Introduction

The Walt Disney Company occupies a globally influential position within the landscape of cultural production. Its animated features, theme parks, and media conglomerates widely propagate its narratives, critically shaping worldviews of audiences. Today, Disney's works are globally consumed cultural artifacts that have been integral to entertainment for generations.

Disney is not only a storyteller, but also a commercial Western entity with market-driven imperatives. Walt Disney believed in the "terrific power of music," asserting that films would be "dragging and boring" without it; music imbues them with "life and vitality" (Tietyen, 1990). Following this philosophy, Disney expertly leverages music to propel narratives and establish depicted identities. Yet, just as music communicates culture, music also transmits ideas and concepts. Thus, Disney's influences must be rigorously scrutinized, as the corporation prescribes ideologies beneficial to Western dominance. In recent film releases, Disney has noticeably incorporated more accurate depictions. **However, critics question whether Disney's efforts genuinely constitute cultural appreciation or merely sophisticated forms of appropriation.**

Through analysis of musical soundtracks, scholarly critiques, and interviews with involved musicians, this case study investigates how Disney's animated films' musical representation of non-Western cultures has evolved since the 1990s. It examines what drove these transformations and whether such changes represent meaningful progress. Although Disney has replaced the stereotyped music of its earlier films with collaborative compositions of its modern releases, this methodological shift masks a continuity in power. This case study posits that current inclusion strategies only serve to insulate the corporation from critique, allowing it to commodify cultural difference while maintaining strict Western control over the final product.

Theoretical Grounding

Music as Music Culture. Music cultures encompass not only sonic elements but also ideas about music, social organization, and the contexts that give music meaning. Mark Slobin extends this framework to examine power hierarchies between "supercultures" (dominant musical systems) and "subcultures" (subordinated musical traditions). When Disney extracts musical elements from their original music cultures and recontextualizes them within Western superculture frameworks, the corporation risks teaching listeners to hear non-Western music cultures only through Western paradigms (Titon & Slobin, 1996).

Cultural Hegemony. Gramsci theorized that dominant groups maintain power through consent, making their worldview appear a natural truth. Hegemonic systems adapt to absorb critique rather than relinquish control, evolving their methods while preserving structural dominance (El Aidi 2). This notion explains how institutions appear to change while fundamental power dynamics persist.

Orientalism. Edward Said details how Western culture constructs non-Western societies as exotic, inferior "Others," justifying dominance through representation (El Aidi 6). Orientalism operates through selective imagery that reduces complex cultures to stereotypes serving Western fantasies. **Said's framework propels cultural hegemony, as it shapes how audiences perceive difference as natural hierarchy rather than enforced power.**

Cultural Appropriation vs. Appreciation. This study distinguishes appropriation from appreciation according to power dynamics. Appreciation involves reciprocal exchange between groups of relatively equal power, with fairly distributed creative authority. Appropriation occurs when dominant groups extract cultural elements without redistributing power or centering source communities in creative decisions (Manuel 5).

Commodity Racism. hooks argues that capitalism transforms ethnic identity into marketable "spice"; difference enhances flavor but never replaces the mainstream foundation (hooks 366). Under commodity racism, diversity serves commercial interests while preserving structural inequality. Cultural collaboration becomes sellable, allowing corporations to profit from appearing culturally-conscious. **Commodity racism names the economic motive driving appropriation, where financial motives incentivize cultural extraction over genuine exchange.**

The Culture Industry. To complement the concept of commodity racism, Adorno and Horkheimer coined the term "culture industry" to describe how mass media subordinates artistic integrity to profit maximization and standardizes cultural creations to ensure marketability. This logic positions Western conventions as "universal" emotional language while treating non-Western structures as financial risk. The culture industry reveals why commodity racism persists: profit imperatives drive corporations to appease critiques while preserving extractive practices (Adorno & Rabinbach, 15).

Methodology

This study employs a multi-method approach, combining ethnomusicological analysis of musical scores with critical discourse analysis of production materials.

Interviews. Interviews with both Western composers and non-Western cultural consultants provide crucial insight into creative decision-making. While the available evidence may not fully capture the lived experiences of all consultants, they still provide sufficient information.

Source Music. To investigate change over time, this study categorizes Disney's musical evolution into two distinct periods, using a select few scores released by Walt Disney Animation Studios. These designations are not official categories but are constructed in this case study to better delineate the shift in methodologies:

- **Phase I (The Renaissance Era):** Evidenced by critiques of *Aladdin* (1992) and *Pocahontas* (1995), this phase represents the era of explicit "Othering" and reliance on pre-existing colonial tropes.

- **Phase II (The Modern Era, Post-2010):** Documented through studies of *Moana* and *Frozen II*, this phase is characterized by formalized partnerships (cultural trusts, advisory boards).

Secondary Analysis. This study also draws on analyses from ethnomusicologists and cultural experts to identify how cultural signifiers are deployed through music. It also incorporates critical studies scholarship examining Disney's societal influences.

2. Phase 1: 1990s

During Phase I, Disney relied on pre-existing colonial tropes, deploying music as superficial signification rather than informed representation.

2.1. Aladdin (1992)

Aladdin (1992) deploys Orientalist musical tactics that define the Arab world as savage and inferior. The opening song, "Arabian Nights," initially described the Middle Eastern setting as a place "[w]here they cut off your ear / If they don't like your face / It's barbaric, but hey, it's home" (Menken and Ashman 1992). While protests forced a lyrical revision, the retained line, "It's barbaric, but hey, it's home," signaled the film's ideological stance (King et al, 2011). These lyrics frame the setting through a "white gaze," geographically and morally positioning American culture as superior to the depicted "Other."
<SONG>https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W0Pf3SL6GKs</SONG>

Musically, composers Alan Menken and Howard Ashman utilized "aural shorthands," recognizable markers of exoticism rather than authentic Arabic music (Taxidou 2022). For example, the augmented second interval is not specific to Arab culture but is a generalized Western signifier for foreignness. Such aural shorthands expose a crucial power dynamic where European fantasies, not Arab people, define Middle Eastern identity in the film. More fundamentally, Disney treats Arab music culture as a repository of exotic sounds rather than a living tradition with its own significance.

Furthermore, excluding Arab musicians underscores the exploitative approach of this era. "A Whole New World," the film's romantic theme, abandons these exotic signifiers entirely for a standard Broadway ballad structure. While the "Other" provides exotic flavor, Western musical hegemony persists through the sonic theme of the film (Baber & Spickard, 2015).
<SONG>https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xYjFxFFdyyk</SONG>

2.2. Pocahontas (1995)

Disney's *Pocahontas* (1995) and its score functions as a historical sanitization project, romanticizing the violent colonial encounter between the Powhatan people and European settlers. The song "Savages" represents genocide as a misunderstanding from both sides, equating Indigenous resistance with colonial violence and effectively erasing the historical power imbalance of the conflict (Petschow 2014). Its dramatic orchestration and parallel structure reinforces harmful stereotypes under an inaccurate representation of history.

<SONG>https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a1qXXzPUBt8</SONG>

Conversely, "Colors of the Wind" employs a Western pop ballad structure that simplifies colonialism's complexity (Menken & Schwartz, 1995).
<SONG>https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hcmpj5HPue0</SONG>

It highlights the "postcolonial exotic," by crafting a "safe" version of Indigeneity that appeals to Western romanticism while stripping away harsh reality (Devipriya, 2025). The lyrics articulate Indigenous ecological wisdom, a problematic front in two ways. First, the lyrics, derived from a fabricated speech, displace specific Powhatan worldviews with generalized environmentalism (Pewewardy 1996). By filtering Indigenous philosophy through a Western pop ballad structure, the film transforms cultural difference into marketable spectacle. Even the lyric's "blue corn moon" imagery was invented for sonic appeal, drawn from the Algonquian "green corn moon" (Schwartz 2010). Second, the music overlooks past genocidal violence and reframes colonization as environmental conflict. Environmentalism is a universal problem that doesn't directly confront Western society. Pocahontas becomes "indigenous in aesthetic but universal in appeal," as the movie prioritizes its audience's comfort over historical accountability (Devipriya 2025).

3. Phase II: 2000s and beyond

In response to criticism, Disney transitioned to a strategy of formalized collaboration for its films, from establishing advisory boards to hiring cultural advisors. Yet, analysis suggests that Western governance persists despite these procedural changes.

3.1. Moana (2016)

Disney positioned Moana (2016) as a triumph of faithful representation. Following research trips to Pacific Islands, directors John Musker and Ron Clements established the Oceanic Cultural Trust, an advisory body comprising experts from Pacific Island nations ("How the Oceanic Cultural Trust" 2016). For instance, the film incorporated Polynesian languages in the soundtrack and featured specific elements drawn from extensive collaboration. Disney's marketing extensively highlighted this collaborative process, positioning the project as a culturally responsible effort.

Despite this, musical production demonstrates the limits to this collaboration. Although Polynesian musician Opetaia Foa'i contributed distinct rhythms and lyrics, Western composers Lin-Manuel Miranda and Mark Mancina retained ultimate creative authority.

Ethnomusicological analysis uncovers that Polynesian elements are systematically "wrapped" within Western musical tropes (Armstrong 2018). Namely, the songs' starts and ends utilize Western orchestration and harmonic structures to frame its Polynesian sounds. Even "We Know the Way" (Miranda, Foa'i, and Mancina), featuring Foa'i's compositions, adheres to Western pop verse-chorus structures and is performed by Miranda (Armstrong 2018). <SONG>https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ubZrAmRxy_M</SONG> This "wrapping" signals to global audiences that Indigenous elements are acceptable only when contained within recognizable American conventions. Polynesian musical contributions provide an additional flair of culture without disrupting the Western musical foundation. In an interview, Foa'i even notes how Disney instructed him to revise his compositions for "English ears," which further highlights how marketability was prioritized over authenticity (Chapman 2017). The advisory process extracts legitimacy rather than relinquishing actual creative authority. It exemplifies commodity racism: the corporation adopts a collaborative image only to placate its audiences, while preserving the decision-making power.

3.2. Frozen II (2019)

Following criticism of Frozen (2013) for its superficial use of generalized Scandinavian motifs, Disney implemented a formalized partnership for Frozen II (2019). They formed the *verddet*, an advisory group comprising Sámi artists, elders, and other experts, to ensure respectful representation of Sámi culture. The *verddet* successfully improved visual accuracy, correcting the generic "frozen north" aesthetics of the first film (Mihailova 2025).

<SONG> https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hThEIOeMTgM </SONG>

Conversely, the musical soundscape, under the direction of Western composer Christophe Beck, remains subject to erasure of Indigenous specificity. "Vuelie," the franchise's iconic opening chant composed by Sámi musician Frode Fjellheim, mixes the "chant-like" *joik*, the traditional Sámi vocal form, with classical vocal style co-written with Beck (Mihailova 2025). Originally, Frozen (2013) featured "Vuelie" without acknowledging its origins, using it solely to score the film's exotic atmosphere. The composition was used for its "memorably melodic opening tune," not its cultural significance as a Sámi chant (Mihailova 2025).

Frozen II (2019) attempted to rectify this by featuring the song in a ritual welcoming Elsa and Anna into the *Northuldra* community, mimicking the Sámi tradition of *joiking* for acceptance into society. Yet the performance still relied on the non-Sámi Cantus choir rather than Sámi voices, perpetuating what scholars term "slippage between 'Sámi' and 'Scandinavian'" and recontextualizing the ritual into background music (Mihailova 2025). The scene provides no explanation of the ritual's cultural meaning, trivializing it into background music instead. <SONG>https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L9L2VvObQXM</SONG>

Lead composer Beck also mischaracterizes "Vuelie" as "Hey Na Na music" and refers to *joiking* as a "Northern European yodel" and "Scandinavian element," obscuring its Indigenous Sámi roots in favor of vague geographic markers that erase cultural specificity (Mihailova 2025). This failure by a key creative figure to correctly identify cultural tradition directly undermines Disney's public claims of respectful cultural stewardship. The film also substitutes *kulning* (non-Sámi Scandinavian cattle call) for *joik* in a mysterious voice calling Elsa, despite their distinct ethnic roots. *Kulning* aligns with Western expectations of "magical" Nordic fantasy; *joik* might sound too unfamiliar (Fuller 2020).

<SONG>https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZTLRr3BIygc</SONG>

<SONG>(Scandinavian Kulning) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TRT8_m8aoow</SONG>

Thus, although Sámi traditions enrich the film's texture, they do not define its sonic identity. Disney only includes elements when they do not disrupt the established Disney aesthetic.

Discussion

The comparative analysis demonstrates that while Disney's methods have evolved from exclusion to consultation, fundamental mechanisms of cultural power remain structurally intact.

Phase I exemplified Said's Orientalism, specifically Arab and Indigenous cultures constructed as exotic Others through stereotypical musical signifiers and complete exclusion from creative processes. The augmented second interval in *Aladdin* and the fabricated "blue corn moon" in *Pocahontas* represented extraction without consultation.

Phase II evolved rather than eliminated Orientalist logic. Disney now incorporates non-Western creators on terms that preserve Western authority. When Foa'i revises lyrics for "English ears" or Beck dismisses joik as "Hey Na Na music," collaboration occurs without power redistribution. The corporation transitioned from blatant Orientalism to sophisticated commodity racism: ethnic identity provides marketable "spice" while Western conventions structure the final product.

Gramsci's hegemonic adaptation explains the shift. Rather than rejecting critique about racist representation, Disney absorbed it by inviting consultants into the process while retaining final creative command. The system appears more ethical because of its inclusion of diverse voices, yet the fundamental architecture of decision-making remains unchanged. Consultation creates moral cover for continued appropriation.

The Economic Imperative: Why Structural Change Remains Constrained

The culture industry framework reveals why structural change remains impossible. Disney executives assume—reinforced by decades of market data—that Western musical

conventions constitute "universal" emotional language ensuring profitability, while non-Western structures represent financial risk.

Economics explains the systematic "wrapping" pattern in *Moana* and the substitution of *kulning* for *joik* in *Frozen II*. These are calculated commercial decisions prioritizing marketability over cultural integrity. Collaboration itself becomes marketable, allowing Disney to profit from appearing culturally responsible while maintaining extractive practices. Under commodity racism, diversity is valuable because it can be sold, not because power has been redistributed.

Music culture

Through musical appropriation, Disney dismantles entire music cultures by severing sounds from the social organizations and cultural contexts that give them meaning.

When Disney's production process simply isolates sonic elements to use as aural shorthands, it destroys the music culture: the social relations of its performance, material culture, and ideas about music are all subordinated to Western superculture.

In many cases, Disney invites representatives of non-Western music cultures into Western-controlled production spaces. The advisory process functions as extractive, where consultants provide cultural data that Western decision-makers recontextualize for commercial consumption. Source communities subsequently lose control over how their music cultures are represented and valued globally.

What audiences learn from such films is a Western superculture's version of these music cultures, where non-Western musical traditions provide exotic enrichment to Western narratives, require Western framing to achieve emotional legitimacy, and see their own interpretations rendered irrelevant.

Weighing Progress Against Persistent Limitations

Fair interpretation requires acknowledging procedural improvements. Phase II consultants gained unprecedented platform and creative input. Indigenous artists like Foa'i and Fjellheim achieved global visibility, reaching hundreds of millions. Young Polynesian and Sámi viewers encounter characters who speak their languages—representation holding psychological value absent from earlier complete erasure. Reception among source communities varies. Some celebrate any visibility while others critique persistent power imbalances. Structural critique doesn't negate the value some community members find in Disney's evolving representations.

Yet acknowledging advances must not preclude structural critique. The improvements demonstrate evolution within hegemonic systems, not liberation from them. Disney progressed from complete exclusion to limited inclusion, from denying consultation to marketing it. These are meaningful steps that nonetheless preserve Western dominance.

Conclusion

Disney's three-decade evolution in representing non-Western cultures constitutes sophisticated hegemonic adaptation, not genuine decolonization. The corporation reformed methods without relinquishing structural power.

The trajectory demonstrates Gramsci's theory: dominant systems absorb critique to maintain power rather than redistribute it. In the 1990s, the mechanism was Orientalist exclusion and crude stereotyping. Today, consultative appropriation invites "Others" into the room without handing over creative authority. Visible improvements in recent film scores from *Moana* or *Frozen II* should not obscure persistent reality: Western composers retain final authority and non-Western elements accessorize Western frameworks..

The significance extends beyond Disney. These patterns shape how billions encounter cultural differences during childhood's formative stages, conditioning audiences to perceive Western musical conventions as emotionally sophisticated and universal while non-Western traditions appear as exotic enrichment. For children from represented cultures, musical heritage requires Western framing to achieve validity—cultural hegemony's ultimate function.

True decolonization requires redistributing creative authority. Until Indigenous and non-Western creators hold power to define their own sonic narratives by structuring films around their musical traditions rather than Western conventions, Disney's music will remain a sophisticated instrument of Western hegemony disguised as respect.

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Add'l Case Studies

LILO & STITCH

The musical architecture of *Lilo & Stitch* (2002) presents a complex case of cultural engagement, simultaneously celebrating Indigenous Hawaiian culture while subtly reinforcing the dynamics of Western assimilation. The score's most direct and profound commentary is achieved through the integration of specific, highly symbolic Hawaiian songs:

- The film's introductory musical piece, "He Mele No Lilo," is a tribute to King Kalakaua and Queen Liliʻuokalani, the last monarchs of Hawaiʻi. <SONG>https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kvznYJEFh1w </SONG>This song is performed entirely in Hawaiian, though its true meaning is lost on the majority of the Western audience. Furthermore, the film uses "Aloha 'Oe," a notable Indigenous Hawaiian song written by Queen Liliuokalani, which symbolizes the historical loss of the Hawaiian Kingdom to Western rule (Kim & Gregory, 2023). <SONG> (Lilo & Stitch - Alona ʻOe) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v6cYHXcWAN0 </SONG> When the character Nani sings and signs this song to Lilo, facing imminent separation by Child Protective Services, she symbolically links her family's plight to the subjugation of the Hawaiian people by the U.S. government, casting the government agency as the antagonist (Casley 2016). This musical reference acts as the film's "most direct textual commentary of American colonization" (Kim & Gregory, 2023).

However, the dominant *nondiegetic* (non-narrative) soundtrack asserts a normalizing Western musical presence, prioritizing familiarity for the American audience.

- The film relies heavily on American cultural markers, particularly Lilo's obsession with Elvis Presley, whose music is used by Lilo to cope and to compel Stitch to assimilate into American customs and norms. This dynamic positions Lilo as a colonizer who subjects the new "Other" (Stitch) to American values through Elvis's music.<SONG> https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bX_OY7iwOb4 </SONG> The influence of Elvis Presley is significant, as his own filmography aided in the gentrification of Hawaiʻi by presenting it as an exotic island paradise. This inclusion of his music reinforces the colonial gaze, compelling the Indigenous character to assimilate to American customs (Eshow & Lundsgaard 2023).

Peter Pan

The history of Disney's non-Western musical representation is rooted in earlier, overt displays of caricature, exemplified by the 1953 film Peter Pan (Lugo-Lugo & King 2010). This film employed a foundational colonial mechanism identified before Phase I of Disney's history, relying on crude, generalized sonic markers and amalgamation to signal exoticism. The song "What Made the Red Man Red?" explicitly reinforced racist discourse, utilizing music to perpetuate

stereotypes under the guise of entertainment.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xGKnCUnAsus
The song's composition and context reveal its primary function as an exercise in "othering":

- **Musical Stereotyping and Exoticism:** The score features chanting, a pervasive use of drums, and "invented gibberish" such as the refrain "Hana Mana Ganda". This generalized and inauthentic portrayal, accompanied by drumming, was intended to sound "Indian" to a Western audience (Lugo-Lugo & King 2010). The use of simplistic drum patterns and repetitive melodies became a stereotype affixed to Native Americans in subsequent media (Anderson 2019).
- **Reinforcement of Colonial Hierarchy:** The song attempts to answer the questions posed by the white Lost Boys regarding the origins of Indigenous people, including why they are "red" and why they say "How" and "Ugh". The lyrics include derogatory terms like "Injuns" and "squaw". The explanation provided—that Indigenous people became "red" when an ancestor blushed after a kiss, suggesting "sexual anticipation"—sexualizes indigeneity itself (Wainer, n.d.). The entire sequence is structurally designed to frame Native Americans in a stereotypical manner, presenting them as inferior to the white protagonists and contributing to the normalization of negative stereotypes.

This musical approach established a precedent for reducing non-Western cultures to generalized, easily consumable tropes. Even when drawing from source material, the Disney adaptation "doubled-down on racial stereotypes", cementing the practice of prioritizing Western caricature over respectful cultural specificity (Laskow n.d.). This early film demonstrates how the music functions ideologically to normalize racial prejudice and shape perceptions of minority groups as "other".

Encanto

The musical representation in Encanto (2021) is one of Disney's more successful examples of its new collaborative paradigm, succeeding in cultural celebration by foregrounding inclusion.

Encanto successfully showcases and celebrates Colombian heritage, distancing the country from previous negative stereotypes of drug trafficking and violence (Jiménez 2024). Its soundtrack—developed after Lin-Manuel Miranda and the filmmaking team conducted research on the ground in Colombia—integrates distinctly local musical elements, including traditional genres such as bambuco and vallenato, and instruments like the marimba and arpa llanera. Germaine Franco, an American-born Latina composer, infused the score with Colombian rhythmic structures and collaborated with Colombian recording artists, most notably Sebastián Yatra. This commitment to structural inclusion, where culturally affiliated creators hold key roles, helped deliver a nuanced, affirming narrative that highlights the Colombian values of family and tradition. The soundtrack received widespread critical acclaim and monumental commercial success, demonstrating that films with authentic cultural foundations can achieve massive global popularity. Notably, "Dos Oruguitas" is an all Spanish-language song that critics perceive to be Encanto's best song (*Billboard*, 2022). <SONG>
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DUGtyj5QIEM </SONG>

Despite high praise, even Encanto demonstrates a persistent toward cultural amalgamation and centralized control, however.

1. While the music draws on Colombian specifics, the soundtrack blends distinct ethnocultural sounds into broader, marketable pan-Latin genres. For example, the popular song "We Don't Talk About Bruno" primarily uses the guajira rhythm <SONG> https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bvWRMAU6V-c</SONG>characteristic of Cuban *son* <*SONG*>(Guajira) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8VCxWPhP4XI <*/SONG*>, and the film features a track titled "The Dysfunctional Tango" in an Argentine style (Jiménez 2024). <SONG>https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1LikmGyZylA </SONG> <SONG> (Argentinian Tango) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wQf-yx4QB8s </SONG> This deliberate amalgamation contributes to assimilation, where distinct ethnocultural groups are blended into one, implying absorption into the mainstream Latin (like the Oriental "Other") identity acceptable to a mass audience.
2. The film's attempt to incorporate the Colombian *bambuco* genre in the song "Waiting on a Miracle" was critiqued for lacking its characteristic polymetric nature where "binary and ternary durations overlap rhythmically [and] binary and ternary melodic articulations alternate" (Jiménez). <SONG>https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jKKrfr4To14 </SONG> <SONG> (Bambuco) https://www.youtube.com/shorts/48i4gnrYFCw </SONG> The resulting composition was noted for sounding like generic "folk" rather than authentic bambuco, and its simplified rhythmic character meant the musical arrangement prioritized a Western waltz-like form for broad audience appeal.

Mulan

The music of Mulan (1998) exemplifies musical Orientalism, where Disney abstracted Chinese cultural elements and reconfigured them to conform to Western commercial demands. Although the film's plot is based on Chinese folklore, the score, composed by non-Chinese American Jerry Goldsmith, prioritized Euro-American musical structures. The music signals "Oriental" identity by employing a Western symphony, which was considered necessary to remain palatable to a Western audience. For example, in song "Honor to Us All," its composers relied on broad musical stereotypes, specifically pentatonic scales and generalized melodic phrases, which American viewers had long been conditioned to interpret as "Asian-sounding" (Amer 2022). <SONG> https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-1S9pYmpkG8</song>

This musical architecture also reinforces a binary dichotomy between Eastern and Western ideologies. When Mulan pursued individualism, aligning her with progressive American values, the corresponding music, such as her solo "Reflection," was exclusively Western in style (Amer 2022). Conversely, scenes depicting oppressive aspects of Chinese society, like antiquated gender roles, were accompanied with a more stylized "Oriental" sound, utilizing aforementioned pentatonic themes; this explicit pairing communicates to the audience that Eastern values are backwards and repressive. <SONG>
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