

## **Global Exoticism and Modernity: The Case of Chinese-Language Pop Music**

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Central to Orientalist perception was/is the belief that exotic others remain stuck in an eternal past and are thus not part of historical evolution and modernity. This convenient fiction reinforced the West's notion of its own superiority and modern status in an enduring dynamic in which the exotic Oriental or primitive other serves as a stable benchmark for the West to measure its own "progress." Appropriating elements of such exotic cultures has consistently allowed western agents to proclaim their own modernity. Until recently, discourse on musical exoticism and globalization has focused primarily on how the West imagines, represents, and appropriates its others and on how music flows "from the West to the Rest." Yet exoticism is global and has operated throughout history, often in support of state-sponsored modernization programs. Just as examples of self- and intra-Asian exoticism unsettle our models of Orientalist appropriation and representation, certain geo-cultural regions such as East Asia appear to be engaged in creating transnational musics more independently of the West.

My focus is on examples of intra-Asian Orientalism and cultural flows, specifically on examples of Chinese-language popular music that appear to appropriate Peking opera and the musics of Chinese ethnic minorities and thereby lay claim to modernity. I will offer a comparative perspective by pointing to developments in Asian American popular music and will also reveal the ways in which ethnomusicologists and entertainment industry globalization have shaped this music both directly and indirectly. To what extent do the Taiwanese-based superstars Wang Leehom, David Tao, and Jay Chou recapitulate western Orientalism in their music videos? To what extent do such musicians succeed in undermining Orientalism through parody and by reclaiming derogatory language in their creation of a "chinked-out" pop style?