

# **Translation and Reception of Contemporary Chinese Crime Fiction in the English-speaking World**

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## **ABSTRACT**

This thesis examines how contemporary Chinese crime fiction in English translation is positioned by publishers and received by lay readers in the US and UK markets through analysis of fourteen Chinese crime novels published between 2008 and 2023. Despite increasing global interest and the emerging prominence of Chinese crime fiction in international markets, there remains limited scholarship on how they accumulate symbolic capital and are received by the target readership. The study addresses this gap by investigating the interactions between publishers' paratextual strategies, lay reader responses, and the evolving image of China in translation.

Drawing on the sociology of translation, the study employs a mixed-methods approach combining paratextual analysis, thematic analysis of 1,085 online reviews from Amazon and Goodreads, questionnaire responses from 126 participants, and insights from 6 focus group discussions with 26 readers in the UK. This data enables an examination of how translated Chinese crime fiction is positioned, received, and interpreted in the Anglophone world, while considering the impact of state policies and institutional support on literature and literary circulation.

The findings reveal how UK and US publishers adopted paratextual strategies as mediators to package and market Chinese crime fiction in the target readership. Digital platforms like Goodreads and Amazon play a part in accessing readers' responses and focus groups bring about more nuanced insights into how lay readers understand and interpret translated Chinese crime fiction. This interaction between texts, paratexts, and readers indicates an evolving image of China in translation.

The research makes contributions to translation studies and reader reception research by

providing empirical evidence of how lay readers respond to Chinese fiction in English translation. It advances the sociology of translation by examining how capital is accumulated and influences the reception of translated genre fiction, and its practical implications for positioning non-dominant literatures in English-speaking markets.

KEYWORDS: Chinese crime fiction, focus group, image of China, lay reader reception, paratext, sociology of translation

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## 当代中文犯罪小说在英语世界的译介与接受

### 摘要

本论文以 2008 年至 2023 年间出版的 14 部中文犯罪小说为研究样本，探析英美出版商对该类译作的市场定位策略，以及大众读者对该类作品的接受状况。尽管中文犯罪小说在全球市场热度渐升，但学界针对其象征资本积累路径、目标读者接受机制的系统性研究仍较为匮乏。本研究通过考察出版商副文本策略、大众读者反馈以及中国形象在翻译过程中的动态演变，以期填补这一研究空白。

本研究以社会翻译学为理论框架，采用混合研究方法，融合副文本分析、亚马逊与 Goodreads 平台 1085 条读者评论的主题分析、126 份问卷调研数据，以及针对 26 位英语母语读者开展的 6 场焦点小组访谈。依托上述数据，本文系统探析中文犯罪小说英译本在英语世界的定位机制、接受现状与阐释模式，同时探讨国家政策及制度支持对文学传播流通的作用。

研究发现，英美出版商以文化中介者的身份，借助副文本策略对译作进行“再包装”与市场定位。Goodreads、亚马逊等数字平台为获取读者反馈提供了重要渠道，而焦点小组讨论则进一步挖掘出大众读者在阅读、理解与阐释译作过程中的认知差异。文本、副文本与读者的三方互动，共同塑造了翻译语境下动态流变的中国形象。

本研究不仅为翻译研究与读者接受研究提供了实证支撑，也深化了对象征资本如何在类型文学场域中积累的理解，对非主流文学进入英语主流市场具有实践启示。

### 关键词

中文犯罪小说；社会翻译学；副文本；焦点小组；读者接受；中国形象