

Taking Advantage of the Dollar: A Case Study of Platitude Press in the Cold War Context, 1950–1954

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Abstract

During the Cold War, Hong Kong occupied a pivotal role as a bridge between the Free World and the Communist World, making it crucial for the United States (U.S.) to counter the spread of communist ideologies. Literary translation emerged as a significant avenue for advancing U.S. foreign-policy objectives by winning over the hearts and minds of audiences worldwide. Consequently, the prevalence of U.S.-commissioned literary translations in Hong Kong became a crucial aspect of Cold War dynamics. Existing scholarly research has primarily focused on the financial support provided by the U.S. to intellectuals involved in literary translations, while overlooking the nuanced perspectives and attitudes of these intellectuals toward such funding. This paper seeks to address this gap by examining the attitudes and reactions of local intellectuals towards financial assistance from the U.S., using Platitude Press (*Renren chubanshe* 人人出版社) as a case study. It argues that the relationship between the U.S. and local intellectuals during the Cold War era was not one-sided but rather interactive, leading to a more complex and multifaceted history of Cold War activities in Hong Kong.

Keywords

literary translation, the U.S.-commissioned translation, Hong Kong, the Cold War, Platitude Press