



Sound and Script in Chinese Diaspora

Jing Tsu

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In this original and interdisciplinary work, Jing Tsu advances the notion of "literary governance" as a way of understanding literary dynamics and production on multiple scales: local, national, global. "Literary governance," like political governance, is an exercise of power, but in a "softer" way - it begins with language, rather than governments. In a globalizing world characterized by many diasporas competing for recognition, the global Chinese community has increasingly come to feel the necessity of a "national language," standardized and privileging its native speakers. As the national language gains power within the diasporic community, members of the diaspora become aware of themselves as a community. Eventually, they move from the internal state of awakened identity to being recognized as a community, and finally exercising power as a community. But this hegemony of the "national language" is constantly being challenged by different, nonstandard language uses, including various Chinese dialects, multiple registers, contested alphabet usage, and Chinese men and women who write in foreign languages. "Literary governance" reflects both the consensus-building power and the inherent divisiveness of these debates about language and is useful as a comparative model for thinking about not only Sinophone, Anglophone, Francophone, Lusophone, and Hispanophone literatures, but also any literary field that is currently expanding beyond the national.



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