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Illegal Noise
—**The Sound of Change in H. T. Tsiang's**
And China Has Hands

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Abstract

This paper examines the role of sound in H. T. Tsiang's 1937 novel *And China Has Hands*. Sound, and its dialectical partner, silence, work in this novel to create a "sonic landscape" in which a cognitive map of identity, community, political affiliations, oppression and resistance might be sketched. Tsiang's use of sound adds an aural dimension to the text which is typically ignored by readers accustomed to Western modes of reading. This paper examines how Tsiang produced a narrative that emerges from enforced silence to emphasize the value and limits of orality in Chinese culture. Those limits cause Tsiang to seek new cadences and choruses within an internationalist working-class movement modulated by racial, ethnic, national, and linguistic differences, in a common struggle for liberation.

Key Words: literature, Chinese-American, H. T. Tsiang, sound

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