的部份，所以兩者各有利弊。

本土市場和國際書的市場，我覺得並沒有太大的區別，我覺得兩者的共同點在於書的本質，及作家本身的名氣影響。

2. 身為一位固定公司的設計師或自由設計師(freelancer)，有什麼差別？在設計書本封面時，有哪些不同的考量？您做過這二種設計師嗎？您比較喜歡做哪一種，為什麼呢？

Ans: 固定及自由的部份，我覺得有好有壞，像我待過誠品的設計，對我來說這份工作是一個很棒的過程，因為畢竟有同事，當你不懂或是不了解的地方可以馬上詢問同事，可以立刻得到答案，缺點就是時間上不自由。自由接案的部

份，我會比較喜歡的原因，是因為我可以去配合家人微調我的工作時間，時間彈性，缺點就是沒有假日的感覺><。在設計封面的考量上，我通常會想知道這本書的預算，然後再去設計適合的畫面，來搭配加工及紙張的選擇部分。

3. 出版社(或您個人)比較偏好複製過去成功的模式，或是比較喜歡創造新的風格?

Ans:這個部分我覺得不一定，可以確切的說，要看這本書的定位來操作

4. 您認為台灣的设计有比較保守嗎? 依據您的個人經驗，台灣是否比較喜歡歐美或是日本的風格? 亞洲比較喜歡可愛與明亮的風格嗎?

Ans:台灣的设计其實很放(可以用這名詞嗎?)，很多元，我覺得台灣的设计在亞洲上面其實不輸日本及韓國，就看業主本身的 Sense 好不好，亞洲喜歡明亮的風格嗎? 應該是沒有，但是在攝影上確實有一群人是喜歡這種清透的攝影風格的。

5. 當商業考量與藝術思維有衝突時，您如何處理? 是否有任何相關的經驗或例子可以說明呢?

Ans:這部份的妥協問題，我會先以藝術思維為主，再來才是商業考量

最近比較有相關的部份就是聯經的系列書籍 Wings 系列，我記得當初遇到業主提出一個改稿的方式，當下我覺得這樣改很醜，就積極的跟負責的編輯討論，希望可以勸退長官這部份的想法，當然後來是成功了! haha

6. 哪個部份是決定書籍封面的主要角色呢? 當您被要求设计一份封面時，編輯

們通常會給您一個清楚的方向或他們就是讓您自由讓您決定要如何設計?

**Ans:**設計封面主要的角色，通常我會看一下書籍資料卡來決定，並沒有一定，自由設計，或是清楚的方向我都有遇過，所以還是要看書本的定位來說。

7. 平均而言，你需要花多少時間去完成一份封面設計?

**Ans:**通常我需要兩個星期來發想封面設計

8. 當一本書的作者是著名作家或是一位新人默默無名的作者，設計的思考會非常不同嗎?

**Ans:**不會的，通常我不太在意作者是誰，我只看書的本身來做設計，所以他們是平等的

9. 一般來說誰是封面的最終決定者? 通常你們會準備多少份草稿?

**Ans:**封面的決定者通常是作者或是總編輯，我會準備兩份草稿。

10. 當設計師實體書封面和數位封面，您會採取不同的方式去設計嗎? 你有何不同的考量針對這二種不同的封面?

**Ans:**我之前遇過實體及數位的封面，我是採取不同方式去設計的。在數位封面設計上的考量，我會比較在意字體大小在螢幕上的呈現夠不夠清楚。

11. 不同文類的書您在色彩的使用上會有什麼不同? 如果是鎖定女性讀者的書籍，您會比較常使用哪一類色彩和設計風格呢?

Ans:色彩的決定，我通常是隨機的，不過像是有主題性或是女性讀者的話，我就會採用柔性一定的顏色，所以其實還是要看書的本質決定，設計風格也不一定。

12. 請問您是否有設計過女性小說的封面？或是有類似的印象，請問這一類型的小說有沒有比較偏愛的色彩和風格呢？

Ans:我有設計過女性的小說，最近的一本就是印刻出版陳玉慧的德國丈夫，我使用的顏色就是比較柔性調的風格

13. 現在的封面是否變得比較失去原創性了？或是更有原創性了？您個人覺得呢？

Ans: 我覺得台灣的封面原創性還是很強，而且也很多元

14. 您是否有和編輯或是作者端溝通有困難的時候？有沒有一些類似的經驗或例子呢？例如編輯或作者方很堅持某些版本，但您針對美學的考量比較喜歡另外的方向？

Ans:這部份單然有遇過，如果真的很難溝通的話，我會終止合作

15. 身為一位設計師或美編，設計實力更為重要或是溝通能力更為重要？為什麼呢？

Ans: 我覺得兩者都很重要，因為你有溝通能力還需要設計能力才有辦法能做出來，反之亦然，我覺得還需要一種理解能力，因為有可能編輯跟你這邊的理解能力是不同的，所以我覺得理解能力也很重要

16. 您會受行銷方面的需求而對設計有所調整嗎？對您而言，行銷面的重要性和藝術面的重要性您如何看待並取得一個平衡呢？

我會依照行銷的部份去做調整的，然後以藝術性最大化為前提去作行銷面的調整。

17. 當重新設計一本書的封面時，會有些什麼考量？

Ans:這不部分我不太理解，通常的考量就是針對書的內容去架構畫面出來

18. 書背(書脊)的重要性有多大？您是否也會付出相當大的心力考慮書背的設計？

Ans:會的，這部份在於賣場上展售我覺得還滿重要的

19. 您個人有沒有比較偏向您個人特色的設計風格呢？

Ans:老實說，我不知道我自己是偏向什麼特色的風格，但是我是會依照每本書的特質來設計符合他們的風格就是。

20. 除了書籍設計，您有從事其他的設計相關工作嗎？您是如何走到封面設計這個領域的？您個人最喜歡的是哪一類的設計工作(或是其他非設計工作也可XD)?

除了書籍設計外，我之前還有接過唱片設計，及劇場的視覺文宣設計，還有一些書店特陳設計及商場視覺設計



## Appendix 11: Translations of Cite Publishing Interview in Taiwan

### Interview Transcription Translation 1

Interviewee: 李季鴻 (Li, Chi-Hung) Chief Editor in Cite Publishing Ltd.

Interview Time: 19<sup>th</sup> February, 2019

Location: Cite Publishing Ltd. in Taipei Taiwan

Q: Have you had experiences making local or translated fictions?

A: I usually make classic literary books, but because our meeting is with the whole group with many publishers together, we know books other colleagues or publishers made. We discuss the sales together and everyone discusses every book, discussing why this book is not sold well. Of course, it's not very serious, and most of time we are quite gentle with each other. If you criticise other people's books too much, next time other people might do the same to you. Therefore, we are quite peaceful most of time. That who makes the book makes big difference to the result. Editors need lots of experiences. When you work in publishing for a long time, you will be familiar with some genres and knows its market. You also interact with readers and authors, so you will know this circle's people and what kind of books excite them and what they want to read most. Some topics or structures are similar. When you are a new reader or a new editor, the first time when you read them you feel very excited. That's because you see it for the first time and you don't feel it's already a cliché and why this person still send this to publish. (Are you already a chief editor now?) Yes, now I am already a chief editor, so sometimes I will be the leader of new editors. New editors are

sometimes very passionate, so what we have are different things. We senior rely on the relationship with authors. New editors don't have many experiences but their passion is strong, so sometimes they also can make amazing works in the beginning. But life is impossible 100 m running (short-term running) forever.

Q: Do editors and authors both care about book cover very much?

A: We both care about this a lot. Almost all authors care about this very much. There is a famous story in Taiwanese publishing. That's about *Twilight*. Everybody knows it sells very well in Taiwan and around the world. The reason it sells very well because of the film. But before the film, *Twilight* was chosen by 'Sharp Point Publishing', which feels that this story has potential. They are not sure how to deal with this book. They think it is a love story but with something like zombie etc. At that time, they made it a cover, which you still can find from online bookstore. The cover is like a romance girls' cover. (They don't use the original version's cover?) No, they don't use original cover but they use romance style's cover in the beginning. They changed the cover after the film was on the market. When they use this romance style's cover, they sold very bad. They only sold less than 1000 books with that a little bit cosmetics' style cover. And the title in the beginning, they use '吸血鬼達令' [Vampire Darling] (Oh my God, what's this name, [laugh]). That's why it sold very bad. However, after that film was on the market, it immediately sold a lot. The reason of course because of the film. But if they kept going using that 'Vampire Darling', it is also not working. This story tells us if literary books want to be published well, the first one is the author is popular one, and the best is related to film or drama. Their story structure is

what readers familiar and not really needs to be original. Sometimes it can become one genre with new elements. But with media connection is the most important.

Without media, who will read these books? Sometimes if the author is very popular on the Internet it will help a lot.

Q: Is Internet a way to find a new writer?

A: Now we have one thing on Internet, we call it 'IP Fiction'. IP means 'intellectual property'. Now there are many online platforms providing people to write their story online. Because some writers are new and infamous, many groups including us provide platform for everybody to write and many people come to write here. (Can anyone write here?) Yes, anybody can write here online. Anyone can register one pseudonym and write here. If we think it is good and want to publish, we will ask them and make them become real writers from us. It is a way developing potential good writers. Another way is that we need to find a person's potential before they become writers. If they become famous later, they begin from you and their things also belong to you. The other way is that you own this thing, but this thing can be good or bad. Sometimes Chinese companies come here to find the drama script. This platform provides them a way to find what they want. Some Chinese companies are rich, so they buy 'bundle'. We called it 'bundle selling'. It means like we sell you 50 at one time, including good and bad quality ones. They combine together and it depends on you want or not. In this situation, the writers on this platform also have income and they are quite happy with that. If it can become drama, it will create more income and they will be happier. People who want to do this are very much, but the

successful ones are not so many. Because Taiwan is small, it is still easier to begin this career. There are not so many platforms, so many famous ones all come from this way. (Any example?) Yes, like that very famous BL fiction ‘上癮’ [Addiction], I’m not sure if you remember this. This is adapted from online fiction. And long time ago very famous one ‘第一次的親密接觸’ [Flying Dance], which was very popular at that time. About this author, there is a small gossip. He joined to one publisher, and that publisher all staff has a Line Group talking about his project. This group including author, marketing, editors and related staff and discuss together in the group. Because the author doesn’t speak for a long time, people forget that he is still in the group. Once someone said he is quite worried about this book because this writer is already a little bit old-fashioned and something like this. Then later they find the author is also in the group. It’s very embarrassing. (Is it very popular to use social media software to discuss now in publishing?) It depends on different publishers. Every publisher has every way to deal with this kind of books.

Q: Does author usually have many opinions about cover design? How is the status and the price of designers? Do you usually use in-house designers or freelancers?

A: It depends on they are famous or not. Every new designer doesn’t ask a lot. If a new designer asks 20000 NT dollars, who will discuss this with you? Nobody will talk with you. This cooperation relationship can be from your developing with them. In the beginning, it might come from introduction from other or just try. Later if you cooperate well, you will go on. It’s similar to most cooperation relationship. Not everyone can do book cover design. Book cover is definitely helpful with sales.

Sometimes you use very famous designers but they are very expensive. (How much can it be for a book cover?) The most expensive is probably 40000 to 50000 NT dollars. It's already quite expensive. One publisher, they use a very famous cover designer '何佳興' [Ho, Chia-Hsin], who is very famous and has won many prizes. In the beginning, his price was quite cheap. (How much is the cheapest?) It's about 8000 NT dollars. Another very famous cover designer is '王志弘' (Wang, Chih-Hung), who is very famous for very high price. He indicates that which special paper to use and that kind of paper is very expensive. His own portfolio price is one book for 5000 NT dollars, which is very expensive [In general one fiction is about 300 NT dollars]. The price of designer Wang, Chih-Hung is 40000 to 50000 NT dollars for one cover, and the electronic book is another price. He also mentioned that this is only 'authorisation fee', so if you want to use this for the next time, you still need to pay. But they love him very much, so they still pay and follow what he wants to do. Let me find his portfolio for you to have a look.

Q: What are the main tasks of cover designers?

A: Book cover designers sometimes don't just design the cover, and they also asked to do book content design. Simply to say, they do all design of this book. Some people will just accept the whole project, including printing and paper fees etc, all included and charge about more than 100000 NT dollars once.

Q: How many will you generally print for one book?

A: Now it's about 2000 something. When I began this job, it was 3000 or even 4000

to 5000 if you are very confident. But nowadays, people don't risk so much now.

Q: Are there more and more people reading e-books now?

A: Yes. There are more and more people choosing digital version. In Taiwan, electronic version is 30% off the physical books, which is much cheaper than physical books. It also saves the space and is more convenient. (Is digital book cover important?) Yes, it's also very important. Readers also see that as well, but the feeling is different from physical book. It is the same version just the different way to present.

Q: Is the digital cover the same with the physical book cover?

A: They are usually the same, but picture books are different. Because picture book becomes digital, its original layout will change. There's one name called 'fixed layout', which has fixed structure, no matter which tools you use to read, it will represent the same form. Another one is fluid layout, which will change according to your different tool to see.

Q: Do you usually ask designers to design different covers? Do they usually make many drafts for you to choose?

A: We usually ask designers to give us their proposal first. Most of time they will give us 3 versions. Some of these covers, you can tell it's just not real serious work because they don't have ideas. (How do you usually communicate? Or do you let them decide by themselves?) It depends on every person's personality. Some designers can make very amazing cover if you give them clear example and say what

exactly you want. But some people must read the book first and design the cover.

Some series books will be followed with the first book and then do a series. The first one usually takes much time to discuss. The process of the discussion is a difficult part because you need to make everyone satisfied. Sometimes designer also get angry. In addition to this, there are authors' part because some authors have strong desire to control everything.

Q: Is author usually the most difficult part?

A: It depends on this author's status in this publisher. Some authors argue with me with some parts, and I will ask which part you are not satisfied with. We try to make them understand we don't just have one friend (author) and designers are also our friends. We need to respect the profession. Because the author is not the designer, we can change a little bit according to your thoughts, but we are sorry that you can't replace designers. Of course, some designers' design is horrible, but we can adjust it and don't replace design itself. (It seems that the most important ability for editors is communication?) Yes, we can't insult authors or retort authors too much. Finally, if we can get a good cover which everyone is satisfied, it will be a successful book.

Q: How do you choose which designer to design a book?

A: It's based on experience and memory. This is a little bit like that egg tart popular in Taiwan before. Sometimes some popular style, everyone will use that for certain time. It is the same with book making. Sometimes a designer is very popular, then everybody will look for this one. However, after some time, people go to find other

people. Sometimes when you go to the bookstore, you can see a person's many books. If they keep doing, you will be more impressed with them. When you want to make this kind of book, you will go to find them. And some designers you even can guess who makes this cover. (Do you have your own designer or do you just use freelancer?) We don't have our own designers. We just use freelancers. (Do you have marketing department?) Yes, we have the marketing department. The sales part is responsible for the book fair. (Do marketing/ sales department have many opinions on book cover?) Sales department usually provide their thoughts, but the final decision is still on the editor manager. It seems UK cares about marketing very much, but to be honest, it might be true that to do everything, marketing is very important. I read one book before talking about making a website. It talks that if you want to make a website now, finally many things are decided by marketing staff because the website is set to sell products. If you let designers decide, they are not good at this. Marketing has many different strategies. Some marketing people are very traditional, but some have many creative new ideas.

Q: In Taiwan, does editor manager play the decisive role?

A: The role of editor manager is a little like the boss, who has the power to make the final decision. When he or she decides this, it means that he or she needs to be responsible for this. It is nothing to argue with. It means that if the book doesn't sell well later, your salary is still the same.

Q: What is different in marketing and book cover on women's fiction?



A: The target customers of women's fictions are different. You can imagine the story similar to Korean drama, so their story is based on female romance. You might be an ordinary person, but in some situations, some powerful rich men pursue you. When we studied English and American literature before, the text book writes, from the past to the present experience, 'readers like to see themselves in the book'. It discusses commercial fictions and says why mass literature becomes popular because readers like to see themselves from the content. This kind of commercial fiction creates an atmosphere to make readers immerse themselves in this. If the author is also female, it will be even better. Most of this genre's popular authors are all female. And even TV director of this genre, the famous ones are most of time female. As a female, it might be easier to describe the experience and the structure of social influence. To put themselves in this position, it will more be more related to personal experience. Female fictions' readers are almost all female readers. Why do men want to read women's fiction? You can go to see the annual report from 'books bookstore'. They make readers' analysis every year and even has geography reader's analysis. They cooperate with 'Sinica' research centre. We are all very astonished with their analysis because they even do political analysis, analysing which part political supports will choose what kind of books to read.

Q: Based on your observation, what is the importance of book cover in Taiwan?  
How's the culture of buying bestseller list?

A: Book cover does help a lot. Because sometimes you just get that feeling. In China, they like to buy the bestseller list very much. They buy the bestseller list with clear

objective, buying that every week. Keep buying and buying. (How do they buy?) You just need to pay for the company and they will help you buy and buy. That can make it look like it sells very well. It's like you go to buy your own book back. You can buy as much as possible you want to buy.

Q: Do you usually consign your books?

A: Before books are published, we talk to bigger bookstores and retails and advertise to them. No matter they are interested or not, this is to arouse their attention. They will give you a response, saying they want 400 books or several hundred or 1000, something like this. Because the stockroom's space is limited, people will usually make stock to others. Anyway, they basically give you a number to follow. Unless they are very interested, they might say 800, 1000 books. One book's volume is also 2000 something, so if they say 800-1000, which means they are very confident with this book and want to cooperate with you to make it bigger. No matter they like it or not, when you report to them, they will give you a number. The number is possibly a small number, like 3 books in the whole Taiwan. It's all based on personal evaluation. Sometimes you feel this book will sell very well. It's always hard to say and difficult to predict. That's why employees transfer and change jobs between editors, sales and retails. Because you sell books to bookstore, and the bookstore sell books. Sometimes if you print few, you might lose money. It's impossible for you to do that. But of course, if you can't sell them, it's worse. (When bookstore has already bought the book, will they still return them to the publisher?) They will return in one month. You give them the products first and they give you money. After they sell, you will give

them money for their returned books. When the books are returned, that's the beginning of trouble. The stockroom takes money to rent. One book per month charges 0.8 NT dollar. It seems a small amount, but after one year, it will be more and more difficult. Books begin rotten and broken, sometimes become yellow. It's also related to designers. Some designers like to use some art paper, but art paper is easy to be broken. When many books put together, it is easy to become broken. Finally, they might need to be destroyed. From accounting, destroying means loss, so on the account you lose some money. They have a way to work.

Q: How much royalty can author get for one book?

A: Usually 10 %. But it is also according to your contract. In some contracts, the author might say they will buy several hundred books. Self-publishing is a tricky process of cheating money. There is one book 'The man who sells the Dream', which talks about self-publishing. If you take the book to them, they will help you publish and do cover design, etc. And that book will have ISBN and will be sent to the library, etc. So far it is correct. But after a while, they will be returned because your payment has already made them earn money. Later, they will tell the author the book is not sold well, so the publisher needs to destroy these books and they don't violate the contract because they are not sold. However, the author can buy those books back. Most of time, authors feel emotional with those books so they will buy some back, which makes publisher earn more. Nowadays, there are also many publishers seeing my Facebook Fan pages and asked me if I want to publish the book.

Q: How does your company to choose book to publish? What is the process?

A: We usually get some book information regularly, which is called 'book information'. It will describe some foreign books' situation. Foreign books usually have agency companies. Agency will go to collect foreign books regularly and data. For example, *The New York Times*' top 10 book list, or this company also hires some foreign employees or have some connections in foreign countries, and they can help you check. They call this 'hunter'. They will recommend some books. They have some cooperation with some agencies, and can collect information and organise together to present some books people might get interested with. They will write Mandarin introduction and description to many publishers for reference. For example, this book has already sold 500,000 books or this book just sign a next film contract. The film might not necessarily be acted, but the contract is real, so that's not cheating. They will make Chinese introduction and send email to every publisher's editor. How many editors they know, how many they send. My personal feeling is that you should develop a writer when they begin, then they are yours! If you don't care about them and don't accept them in the beginning, and you don't find their potential in the beginning, then later they become others or they might never make any good work anymore.

Q: How about the readers? Do Taiwanese readers have any preference?

A: For Taiwanese readers, when you tell them which book is very good, they prefer to read a book they watch them from TV. It's why we buy something like WAGAMOTO [Japanese medicine]. When we feel familiar with them, we want to buy them. When

readers want to buy some books to read, they easily choose some books they feel familiar. Taiwanese believe brand very much, so the book easily to be seen is easy to be got. When the bookstore chooses the books to buy, it depends on the buyer's taste. Sometimes the buyer tries to make some books with much feelings and buy some books with much sense, but it just happens sometimes, unless it really touches them. Most of time it's about some Taiwanese image. If it is about this, they will insist a lot buy these books.

## Appendix 12: Translation of Rye Field interview in Taiwan

### Interview Transcription Translation 2

Interviewee: 林秀梅 (Lin, Hsiu-Mei) Editorial Manager in Rye Field Publishing

Interview Time: 21<sup>st</sup> February, 2019

Location: Rye Field Publishing Company in Taipei Taiwan

Q: Hi, I am very happy to have this interview with you. The Book Fair last week seems that Taiwanese publishing has become more popular. Does the bestseller list influence the sales' volume a lot? Do some publishers buy the bestseller list to control the market?

A: The importance of the bestseller list is very common in the world. Sometimes we can see some publishers buy the list in Taiwan, but this phenomenon is more common in China. Our company rarely buys the bestseller list unless some special situation needs that. Some bookstores don't allow to buy the bestseller list. For example, Eslite bookstore doesn't let people buy the list. If someone or some companies want to buy more than 5 books, they will notice that and worry about you want to buy the list.

Q: About the cooperation with China, do you buy copyright from them and change the language into traditional Chinese?

A: Yes, we buy the copyright from China and sometimes we negotiation to buy the

copyright from Chinese writers directly and translate the language into traditional Chinese.

Q: In your company, you have published many fictions or translated fictions. Do you have specific focus on the genre of 'female fiction'?

A: We publish many fictions and humanities books, but we don't take female fiction as a specific genre to focus. We usually separate translated fictions and Chinese (language) fictions. Chinese fictions include Taiwanese fictions and Chinese fictions. There are two types of Taiwanese readers: one type like to read classic or very literary books, such as Nobel prize books or classic literature; the other type prefers mass literature and popular topics. No matter which side we will use the fame of authors to market these books or the special content of the fictions. The most important genre to publish is about films or TV. No matter translated books or non-translated books, the books relating to films or TV play a crucial role, especially some very popular and famous books, which has great importance in the world. Sometimes publishers compete to buy the copyright of those adapted film/TV books.

Q: Regarding to Film/TV books, do you usually use the pictures or posters about that TV/film to be cover?

A: Yes. Most of time we use the same one. Only in some special situations we use different one. This helps readers connect with that film.

Q: Do you use the same cover with digital version and physical version? What is the difficulty to choose the cover?

A: We basically use the same cover because it is easy to connect visually. Only in some very special situations we made different covers. It takes much effort for editors to make the cover, especially we don't have designers in our publisher. We totally use freelancers or other companies' designers. We always use professional designers. To use freelancer takes time to find the suitable one. If the book belongs to one author, we also need to listen to the author's comments. Luckily, most of our authors are easy to communicate. They don't have very strong personal opinions. Another kind of author, in the beginning, they tell you what they want exactly. And some authors even design the cover by themselves. If the author has design and visual background, they will design by themselves. Most of time, we make 2 to 3 drafts to let author choose which one they prefer. We don't give authors the draft we don't accept. For example, recently we cooperate with a Chinese writer. In general, Chinese authors do not strong opinions. We like one draft very much and we think that version is more suitable for Taiwanese market, but the author obviously prefers the other one. However, this author mentions about the reason why that one is better and successfully persuade us. Finally, we use that version we also feel it's ok.

Q: How do you usually communicate with marketing department?

A: We usually communicate with marketing department with them two months ago before publishing. If it is a 'big' book, two months before publishing are probably a



little bit late. Some 'big' books, we discuss 6 months ago. But two months ago, we have more intense discussion.

Q: In the UK, it seems that marketing is a very important department. In Taiwan, in my experience, it seems that editors play a more leading role. How do you think about this?

A: In Rye Field and the City Publishing, editors' team is the leading department, and marketing/ sale team assist us. Some countries are more commercial or capitalism direction, which is quite different from Taiwan. But if they can use their marketing strategies to sell very literary books, we really want it too. I feel we Taiwan might also follow this direction to go further. They might choose the book in the beginning for the market consideration, not choosing some books without market.

Q: How do you choose books to publish?

A: Take local fictions as an example, we focus on the content most. We see if that content is what we want. We also go to find some professionals to listen to their opinions. Some professional are also writers, and they understand some genres more deeply. They are a little bit like consultants. Another way is that we ask other editors. Every editor is familiar with different topic, and they need to understand that genre's writhers and books more: their position, their popularity, and their quality. Anyway, we need to study this. Some new things take time to search and understand. For example, that successful new publisher (Delight Press), in the beginning, it is an e-

commerce company, selling some books or textbooks about computer. But when they begin to do literature books, they make much effort to understand this area. It is impossible to sell so well without doing much research before that. Of course sometimes it can rely on luck, but luck only can let you sell well with some books not forever. If you want to go on for a long time, it can't only rely on luck. Delight press's boss asked the marketing team need to make results. Because they begin from e-commerce business, they have more experiences about marketing. They also have more money to buy the copyright of some famous films' books.

Q: What is your publisher's direction? Is literature your main feature?

A: We do many. The main focus is on literature and humanities, or some about thoughts or historic books, and some international topics, which is also Rye Field Publishing's long culture. Besides this, we also do some encouragement books, about life, or media books, just the main feature is about humanities.

Q: Do you cooperate with other publishers?

A: We are a group in the City Group, which has many publishers in this group. Editors and marketing work separately, but accounting and publishing industry are together.

Q: In Taiwan, is there high percentage reading e-books?

A: Now it is growing. Because Taiwan has little population, so the sales volume is more conservative, but it is growing and it is growing quite rapidly. We do many

discounts, or such as how many books how much discount. The digital books' readers still haven't surpassed the physical books' readers, but growing very quickly. Digital market helps publishing a lot because it is a platform for advertisement. E-books can have projects and banner, which make publishers seen more. But the customers are very different from physical books' readers. Teenagers like e-books very much or some romance readers. If you can read great amount books in one platform, they are like consuming products, which are different from classic or visual books collected by readers.

Q: Does digital books and physical books be published at the same time?

A: Now we manage to make them published at the same time. Digital books' manufacture price is relatively low and we are still growing new readers' group, so the price can be lower, and the discounts has more varieties. Nowadays, the physical word books, at least need to print 1000 books, we won't lose money. For colourful picture books, we at least need to print 1800-2000 books in case we lose money.

Q: How to deal with the books not sold?

A: We put them in the stockroom or destroy them. Another way is to sell them to other countries with lower price, but it is more difficult sometimes. It depends on if there are other companies which want to buy from you. The best way is to sell. We prefer not to destroy them. Chinese language market has China, Malaysia, Hong Kong etc. Before we publish a book, we control the printing amount in case we have too much unsold items left. We have sales professional colleagues holding meetings with

retailers, then retailers tell us how many they need, and we will evaluate and decide how many we will print. The manufacture price is growing now, so the sales price also grows.

Q: In Taiwanese Book Fair, it seems focusing on selling books rather than discussing copyrights?

A: Most countries' book fairs discuss about copyrights, but we Taiwanese are a little bit unusual. Our book fair is more like selling market. So that's why now some publishers don't want to go to book fair because they think they won't earn a lot and also have cost consideration.

Q: I think this discussion is very helpful. Many thanks for your help to assist us understand publishing more.

A: You are welcome and welcome you come back. If you have any other question, it's very welcome for you to contact us anytime.

## Appendix 13: Translation of Linking Publishing interview in Taiwan

### Interview Transcription Translation 3

Interviewee: 胡金倫(KamLoon Woo) Editor-in-chief at Linking Publishing Company

Interview Time: 15<sup>th</sup> March, 2019

Location: Linking Publishing Company in Taipei Taiwan

Q: Is Linking Publishing a magazine or a book publisher? How do you define this publisher? What is the connection with UNITAS publishing [聯合文學]?

A: Linking Publishing has been working on publishing, with humanities-related publishing. Since 2013, UNITAS stopped making magazines, so their magazines business entered Linking Publishing. The magazine business started here since 16<sup>th</sup> October 2013, and UNITAS now just publishes books and stopped making magazines. In Linking Publishing, we do most kind of books apart from computer books and textbooks. Our initial focus is on humanities books, but now we have language books, children books, lifestyle and business books etc.

Q: How do you usually decide to publish which book?

A: It depends. Everyone's direction and decision are different. Some are based on the market sales. Some lies on the worth. If you think it has thoughts, you want to publish them. So-called worth means that the thoughts and spirits. Of course, some have more market-oriented, which will be sold well. Some books are based on the political position to publish. Therefore, everyone's choice is different.

Q: Are you an editor-in-chief? Does that mean you are in the department of editing?

Do you also have marketing team? Before a book is published, does every team have a meeting together?

A: Yes, it's editor department. We also have marketing and sales department. In our company, marketing and sales are separate, and we also have finance department.

Before we publish the book, we have meetings together to discuss how to market and how to advertise the book.

Q: Regarding to book cover, which department usually decides the cover?

A: It is usually decided by the editor department, but when the cover is made, we usually send to all to discuss. For example, we use vote to choose or ask people's opinions, but finally the decision is made by editor, me and the director. Sometimes some authors insist do some design, but sometimes authors don't insist. Sometimes it is decided and voted by the whole company. Sometimes the staff provide some comments and finally the chief editor decides. It is not necessarily the editor team plays the crucial role in every company. Some companies might care about marketing team more. It depends. However, in Taiwanese publishers, editors play the decision role, which is a popular phenomenon because marketing team considers the market, but editors have more knowledge in certain kind of books. They know more about this book's direction and content, which is easier to communicate.

Q: About the choice of book cover, is author a difficult part?

A: Sometimes authors insist some ideal or thoughts, but sometimes they don't. If an author insists very much, we might persuade them gently. If we persuade them until finally, they still don't listen. So sometimes we might have not very ideal cover because authors insist a lot and are very stubborn.

Q: If this situation happens, is it also difficult for designers to follow?

A: This is the difficult situation and they can't do anything about that. If the situation is like this, designers might just make it casually and just finish the work.

Q: In general, how many drafts do designers make to choose?

A: Some designers do one in the beginning, and if it passed, it is ok. Some might do two, three or four. And it also happened once one designer made 30 to 40 versions for you to choose. Nowadays, few designers will do so many for you to choose.

Designers are very busy now. They just get one case's money, if they do so many, it's not very worth for them. It's better for them to accept more other cases.

Q: Do designers just take money once?

A: In general, we just paid once. If you make a lot of cases but just choose one, you spend much time on there. The time spending on this can let them do other cases. If you do 3 or 4 and you know it's not suitable, you know that it's time to change person.

Q: How do you usually choose the designer?

A: Many different ways. Usually we let every editor choose by themselves. They can pick up the designer they like or the style which fits this book's style more. Some designers' style might be more like mass culture / popular culture style. If the designer's style is not suitable for that book, they won't find them.

Q: Do media genre books sell better?

A: Not necessarily. Some films are sold very well but the books are not sold well. Some books are sold very well but films are not sold well. Sometimes they are both sold well or both are not sold well, so it's hard to say. I remember one film 'A Monster Calls', which film was not so well but the book was sold very well. Another film, 'Eat, Pray, Love', the film was not sold well but the book was sold very well. Like 'the Hunger Games', the book was sold well and the film was sold well too. So is *Harry Potter* or *The Lord of The Rings*. Another example, we published '*Dragon Knight*' before, the book was sold well. But after the first film, the film stopped. Another one, *The Devil Wears Prada*, the film and the book are both sold well, so it's really hard to predict. Some books, before they are published, you don't know if they will be adapted into film. Some when you decide you will publish, you have already known it will be adapted into film. Or some after you publish it, then you know it will be filmed. Then you just pray for the film sold well, then the book will be sold well.

Q: Do you need to buy the copyright with foreign films?

A: Yes. It's usually 6 years' contract, and sometimes the longer one might be 8 years.



Q: How is digital book in Taiwan now? How is it compared to physical books?

A: In Taiwan, digital books are still fewer than physical books. We don't have our own tool now, which is a different thing from abroad market. However, digital books are still more and more, and more and more people download the books. Just still physical books have more volume. Another problem is in Taiwan, there are not so many people reading books. It's not in physical books, so it's even fewer in e-books.

Q: But it's quite high percentage for publishing books in Taiwan? Especially from our population.

A: It is indeed so much publishing in Taiwan. But there's a news talking about many Taiwanese don't read, but we need to see who they interview. For example, in the book fair, there are many people but people who really want to buy are not a lot. People like to have a look. Taiwanese book fair is a special culture because most foreign book fair is used for buying copyrights. In Taiwan, they also buy copyright, but just focus on selling books more. For discussion about copyright is one the second floor, where there is an agent centre. Some will come to you directly and some will use email to contact.

Q: When the company buy foreign books, is it usually to change to book cover?

A: Not necessarily. If the original cover is very beautiful or the author insists using that cover, it won't change. Or some authors will hope that we can use the original cover, but it's unusual to meet authors who insist because the language is also

different. Some children books or picture books usually keep the original cover because it can keep the original feelings. But the adult books are not like this. It depends on the situation.

Q: If we want to change cover, do we need original foreign author to agree with that?

A: It depends on the contract. Some contracts write that you must show them the cover after you make it, but some write that you don't need to do that. Every contract is different. But now 90% they want to see the cover. They check if there are mistakes of book names or if there are any elements that they don't want to see or if you change their original book title.

Q: When you have deadline, will you work overtime or stay up late?

A: When I was a new editor, I did this. But now I don't do this. Because editor is the exempt employee, no matter you work overtime or not, you need to finish the job. It depends on how you arrange your time. If you can't finish your job in time, you might bring it home to do.

Q: Being an editor, when is the happiest moment?

A: Probably when the book is sold well or the book wins honour or prize, which makes me most happy. The prize of the best choice of book or the best book something like this makes me happiest.

Q: Is it also quite interesting for the process of finding the author? How do you

usually find the author?

A: Some submit their writing by themselves. Some relies on our observation. Some have already published a lot on the Internet, and you have observed them for a long time and find they write quite well. Of course, some are famous from somewhere else and you want to dig them, so there are many ways to find the authors. (Is it possible for the writer to publish in many different places?) Yes, they can jump. Of course, it depends on their conditions. If they feel here is better than there, they will come here. Some people like to change to many places, but some people do not want to change. Some people like to work for the same publisher and some people like to run around different places. All in all, it depends on how good they are and how people cooperate.

Q: About the status of editor, in Japan editor seems like God, how about Taiwan?

A: In Taiwan it is not really. I feel in Europe, America, Japan or China, the status of editor seems higher, and it is not so high status in Taiwan. The editor in Taiwan is more passive and the authors in Taiwan is more powerful and manipulative.

Sometimes authors are more strong and stubborn, so it depends on how editors persuade authors. Anyway, it is a cooperation relationship. Sometimes some editors need to keep communicating or persuading authors and present some reasons for them to believe.

Q: If digital and physical book are published at the same time, do you use the same cover?

A: The content and the cover are both the same. Our e-books original price is also the same. Just sometimes different bookstore do different discount, but they will absorb them by themselves. Because the market is very competitive, most do discounts.

Q: How do you see the book price keeps increasing?

A: Because all material price is increasing, the salary is not growing, you have the feeling that the book becomes more expensive. Now the books' manufacture price is also higher. Even Chinese books are also increasing the price. Their price was lower than Taiwan a lot before. But they don't want their price is lower than that in Taiwan, so they increase a lot now. Nowadays, most books' beginning price is more than 68 Chinese dollars.

Q: How is Taiwanese book quality compared with Chinese book quality?

A: Humanities books in Mainland China, because their publishing amount is a lot, there are still some with good quality. Their literary books become better and better. However, talking about the translation quality, this is another story. Taiwanese editors are pickier and more careful with the words' correctness and preciseness, so it still can keep a standard. Another reason is that in Taiwan, readers are also very picky with the standard. If publishers don't want to be criticized by readers, publishers should be very careful for the quality.

Q: How do you see self-publishing and publishing in Taiwan?

A: Every nation's publishing is a little bit different. In Taiwan, editors have their own

power, so they are quite powerful to do many things. There are not many readers in Taiwan, and exported books are not a lot. Compared with Chinese market supported by their government, there are fewer exported books in Taiwan. There are so many books published in Taiwan because the requirement is low to publish. Publishing so much, in some level, it is because Taiwan has too much freedom. Because publishing is with much freedom, any kind of book can be published. We respect every person's power to publish and don't ban any book. There is totally no limit for any speech freedom. Therefore, it is ok for everyone to publish book such as criticism for the government or politicians. Some publishers' main task is to earn money, so they just accept self-publishing. Our publisher rarely does this. If the author wants to do self-publishing in our company, we will check if it has that worth. If it does not match our brand's feature, we won't accept that. We have the process of evaluation to ensure the quality is stable.

## Appendix 14: Translation of Taiwanese freelance designer

### Interview Translation 4

Interview Time: 18<sup>th</sup> March 2019

Interviewee: 兒日設計 [ R S.U.N. Design] Studio Freelancer

Q: When you design the book cover of Taiwanese books and translated books, what are the considerations do you have? What is the difference between the local market and international market?

A: Designing Taiwanese books relies on the author's taste very much because every author has different taste. Designer need to reach their requirement. Some of their requirements are very ideal and not very specific, which will make design more difficult. About translation books, because most of these need to be processed, the deadline is rusher for me compared with local markets. Translation book and local book both have advantages and disadvantages.

Local market and international market, from my perspective, there is not big difference. I think the common points of these two are the book's content and the author's fame and its influence.

Q: Being an in-house designer or a freelancer, what is the difference and what are the different considerations when designing a book cover? Have you been both designer style? Which one do you prefer and why?

A: To be an in-house designer or a freelance designer, I feel they both have good parts and bad parts. I worked in 'Eslite Design' [The biggest bookstore chain in Taiwan], for me it's a very wonderful process. Because you have colleagues, when you have something that you don't understand and you can ask them and get the answer immediately. The disadvantage is that the time is not free. Being a freelance, the part that I like most is that I can adjust my work time with my family. The time is more flexible. The disadvantage is that I don't have holiday/weekend feelings >>. For the design consideration, most of time I want to know what's the budget, then I will design the cover and combine with the choice of paper and other small things.

Q: Do the publishers prefer to follow the past successful formula for cover design or do they prefer to create the new style?

A: For this part, it depends. More specifically, we need to see how the book is and to make it later.

Q: Do you think the design in Taiwan is more conservative? From your experience, do Taiwanese designers like to learn Japanese, European or American style? Do Asian prefer cute and brighter style?

A: In fact, Taiwanese design is 'super open' (Can we use this term ? lol). It's very diversified and multicultural style. In my opinion, Taiwanese design is not worse than Korean or Japanese design in Asia. It depends on their sense. I don't think Asian

prefer brighter style, but for photography, there are indeed some people that prefer transparent and clean style.

Q: When commercial considerations have conflicts with artistic ideas, what do you deal with that? Do you have any exact example?

A: This part needs to compromise. I will take artistic consideration first, then the commercial consideration. Recently, the related example is Linking' Publishing Series 'Wings'. I remember in the beginning, the author or the decisive team presented a way to revise, but I felt it's very ugly. I actively discussed it with editors and hope they can give up that idea. Finally, I succeeded. (Haha) [laughter]

Q: Which department is the main role to decide the book cover? When they ask you to create a cover, do they usually give you a clear direction to follow or do they just let you decide what to design?

A: It's not always with freedom to design. Most of time, before I accept the case, I will see the book a little bit to decide. Sometimes they don't have any clear direction, so every book's situation is different.

Q: How much time averagely does it take you to finish one book cover?

A: It usually takes me about two weeks to design one book cover.

Q: When the book is written by a very famous writer or by a new unknown writer, is it very different?



A: No. For me, I don't care about who the author is. I just design according to the book itself. So, every author is equal for me.

Q: Who is usually the final one to decide the cover? How many drafts do you prepare mostly?

A: The one who finally decides is usually the author or the chief editor. I usually prepare two drafts for them.

Q: When designing the digital cover and physical cover, do you take different ways to create? What are your different considerations?

A: For my personal experience, I use different ways to design digital and physical cover. For digital book cover, I care about if the size of the words are clear enough to represent and if readers can read them clearly.

Q: For different books, what is the difference to use the colour? If the target readers are women readers, what kind of colour do you usually use?

A: The decision of the colour is quite random for me. But if the book has specific theme or the target readers are women, I use the softer colour, so it is decided by the book's characteristics. Different books have different design style.

Q: Have you ever designed book cover of women's fiction? Does this genre have any preference for any colour or style?

A: Yes, I have designed women's fiction. The recent one is '*German Husband*' [德國]

丈夫] written by 陳玉慧 [Yu-Hui Chen]. The colour I used is soft tone style.

Q: Do you think the cover now lose originality or have more? What do you think?

A: I feel that Taiwanese cover still has very strong originality and the design is very diversified.

Q: Have you had difficulty communicating with author or editor?

A: Of course, I have had this kind of experience. If it is really hard to communicate with them, I would choose to stop cooperation.

Q: As a designer, design skill or communication ability, which one is more important and why?

A: I think these both are very important. Because if you can communicate very well, you still need to have design skill to make it. Vice versa. Besides this, I feel that comprehension ability is also very important. Because the comprehension of editors might be different from yours, I think the comprehension ability is also important.

Q: Do you adjust your design because of marketing needs? How do you get a balance between the importance of marketing and artistic importance?

A: I adjust design according to marketing needs. I will make the maximum of artistic worth within the needs of marketing.

Q: How is the importance of book spine?

A: It's quite important especially in the bookstore or book fair.

Q: Do you have personal style or what kind is your design style?

A: To be honest, I don't know what my design style is, but I design every book based on its unique feature, to make design suitable for that book.

Q: In addition to book cover design, do you do any other design jobs? How have you entered book cover field?

A: In addition to book cover design, I also designed for CD cover before. I also do visual design of theatre and some bookstores' visual design and retail shops' setting visual design.