

In terms of image construction, the literary works at the center of this book, William Shakespeare's *The Merchant of Venice* (1600) and Charles Dickens's *Oliver Twist* (1838), are controversial, and may be disturbing to modern readers, due to their depiction of Jews. Featuring Jewish antagonists, both reflect stereotypes which can be easily interpreted as anti-Semitic. With the belief that there has never been any kind of autochthonous anti-Semitism in the history of China, then how the image of Jews was reconstructed in Chinese translations and in what ways, if any, they were adapted to the Chinese culture? To explore the answer for this question, the Chinese translations by Laura White (1914-1915) and Shiqiu Liang (1936/2001) have been chosen for *The Merchant of Venice* and the translations by Wen'an He (1977/1997) and Rude Rong (1984) for *Oliver Twist* have been selected. The four translations selected were produced in different times, and are imbued with the features of their respective social background.

By intrinsic textual analysis and extrinsic contextual analysis in the light of theories of imagology and paratext, the findings show that the two translators of *The Merchant of Venice* concern themselves with the Jewish identity of the antagonist, each in his or her own way, which can be a sound explanation to why the reconstructed image of Jews varies much from the original. In the two translations of *Oliver Twist*, on the other hand, Fagin still retains his Jewish identity, but the reconstruction of his image is focused on his identity as a criminal. Also, through the analysis conducted throughout this book, it is found that the involvement of the translator as a third party complicates the original 'self-other' opposition in the source text based on imagology. As a result, the (re)constructed image in the translation is possibly not only that of the 'other', but also that of the author.



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# The Image of Jews in Selected Chinese Translations

Reading in *The Merchant of Venice* and *Oliver Twist*



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