*Comparative Studies in Society and History* (2023), 1–27
doi:10.1017/S0010417523000117

CAMBRIDGE
UNIVERSITY PRESS

RESEARCH ARTICLE

# Opera as Critical "Synthesis": Theorizing the Interface between Cosmopolitanism and Orientalism

Aeron O'Connor

Anthropology, University College London, London, UK
Email: aeron.oconnor@ucl.ac.uk

## Abstract
For centuries, European operas have portrayed dramatic, exotic Others on stage. However, as opera is increasingly adopted around the world, including by those "Eastern" Others it orientalized, its Othering tendencies serve new, more critical purposes. Post-colonial studies of knowledge and cultural production have shown how relations between centers and peripheries, knowledge and power are integral to forms of orientalism. In Tajikistan, the accounts of opera told today by the daughter of a successful Soviet Tajik composer bring to light the ambiguity of power relations and positionalities in Soviet opera's production. Her accounts, beyond highlighting opera's readily apparent orientalist tendencies, reveal surprising cosmopolitan aspirations in Soviet Central Asian opera. Cosmopolitan histories and values also feature heavily in post-colonial politics of knowledge production, but the concept appears worlds apart from, even in opposition to that of orientalism: the latter feeds off center-periphery, knowledge-power relations, while the former aspires to evade them. Through this present-day account of opera's development in Soviet Tajikistan, this article challenges this opposition, theorizing a conceptual ambiguity and interdependence between orientalism and cosmopolitanism, which has important consequences for knowledge-producing fields like opera, as well as anthropology. Multiple forms of orientalism and cosmopolitanism overlapped and interacted in the development of Soviet Central Asian opera as numerous, intersecting meanings and socio-political agendas went into its production. Ultimately, a conceptual space emerges *between* the orientalism(s) and cosmopolitanism(s) at play. This ambiguous space in-between offers a lens for critically evaluating the complex, uneven practice of portraying and engaging with Others.

**Keywords:** opera; cosmopolitanism; orientalism; anthropology; Tajikistan; Persianate; Soviet; Central Asia; post-colonialism

## Introduction

Among its many gargantuan projects, the Soviet Union set itself the task of building an opera house in every Soviet capital city, sending Russian-trained composers and

© The Author(s), 2023. Published by Cambridge University Press on behalf of the Society for the Comparative Study of Society and History. This is an Open Access article, distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution licence (http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0), which permits unrestricted re-use, distribution and reproduction, provided the original article is properly cited.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0010417523000117 Published online by Cambridge University Press

musicians to all its republics to train local artists in classical music, opera, and ballet. Places and people with no prior involvement in opera soon became active participants and audiences in the Soviet world of opera. This serious financial and logistical investment was intended to show that socialism could modernize its newly formed republics—particularly those in the "peripheries"—and unify diverse people as Soviet citizens through shared cultural forms (Tomoff 2004). The idea that a sixteenth-century European artform, which often portrayed non-white Others in exoticized and orientalizing ways, would be used to unify and modernize people outside Europe with extremely diverse musical traditions of their own rings of cultural colonialism. But some accounts told today in Tajikistan, a former Soviet Central Asia republic, reveal more nuanced local approaches to histories of colonization and orientalism in this context.

The first person who introduced me to Tajik opera was Munira Shahidi, the daughter of Ziyodullo Shahidi (1914–1985), one of Tajikistan's leading Soviet composers. A scholar herself of comparative literature, whose doctoral thesis focused on British Orientalism, her accounts of opera in Soviet Central Asia today make limited mention of the power inequalities between Central Asia-based composers and ones based in Soviet cultural centers like Moscow. Munira's accounts, by contrast, highlight the centrality of Central Asian operas in the history of Soviet opera, in the process complicating, even undermining, the power relations between Soviet centers and peripheries.

In this essay I analyze the ways Munira speaks today about opera and her use of the concept and practice of cosmopolitanism to interpret opera's history. When her accounts of Soviet Central Asian opera are put into dialogue with existing scholarship on the topic, a complex web of orientalist attitudes and cosmopolitan ideals is revealed, two concepts that at face value do not easily sit together. While opera's orientalist history of portraying exotic, often "Eastern" Others is well documented, its cosmopolitan tendencies to link diverse places together through shared ideas and aesthetics is less considered. Orientalism, rooted in a process of Othering and creating hierarchical distinctions between people, and cosmopolitanism, in theory a practice of unifying diverse people in shared spaces, each have their own specific historical legacies. At the heart of both, however, are questions of the relationship between knowledge and power, across and between centers and peripheries.

Following the anthropological practice of focusing on one ethnographic example or thinking through an interlocutor's life or accounts, this essay thinks through Munira's interpretation of Soviet Central Asian opera to explore and theorize the ways in which cosmopolitanism and orientalism sit and work ambiguously together. By analyzing Munira's accounts against the backdrop of, primarily English-language, scholarship on the histories she discusses, I will theorize the ways in which socio-political and geographical imaginaries pivot around a cosmopolitan-orientalist ambiguity, highlighting how opera serves multiple agendas and audiences. In Soviet Tajikistan it facilitated various cultural, historical, and power relations in different ways at different times.

As I explore these histories of opera, a sometimes disorienting back and forth emerges between different ideals, imaginaries, and rhetorics of cosmopolitanism and orientalism. Multiple different forms of cosmopolitanism and orientalism exist in these histories, rather than a single homogenous form of either. Moreover, the ideas and ideological agendas that went into Soviet Central Asian opera were, I will show, simultaneously cosmopolitan *and* orientalist. By highlighting the broad spectrum of

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0010417523000117 Published online by Cambridge University Press

power relations present in opera in Soviet Tajikistan, as well as in closely connected Azerbaijan and Uzbekistan, I will ask how the circulation and reception of operas create overlapping agendas, slippages, and ambiguities in meaning. Through these ambiguities, which surface in her accounts of opera's history and meaning in Central Asia, Munira engages in debates around cosmopolitanism and orientalism, concepts that often frame scholarly approaches to the region, which has not only been a site of colonization since the early-to-mid-1800s, but also been at the center of empires, trade routes, and intellectual and religious networks for centuries.

My ultimate aim in analyzing this example of opera in Soviet Central Asia, as interpreted by Munira in the present, is not to make a claim on opera, Soviet or otherwise. Following Højer and Bandak's (2015) work on the power of example in anthropology, I intend to think through the material as example, in order to make a conceptual provocation. Examples are a "powerful prism for thinking anthropologically" because they explore and straddle the tensions between "the specific and the general, the concrete and the abstract, motion and structure, ethnography and theory" (ibid.: 6). To break down the evidential structures that separate ethnographic from anthropological worlds, Højer and Bandak point to foundational theoretical works that in reality "are only [or simply] examples—[Geertz's] Balinese cockfight as webs of significance, [Mauss'] Maori *hau* as social life, or [Foucault's] panopticon as power" (ibid.: 14). Looked at in this light, "exemplification can also be said to be theory in the realities we study" (ibid.). The scale of what is examined and argued here—that there exists an ambiguous and interdependent relationship between orientalism and cosmopolitanism—may be more modest, but it speaks to important debates in social theory around the politics of post-colonial knowledge production (Bhabha 1994; Moore 2001; Chari and Verdery 2009).

Orientalism and cosmopolitanism are valuable and pressing concerns in anthropology today because, as both practices and concepts, they have profoundly shaped anthropology's inception, as well as critiques made of it (Asad 1973; Bauman and Briggs 2003: 255–98). By focusing on how cosmopolitanism and orientalism sit ambiguously together, how one is sometimes instrumentalized as a panacea for the other, tensions and unresolved histories of knowledge production and cultural authority in opera, as well as anthropology, are revealed (Harrison 1997; Trouillot 2003; Foks 2018; Gibbings 2020; Jobson 2020). Opera has received scant attention from anthropology, even though it speaks to several conceptual issues at the heart of the discipline. Opera has historically been tasked with fascinating and creating phantasms for audiences, often based on non-white or non-Western Others, while anthropology's role has been to deconstruct such ethnocentric fascinations by traditionally looking at non-Western societies (Kotnik 2016). However, as anthropology becomes increasingly introspective, of itself as a practice, of the societies in which it was formed, and of the Others it turns into research subjects, opera's capacity for anthropological inquiry, social analysis, and historical reflection opens up. If we approach opera with an interest in the history of ideas, "opera gives … expression to ideas about the self, society, and history, on the one hand, and how attitudes toward society, culture, and politics have shaped great operatic works on the other" (ibid.: 26). In showing the ambiguous interconnectivity of cosmopolitanism and orientalism as relevant to anthropology and opera, I reveal an array of empowering possibilities and dangerous traps that both cosmopolitanism and orientalism can offer knowledge and cultural producers. Before introducing more

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0010417523000117 Published online by Cambridge University Press

thoroughly the concepts of cosmopolitanism and orientalism within the contexts discussed here, let me explain how I first became aware of a cosmopolitan-orientalist ambiguity in present-day accounts of opera.

*****

After a chance encounter in 2016 with a Tajik opera singer who had lived and performed in Italy for nearly thirty years after Soviet collapse, Munira, who was at the time organizing an international conference on "Music of the New Silk Road," encouraged me to prepare a paper that explored the links between Italian and Central Asian opera. This led me to research and present a paper on the Italian opera *Turandot* by Giacomo Puccini, which Puccini began composing in 1920, but whose history stretches much further back and merges fictional and true historical characters from across Eurasia.

*Turandot*'s story was originally penned by the celebrated twelfth-century Persian poet Nizami Ganjavi from modern-day Azerbaijan. His *Haft Peykar* (The Seven Beauties) tells the tale of the Sassanian ruler Bahrom, who finds portraits of seven princesses from seven different places across Eurasia and North Africa. Bahrom falls in love with each, seeks them out, marries them, and has a domed room built for each to live in. While in their company, each princess tells him a tale. The one told by the "Slavonian" princess is closest to the tale of *Turandot*, a strong-willed, intelligent woman who sets her suitor four difficult challenges to solve before she accepts his marriage proposal.

In 1710, more than five hundred years after Nizami wrote the original tale, the French Orientalist and diplomat François Pétis de la Croix wrote a five-volume collection of fairy tales titled *A Hundred and One Days*, which he claimed to have heard in Isfahan, Iran from a Sufi dervish. One of these tales, *Turandot*, likely originated from Nizami's *Haft Peykar.*[1] De la Croix's version of *Turandot* is set in China, but, as the name indicates, it tells the story of the daughter of Turan (*dokht* means "daughter" in Persian).[2] De la Croix's *Turandot* was subsequently turned into a play in 1762 by the Italian playwright Carlo Gozzi, and in 1801 was translated into German by Frederich von Schiller and performed in Weimar under the directorship of Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, author of the *West-Eastern Divan*, which was inspired by the Persian poet Hafez (Weatherford 2010). Thus, before Puccini had even laid hands on the text, this twelfth-century Persian-language tale had traveled through the words and minds of some of Europe's most famous writers.

Puccini's *Turandot* was premiered at La Scala in Milan on 25 April 1926, around the same time that Central Asia was being divided into five Soviet Socialist Republics. Just five years later, in 1931, the opera was first performed in Moscow at the Bolshoi Theatre. In 1934, Gozzi's earlier iteration of the play was performed at the State Theater for Tajikistan's Cultural People's Commissariat in Dushanbe (later renamed Lohuti Theatre), directed by Homidjon Makhmudov, who had received theatre training in Moscow. The play was accompanied by an orchestra that performed Tajik and Uzbek melodies, and tried to combine Italian *commedia d'arte* with the local, folk *maskharaboz* theater tradition of comedic social commentary and critique

[1]There is new speculation that *Turandot* may also have been influenced by tales of the Mongolian emperor Chinggis Khan's great-great granddaughter Khutulun, an unparalleled wrestler who defeated any male suitor in matches (Weatherford 2010).

[2]'Turan' was the term once used by Persian-speakers to refer to non-Persian-speakers, particularly Turks in Khorasan and Oxus river territories (Bosworth 2011).

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0010417523000117 Published online by Cambridge University Press

(Nurjanov 1967: 144–50).[3] As Nurjanov put it, "the old 'Chinese tragic-musical tale' sounded good on the Tajik stage. The story of the arrogant and cruel beauty Turandot and Prince Calaf, who was passionately in love with her, captured the viewer with fun, irony, poetry, musical tonality, cheerfulness" (ibid.: 147).

Like many other operas, Puccini's *Turandot* centers around his fascination and exoticization of the East, particularly China:[4] Princess Turandot's strong, cruel character reinforces racist stereotypes of Asian women; the three Chinese ministers (invented by Puccini) also reinforce racist stereotypes with the names Ping, Pang, and Pong; the Prince of Persia is loosely based on ideas of the Persian world; and the Prince of Tartary's father is inspired by and named after Timur, the founder of the Timurid Empire. This exoticization of the tale's characters was not unique to its European iterations however, since Nizami's original *Haft Peykar* arguably also told the story of cosmopolitan love through an exoticization of women from seven different places.

When I presented this history of *Turandot* to the audience of scholars from across Central Asia, the Caucasus, and Russia at Munira's conference in Dushanbe, participants were pleasantly surprised to hear of *Turandot*'s roots in Persian classical literature. Several, including Munira, asserted that this was part of a wider history of literary and musical exchange between the Persian world and Europe. This artistic connectivity could be understood, I was told, through a history of cosmopolitanism across Eurasia. In the discussion that followed, participants paid little attention to the orientalizing aspects of *Turandot* I had pointed out, which led me to ask how an opera can be created out of clearly orientalist tropes, yet also generate historical accounts of cosmopolitanism among a primarily Soviet-educated "Eastern" audience.

In subsequent conversations with Munira, she spoke of her father's works, and their relationship to the broader Soviet world of opera and to Persianate music and literature. She also paid special attention to the pre-Soviet Azerbaijani opera *Leyli və Məcnun*, by composer Uzeyir Hajibeyli. In weaving together operas and composers across geographical and temporal boundaries, Munira's accounts today emphasize a cosmopolitan social imaginary that surrounded, fed, and was sustained by operas in Soviet Central Asia. However, review of the political backdrop to these operas at the times of their production undeniably highlights orientalist practices and attitudes that compete with the claims of cosmopolitanism I heard surrounding their production. Given Central Asia's longstanding connections to the Caucasus, I will focus here on a couple notable examples of composers from Azerbaijan and Uzbekistan, as well as from Tajikistan. This choice of examples reflects the porous ways in which operas, as well as cosmopolitan and orientalist ideas and practices, traveled across national borders both before and during Soviet times. Before I analyze the ways in which cosmopolitanism(s) and orientalism(s) are simultaneously present in these histories of opera, I will analytically review both concepts as they relate to the Soviet Union, the Persianate cultural sphere, and opera. This is an initial attempt at holding both concepts together in a productive way before I explore the example of

[3]The performance style followed that of Russian-Armenian director Vakhtangov's own famous Moscow production of *Turandot* in 1922.

[4]Other notable European operas set in a fantastical East include Handel's *Poro, Re dell'Indie*, Bizet's *Les Pêcheurs de Perles*, Massenet's *Le Roi de Lahore*, and Deilbes' *Lakmé*. See Wolff (2016) for analysis of the portrayal of Turks in European opera.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0010417523000117 Published online by Cambridge University Press

Soviet Central Asian opera, as interpreted by Munira and in relation to existing scholarship.

## Cosmopolitanism and Orientalism in Context

Orientalism and cosmopolitanism are both heavily loaded terms and were each leveraged in the early Soviet years for political gains and to unify the USSR's republics. Here I map out Persianate and Soviet ideas of cosmopolitanism, both of which have shaped Tajikistan, and then bring these forms of cosmopolitanism into dialogue with the different forms of orientalism that have fed into Soviet Central Asian history: the Saidian definition of orientalism and Soviet Oriental studies. For clarity, I use lower-case "orientalism" and "orientalists" to refer to the practice of orientalizing others, and upper-case "Orientalism" and "Orientalists" to refer to the discipline and scholars of Oriental studies, though this distinction does not preclude that Orientalist scholars can also orientalize others.[5] These multiple, anachronistic histories of cosmopolitanism and orientalism make use of very different, even opposing ideas of these concepts, but all are relevant here as they each relate to the issues of cultural authority in Tajik opera, the relationship between Soviet "centers" and "peripheries," and how artistic knowledge and cultural influence or power work hand in hand. In reviewing and weaving together in new ways the existing literature on cosmopolitanism and orientalism, I show here the ways in which the two concepts can be inextricably linked on conceptual as well as historical levels.

### *Cosmopolitanisms*

While the term cosmopolitanism may conjure images of universal, shared social spaces and ideals among diverse peoples, it is in fact a highly flexible concept that takes on wide-ranging local specificities with different social potencies depending on its usage. In the European context, enlightenment thinkers like Kant envisioned cosmopolitanism as a utopian political order in which peace among all people is maintained. Elsewhere, cosmopolitanism has other histories, meanings, and values, and some of these have to an extent come into social existence in various places throughout history (Pollock et al. 2000; Ho 2002; Hamid and Khan P.M. 2017).

As a Persian-speaking country, Tajikistan is widely understood to be part of the historic Persianate cultural sphere, or cosmopolis. This refers to societies that were interconnected from the ninth to early nineteenth centuries CE by Persian language and literature (Gould 2015; Green 2019; Amanat and Ashraf 2019; Pickett 2020). This is comparable to other cosmopolitan linguistic spheres like Latin or Sanskrit. At its peak—from the 1500s to 1700s—as a transregional lingua franca in literary, educational, bureaucratic, diplomatic, religious, and commercial life, Persian reached the Caucasus, Anatolia, the Iranian Plateau, Central and South Asia, western China, and parts of Siberia. In each of these places, Persian mixed with local languages. The only officially Persian-speaking countries today are Iran, Afghanistan, and Tajikistan. Many of the other places in the historic Persianate world that no longer speak Persian still share some cultural and literary tropes,

[5] For a discussion of when and how imperial power intersected with Orientalist scholarship, see Morrison (2009: 620), Khalid (2000), Knight (2000), and Todorova (2000).

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0010417523000117 Published online by Cambridge University Press

vocabulary, and musical and other creative influences, though the degree to which this shared history is legitimate or important to people across these diverse places varies significantly.[6] The Persianate sphere was closely intertwined with Arabic, Turkic, and Islamic worlds and languages, but the overarching presence of Persian explains the term "Persianate," coined by Hodgson (1974: 293). For instance, people in the territories of today's Azerbaijan and Uzbekistan were actively part of the Persianate cosmopolis, even though they are primarily Turkic-speaking. An alternative term that Canfield (1990) proposes to describe these contexts in which Persian, Turkic, and Arabic came together is "Turko-Persian," which I will use here too, particularly when discussing Azerbaijani and Uzbek contexts. By focusing on the "Persianate" world, I do not intend to impose a Persianate identity or history upon people. I am engaging with scholarship on the Persianate cosmopolis in order to analytically look beyond ethno-national borders (Gould 2015; Pickett 2020). This is useful for understanding the various points of reference Munira employed when discussing "Tajik" opera. While in Dushanbe I never heard the English term "Persianate," its meaning and history are explicitly referred to when using terms like "Persian" or even simply "cosmopolitan," either in Russian (adj. *kosmopolitichni*) or in English.[7] I rarely, if ever, encountered the use of Persian-language terminology to refer to it in conversation.[8] When pressed to provide me with a Tajik term for cosmopolitan, some would offer *shahri* (lit. of the city).

As well as being part of the Persianate cosmopolis, modern-day Tajikistan was part of the Soviet Union and can still today bear the weight of the Soviet definition of cosmopolitanism (n. *kosmopolitizm* in Russian), which took on a dangerous meaning under Stalin's rule. *Kosmopolitizm* was rebuked throughout the first half of the Soviet period, but its condemnation intensified in the late 1930s and culminated in an anti-cosmopolitanism campaign from 1949 till Stalin's death in 1953. To be *kosmopolit* (cosmopolitan) in those years was to be too interested in the non-socialist world, politically unattached, unpatriotic, and untrustworthy to the Soviet Union. These accusations led to the arrest and execution of thousands, the majority of whom were Jewish. However, given this essay's focus, it should be noted that, in the world of music, anti-cosmopolitanism was not as clearly motivated by anti-Semitism, but rather by a desire to further "Russify" music and those working in it (Tomoff 2006).[9]

In contrast to this Soviet definition of cosmopolitanism, which made it a stigmatized and dangerous idea, the closely connected concept of Soviet internationalism was heavily endorsed by the state. At the core of both internationalism and *kosmopolitizm* were the idea of universality, but each

[6]The Persianate cosmopolis was far from a harmonious, unified whole where all people across social classes had equal access and engagement with the Persian lingua franca, in part because Persian was mostly a shared written, rather than spoken language (Spooner and Hanaway 2012).

[7]Persianate cosmopolitanism also encompasses Muslim and especially Sufi cosmopolitanism. No clear-cut distinction can be drawn between the "Persianate" and "Muslim," since the former is highly influenced by Arabic and many influential Persian writers were Muslim. For how Islam relates to cosmopolitanism, see MacLean and Ahmed (2012), and Hopkins and Marsden (2011).

[8]See Grant (2010: 133–34) on terminology used to refer to cosmopolitanism in Baku, Azerbaijan.

[9]This inevitably came at the expense of Jewish musicians since many of the most influential figures in Soviet music were Jewish and they made up the largest minority in the field (Tomoff 2006: 168). While anti-Semitic sentiments persisted, Soviet Russians were given positions at the expense of Jewish candidates because they were *not Russian* rather than because they were Jewish—in the USSR Jewish people were considered their own ethnic group, regardless of whether they were also Russian.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0010417523000117 Published online by Cambridge University Press

revolved around a different form of universality with different boundaries. Both espoused a universality that was hence never truly universal. Internationalism emphasized universal class-consciousness around the world, encouraging a degree of looking outward beyond Soviet borders, but it simultaneously maintained an emphasis on national differences and confines, both within and outside the USSR (Humphrey 2004). *Kosmopolitizm* did not adhere to this latter point, since *kosmopolity* (pl. cosmopolitans) were seen to be "rootless," without national (or at least Soviet national) allegiance (ibid.; Grant 2010: 131–32). However, the inconsistent and selective labelling of *kosmopolity* throughout the USSR hints at some of the paradoxes within the concept and rhetoric of *kosmopolitizm*, which I engage with later. While the taboo of *kosmopolitizm* can sometimes still linger in Tajikistan today, particularly among older generations, other pre-Soviet forms of cosmopolitanism, like a historic "Persianate" one, are leveraged by some to disassociate themselves from the limited and damaging idea of *kosmopolitizm*. In what follows, I show how both Persianate and Soviet forms and definitions of "cosmopolitanism" could coexist and compete, despite their dramatic differences. But crucially, the accounts I analyze of cosmopolitanism in Tajik opera cannot be disentangled from orientalist histories and accounts.

## *Orientalisms*

Orientalist scholars—linguists, historians, ethnologists, and so on—in Tsarist Russia and later the USSR, helped understand and administrate Central Asia from the mid-1800s on and to shape the fifteen Soviet republics: they mapped out people, languages, religions, and cultures and developed ethnic and, eventually, national identities for each Soviet republic. In the early Soviet period, "knowledge about 'the Orient' was not only produced—in Saidian terms—to rule the 'Orientals,' but … was also appropriated by Central Asians [who became Orientalist scholars themselves] in order to gain access to resources, recognition and power" (Battis 2015: 741). The earliest Soviet Orientalists were predominantly from European Soviet territories, but gradually the field became populated by scholars from across the Soviet republics (Edgar 2004: 5; Abashin 2007: 190). Oriental studies and the practice of orientalizing others are therefore different, yet interconnected practices that are highly context dependent.

Importantly, ideas of cosmopolitanism played a significant and often controversial role in Soviet Orientalism, too, as Orientalists were at the center of much of the debate, and even rivalry, over the politics of culture, language, and identity in the USSR's republics. Approaches to identity formation swayed between stressing a whole, unified identity across all of Central Asia and emphasizing individual, national historiographies and identities within each of the region's five newly formed republics (Hirsch 2000: 189). Some Orientalists fought back on this latter approach since, they argued, Central Asia was too culturally, linguistically, and ethnically interconnected to be divided into neat republics with separate identities—the Persianate sphere was just one source of cross-border and cross-ethnic interconnections. Some who held this view, however, were accused of rootless *kosmopolitizm* in the 1930s and 1940s for putting inter-cultural unity before cultural (national) distinctness and thereby threatening Soviet agendas for international unity (Bustanov 2015: 56). One such scholar accused of this was Aleksandr

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0010417523000117 Published online by Cambridge University Press

Semenov (1873–1958), originally from Russia, who spent most of his career in Uzbekistan and Tajikistan and advocated for the recognition of both Tajik- and Uzbek-speaking peoples and cultures. In 1931 he was arrested for being part of the "reactionary-bourgeois" school of Orientalist thought. He was then fired from his professorship in Tashkent and exiled to Kazan, but later returned safely to Tashkent. Later again, during the anti-cosmopolitanism campaign, he was accused of racism and forced to flee from Tashkent to Dushanbe (Battis 2015: 737–38).

### Common Ground

Not unlike cosmopolitanism then, orientalism has conceptual flexibility, making both terms still today hotly debated as well as oft-instrumentalized across scholarly, political, and ideological spectrums (Khalid 2000; Knight 2000; Todorova 2000; Pollock et al. 2000; Pollock 2001; Bauman and Briggs 2003: 255–98; Kemper and Conermann 2011; Kemper and Kalinovsky 2017). Held together in this light, questions emerge on the relationship between knowledge and power, across and between centers and peripheries. In the traditional, often romanticized conception of cosmopolitanism, shared languages and identities like Persian create a cultural and political order that transcends the local, obfuscating centers and peripheries as points of reference (Pollock 2006: 10; Kia and Marashi 2016: 380). During the Soviet anti-cosmopolitanism campaign, however, many of the measures taken to ostracize *kosmopolity* from society involved regular monitoring of peripheral Soviet nations from Soviet centers like Moscow, exporting Russian cultural figures to the peripheries to help shape new national identities and cultures there, and sidelining "rootless" intellectuals who did not associate closely enough to a national, socialist identity (Tomoff 2004). While the campaign was not explicitly about centers and peripheries, it implied that national socialist life and identities had to be spread and monitored not only to "peripheral" places but also to "peripheral" people: *kosmopolity* were in this sense peripheral individuals who tested Soviet "ideas of spatiality, movement and citizenship" (Humphrey 2004: 139).

These center-periphery, knowledge-power relations are equally fundamental to orientalism: in the Saidian definition, orientalists are physically and intellectually separate from the "Orient" and "Orientals," who are themselves excluded from Orientalist scholarship (Said 1978: 21; Khalid 2000: 693; Morrison 2009: 623). Those who orientalize are therefore centers of power and knowledge, and the orientalized are peripheral.[10] Soviet Orientalism, however, in part because it was populated and sometimes even led by scholars from the Soviet "Orient," became a scholarly landscape in which people "central" to "centers" of knowledge and power over "peripheral" people and places originated from all over the Soviet Union, including its "peripheries"—though spatial and racial hierarchies were, and remain, far from eliminated (Morrison 2009; Khalid 2000; Koplatadze 2019). While relatively little has been written about opera in Central Asia, the unequal

[10]Said problematically does not include Russian imperialism in his account and critique of Western orientalism (Khalid 2000: 695). He treated Russian imperialism differently to that of the British or French, who "jumped thousands of miles [by sea] beyond their own borders to other continents" (Said 1993: 10) while Russia acquired bordering territories. This explanation seems to excuse Russia's imperialism and severely underestimates the "infinitely rougher" mission Russia undertook to cross overland from Moscow to Tashkent and beyond across steppes, deserts, and mountain ranges (Moore 2001: 119).

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0010417523000117 Published online by Cambridge University Press

power relations between Soviet centers and peripheries present in its development there are, understandably, almost taken for granted in much existing scholarship. Munira's accounts of Tajik opera however, further complicate these tensions between power and knowledge, and centers and peripheries of cultural production.

## Creating Persianate Operas

Opera houses were built at great expense in every Soviet capital city, Russian-trained composers and musicians were sent to "peripheral" republics to train local musicians, and promising local musicians and composers were sent to Moscow and Tashkent for formal training in conservatories (Frolova-Walker 1998; 2016; Tomoff 2004; 2006; Kalinovsky 2016). The arts were considered so central to Soviet unity that during the Second World War members of arts institutes in Kyiv, Moscow, and Leningrad were evacuated to "peripheral" Soviet cities for their protection and so they could continue producing music to sustain wartime unity and allegiance. As Munira's father noted in his 1986 memoir, this led to the more "peripheral" cities becoming populated with some of the USSR's leading composers, musicologists, writers, and artists (Shahidi 1986: 32). Tashkent, for instance, housed the second highest number of evacuated composers, including the Leningrad Conservatory for a time (Tomoff 2004: 67). Scholarship on Soviet opera focuses on the ways in which its development was driven by an urgency to create uniformity in cultural forms, and for these forms to mimic those already established in centers like Moscow. Munira's accounts add new dimensions to existing scholarly accounts focused on the roles of Moscow, Kyiv, Leningrad, and Tashkent as feeding mechanisms for peripheral places like Dushanbe. She gives far more weight to the agency and independence of local cultural producers from her father's generation than to the pressures they were under to conform to centrally dictated cultural policy.

Who had cultural authority and what forms of culture society valued were hotly debated in Central Asia long before the Soviet formation. In our conversations, Munira described the turbulence her father's generation grew up in. He was born in 1914 in the ancient city of Samarqand, which later became part of the Turkic-speaking Uzbek SSR. His mother was well educated and his father was, as Munira put it, "free-thinking" and affluent, and he ran a music salon where prominent *shashmaqom* musicians and singers performed and discussed music.[11] Prior to the Bolshevik Revolution, his parents were surrounded by the conversations and initiatives of the Muslim modernist Jadid movement, in which local progressive intellectuals scrutinized traditional cultural life. In the 1920s, Ziyodullo moved with his parents to Dushanbe, the newly established capital of the Persian-speaking Tajik SSR. Like many progressives of his generation, Ziyodullo's father was later arrested and killed in the Great Purges of 1937 for his reformist, cosmopolitan views on music and society. Despite this enormous personal loss, Ziyodullo later rose to prominence in the Tajik SSR as a leading composer.

In his memoir, Ziyodullo describes meeting and interacting with various Russian-trained musicians in Samarqand and Dushanbe like Listopadov, Lensky, and Balasanyan, who were sent there to help develop national socialist musical culture

[11] *Shashmaqom* is a form of modal music closely connected to Azerbaijan's *mugham* tradition and primarily performed in Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, and Xinjiang.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0010417523000117 Published online by Cambridge University Press

(Shahidi 1986: 30). After the Second World War, Ziyodullo went to study at the Moscow Tchaikovsky Conservatory, where he composed his first symphonies. As Munira put it, her father and other Central Asian intellectuals of his generation "knew both schools of knowledge—the traditional, regional and the modern, European systems—and they combined them." Their local education and upbringing meant they were fluent in local languages, schools of thought, and artistic styles, themes, and techniques, which were later complemented by their exposure to Russian language and European epistemologies and modes of artistic expression. Her father went on to compose numerous operas, songs, and symphonies that, as Munira put it, "synthesized" local and Russian musical forms.

Crucially, in our various conversations on the topic, Munira emphasized that the inspiration to combine Russian (or European) and local systems of knowledge in Central Asian music did not solely stem from "centers" of Soviet opera in Moscow or Leningrad, but also came from local, pre-Soviet socio-cultural agendas. She traces the roots of opera in early Soviet Tajikistan to a pre-Soviet Azerbaijani opera, rather than a "European" or "Russian" one. In 1908, Azerbaijani composer and playwright Uzeyir Hajibeyli (1885–1948) produced the opera *Leyli və Məcnun* (Leyli and Majnun), considered to be the first opera of the Muslim world. Hajibeyli was born under the Russian Empire, learned Persian and Arabic in the *madrassah* school system, and later attended a Russian-Azerbaijani school.

The opera's tale was taken from the famous story by the same name in the Persian and Arabic literary canons, originally dating back to the seventh century in Arabic. Hajibeyli's opera was based on the Turkic rendition of the tale by sixteenth-century poet Fuzuli. The Persian poet Nizami, who inspired Puccini's *Turandot*, had earlier popularized Leyli and Majnun from Arabic into Persian, which Fuzuli, who was trained in Persian, likely used to pen his Turkic-language version. "Leyli and Majnun" tells the tragic story of Qays's uncontained love for Leyli. He recited poems about her in public and became known as Majnun (literally, insane or mad), leading her father to refuse his marriage proposal. Ultimately both Leyli and Majnun died untimely deaths. This tale is still widely present in the social and literary consciousness of the broader "Persianate" world: countless songs refer to Leyli and Majnun, and in everyday speech, referring to someone as one's Leyli or saying that someone has made a Majnun of them are shorthand expressions for professing one's love.

Hajibeyli's 1908 *Leyli və Məcnun* opera told this story of unrequited, tragic love by combining musical and narrative forms from Azerbaijan, Europe, and Russia. This combination reflects Azerbaijan's historical legacies within the Turko-Persianate world, having been part of Iranian empires for centuries, before its territories were gradually conquered by the Russian Empire in the nineteenth century. European and Russian influence became most pronounced once oil was discovered in Azerbaijani territory and its capital Baku became a booming cosmopolitan city with an international arts scene. This diverse history influenced Hajibeyli's opera as he merged more traditional local musical forms into the operatic genre: he "replaced classical operatic arias with *mughams*, which were improvised in the course of operatic performance. Choruses and ensemble numbers, appearing between the improvised *mugham* sections, were fully notated. Even so, these choruses and ensembles were written in the style of the song-like and

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0010417523000117 Published online by Cambridge University Press

dance-like interludes characteristic of the traditional *mugham* form" (Huseynova 2016: 32).

Munira recounted how this early rendition of *Leyli və Məcnun* was performed various times around Central Asia before the Bolshevik Revolution and that this, rather than later socialist cultural policy, was a catalyst of sorts for the transformation in the region's musical consciousness. These performances were attended by local intellectuals, some of whom were the parents of Soviet Central Asia's most notable future composers such as Mukhtar Ashrafi (1912–1975) in Uzbekistan, Ahmad Jubanov (1906–1968) in Kazakhstan, Veli Mukhatov (1916–2005) in Turkmenistan, and Ziyodullo Shahidi in Samarqand before his family moved to Tajikistan. None of these nations existed yet but would soon become Soviet republics. Hajibeyli's opera was accessible to Central Asian audiences in several ways: many already knew its storyline through the Turko-Persianate literary canon; *mugham* was familiar as it was closely related to Central Asian *maqom* music; and most Central Asians could follow the Azeri, a Turkic language, spoken on stage. Hajibeyli thus weaved these recognizable musical and narrative features and styles into European-influenced harmonic choral music, accompanied by a symphonic orchestra that played a synthesis of Eastern and Western instruments. The chorus, a polyvocal narrative form mostly unfamiliar to Central Asian audiences at the time, was used to move the plot along, comment on the storyline, and reflect on the psychological state of the main characters.[12]

Audiences therefore recognized in *Leyli və Məcnun* an intertextual spectrum of familiar and unfamiliar "texts" (narratives and sounds), a combination of "others' words, varying degrees of otherness or varying degrees of 'our-own-ness,' varying degrees of awareness and detachment" (Bakhtin 1986: 89). Scholarly accounts of the development of opera and classical music across Muslim Soviet republics regularly note that orientalist tropes were integrated into productions to fit Russian social imaginaries of these places (Frolova-Walker 1998: 351–52; Tomoff 2004: 213). Yet, Azerbaijani musicologist Huseynova (2016) rejects the view that Russian orientalism was the yardstick of musical production in these republics, especially Azerbaijan. While acknowledging that some Azerbaijani composers were influenced by Russian musical depictions of the "East," she argues that numerous others, including Hajibeyli, used local musical traditions to reinterpret Western music on their own terms. Like Munira, Huseynova describes this process as a cosmopolitan-inflected "East-West synthesis" that "creat[ed] different vectors of power" (ibid.: 50) within compositions. Here we begin to see the ways in which overlapping claims of orientalism and cosmopolitanism in Soviet "peripheries" can compete. Rather than attempt to resolve these competing accounts and claims, I aim here to elucidate the tensions and ambiguities that feed them.

[12]Most music in the Caucasus and Central Asia was not historically polyvocal. *Mugham* and *maqom* were traditionally performed by a single vocalist, accompanied by two or three musicians, each playing a different instrument. Soviet cultural policy later altered this mono-vocality. *Shashmaqom*, for instance, became a large multi-vocal and multi-instrumental performance (Huseynova 2016: 54).

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0010417523000117 Published online by Cambridge University Press

## Opera as Cosmopolitan or Orientalist?

### *A View from Russia*

To start exploring these tensions and ambiguities, it is helpful to briefly look further back at orientalism in nineteenth-century Russian opera. As educated Russian elites tried to carve out a distinct national identity through music and, in the process, make sense of their neither-European-nor-Asian identity, they developed musical "Russianness" in two ways and for two different audiences. The first of these was the quest for a "return" to an imagined Russian purity and innocence, through a selection of folksongs that expressed the perceived quintessential Russian sentiment of melancholy. From the mid-1800s, the foundations of Russianness were identified in its peasantry, in "'simple man'" (Dostoyevsky 1922: 10, in Frolova-Walker 2007: 3), and involved European-educated gentry temporarily living among peasants, extrapolating folksongs and images of peasant life, and "fantasiz[ing] abstractly on the organic *russkiy narod* (Russian nation)" (Frolova-Walker 2007: 3) based on their "ideal image of original innocence … in pre-Petrine Russia" (ibid.: 13). This, I contend, is reminiscent of early evolutionist anthropology's conceptualization of the "noble savage" in rural and non-Western societies, problematically never accounting for the unequal power relations between researchers and research subjects.

The second quest for Russianness in music, from the late 1800s, stemmed from the desire to impress European audiences with something that would, to a European ear, appear musically accomplished and distinctly Russian.[13] This sometimes resulted in a self-orientalization for European audiences as composers presented what became a trademark fairy-tale Russianness with oriental characters, themes, and dancing on European stages. Here, set design and costumes were as important as the music. After seeing the performance of Musorgsky's *Khovanschina*, one audience member described the "exotic, garish colors and exaggerated shapes [that] 'gave us a vision of some cyclopic land that was nevertheless nothing but Russia…. In a word, this was the wild beauty and the previously unseen picture of a European barbarism'" (Frolova-Walker 2007: 48). Crucially, Frolova-Walker notes that the word used to convey "barbarism" in Russian is actually *aziatchina*, which literally means Asianness: "European barbarism" therefore reflected the self-perception of Russians as neither European nor Asian but something in-between. Not only were the costumes exotic, but the music too "was itself heard as bright, decorative, exotic and fantastic; no Russian tragic soul was in view" (ibid.: 49).

While these two melancholic and exotic approaches to musical Russianness for different publics varied greatly, they were both reliant on the construction and dissemination of self-orientalizing musical idioms that were familiar to audiences who "would perceive [them] as unmistakably Russian" (ibid.: 45). Arguably, these practices of nineteenth-century orientalism were both an orientalization of the self for non-Russian audiences, especially in the later exoticizing approach, and an orientalization of the Other as, in the melancholic approach, elite Russian composers in urban centers reified Russia's rural peasants. These practices of orientalizing both self and Other appear to have laid the groundwork for the complex orientalizing practices in Soviet musical production that spanned fifteen

[13]Though the definition of national and Russian operas was often open to interpretation (Helmers 2014).

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0010417523000117 Published online by Cambridge University Press

republics and the USSR's attempts to grapple with these multiple national and ethnic identities.

In the midst of this complex multi-directional (self-)orientalizing, cosmopolitanism in the form of Soviet internationalism (cosmopolitan in the broadest sense of the term) became indispensable in creating recognizable yet diverse musical idioms and genres across each Soviet republic. Music was produced to be characteristic of each newly formed national culture and identity it represented as well as accessible and recognizable to audiences from elsewhere across the USSR. In our conversations, Munira frequently used the term "synthesis" to describe the process of combining musical forms to create local operatic music, a genre that referenced multiple canons and could be appreciated in different ways by different audiences within the Soviet Union. This practice of synthesis that Munira describes her father and Hajibeyli practicing allows their works to be read, I posit, as simultaneously "cosmopolitan" and "orientalist."

To contextualize, the process and desire for synthesis that Munira refers to originated from, and extended to, far beyond music in the socio-political landscapes of the Caucasus and Central Asia. From the late 1800s, modernist movements rose across the Muslim world, calling for social, political, and religious reform. The aforementioned Jadid movement in Central Asia, for example, tried to modernize and redefine the culture that Islamic society valued by introducing modern technologies and systems of knowledge production into society, from printing presses to formal schools in place of traditional *madrassah* schooling (Khalid 1998). Music and other forms of cultural expression came under scrutiny, too, and "new schools" of music and dance were established. The modernizing ambitions of Jadid members initially worked in favor of the socialist revolutionary forces that were sweeping the region from 1917 on, providing local support for the implementation of Soviet rule there that emphasized collective modernization (Khalid 2000; Morrison 2009). While initially, in their own way and for their own agendas, both early Soviet and Jadid ideals emphasized cultural unity and modernization, their differences quickly emerged, however. Over multiple cycles of political reshuffle and persecution from the late 1920s to the early 1940s many local intellectuals, including Jadid members and some Orientalist scholars, were turned into enemies of the state, incarcerated, and even executed for their liberal "bourgeois" or "rootless" cosmopolitan views, seen to impede Soviet progress in Central Asia. This same accusation was levied against Ziyodullo's father before he was executed. These figures were labeled *kosmopolity* because they were perceived to be more interested in non-socialist than socialist sources of socio-cultural unity in and beyond the region.

This had a direct impact on the world of music. Ziyodullo's generation, born in the 1910s and 1920s, followed those at the heart of the Jadid movement. They were the pioneers of Soviet Central Asian opera, coming of age and becoming professionally active in the 1930s. Notable examples from this generation include Shahidi, Ashrafi, Jubanov, and Mukhatov, who Munira explained were influenced by early performances of Hajibeyli's *Leyli və Məcnun* in Central Asian cities, which their parents attended.[14] Until the mid-1950s, their careers were spent under the ongoing shifts in national and cultural policy that impacted and were impacted by Orientalist

[14]See Rajabov's (2015) description of Shahidi's later engagement with Azerbaijani composers.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0010417523000117 Published online by Cambridge University Press

studies and the political turmoil and persecutions just described, not to mention the two world wars. These events directly affected their work opportunities, the content of their compositions, and the recognition they received.

From the mid-1930s, the doctrine of socialist realism was introduced, encouraging artistic styles in each republic to reflect local aesthetics, as long as the "content" of works was socialist: "national in form, socialist in content," as Stalin put it in 1934. In practice, this meant introducing Russian repertoires across all republics, integrating them into local, national ones, modifying local instruments to suit Western musical forms, and creating polyphonic folk orchestras in place of traditionally monophonic performance styles (Frolova-Walker 2016: 160). Socialist realism therefore required composers to conjure a sense of commonality across the Soviet world through a shared "language of scales, intervals, and rhythms" (Levin 2002: 191), while also celebrating local particularities in each republic. These national forms were in great part informed by scholarship and research produced at Institutes of Oriental Studies across the USSR, as well as by Russian orientalist musical tropes (Frolova-Walker 1998).

This is where a tension between cosmopolitan and orientalist tendencies can be identified. While in the early Soviet period the interpretation of cosmopolitanism (*kosmopolitizm*) took on a heavily stigmatized meaning, a push emerged from the 1930s on to achieve socialist realism and Soviet internationalism, in its essence the socialist aspiration for collective unity across enormously diverse people and places, which is arguably also a form of cosmopolitanism. Yet, in order to achieve the broadly cosmopolitan ambition of socialist realism and Soviet internationalism, the vernacular particularities across this shared socialist space had to equally be enhanced and drawn attention to, arguably a form of orientalism. This ambiguous relationship between cosmopolitanism and orientalism, I argue, led to the involuntary nurturing of a space between the two, out of which cultural production, like opera, emerged. This complicates the way in which we analyze the positionality of opera's producers and who has cultural authority over it. This can be observed more closely in Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, for instance, and the various attitudes that existed toward opera there.

## *A View from Central Asia*

In Tajikistan, divisions formed between those who resisted and supported the introduction of musical notation, professionalized training, and the general "Russification" of local music (Kalinovsky 2016).[15] There were also varying degrees of commitment to the process of "synthesizing" local and Western music: those who promoted European homophony and polyphony were deemed "progressives," of whom Ziyodullo Shahidi in Tajikistan and Mukhtar Ashrafi in Uzbekistan are notable examples. Those who argued for preserving traditional monophonic vocal and instrumental performance were labelled "conservatives" (Tomoff 2004). Shahidi, originally from Samarqand, and Ashrafi, originally from Bukhara, both embraced the changes sweeping musical life in the region, and both

[15]For instance, some Tajik intellectuals "attacked the obsession of 'harmonization' in music" (Kalinovsky 2013: 200) at the 1956 Second Congress of the Union of Composers of Tajikistan.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0010417523000117 Published online by Cambridge University Press

had been trained in local musical forms like *shashmaqom* before they were sent to the Moscow Conservatory—Ashrafi in 1934 and Shahidi in 1946.

Munira pointed out that her father's upbringing in Samarqand among modernizing *shashmaqom* artists of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries—some of whom were affiliated with the Jadid movement—is reflected in his music. These artists aspired to a new, modern musical culture in the region, an example of the local drive for "modernization" and "synthesis" that predated Soviet nascence. Ziyodullo argued that only by learning and integrating modern (European or Russian) musical theory into Central Asian music could local musical culture be preserved and recognized. He himself, in line with this view, produced his first instrumental chamber composition in 1948, and went on to produce a *Symphony of Maqams* and compose the opera *Komde va Madan*. Ashrafi wrote Komsomol songs in the early 1930s, composed numerous symphonies, which won him a Stalin Prize, and composed the first Uzbek opera *Buran* in 1939 alongside Russian composer Sergei Vasilenko. In a 1975 essay, Shahidi described how well Ashrafi pushed back against "conservative" "bourgeois nationalists" (Tjk. *millatchiyoni burdjuazi*) who resisted the use of symphony orchestras and polyphonic arrangements in Uzbek music (1986: 55).

Beyond concerns over the degree of synthesis or, as "conservatives" saw it, "Russification" that should take place in music, debates also arose in Tajikistan over its style and narrative content. These included whether the sources of national music should be rural folk or urban *shashmaqom* traditions and whether narrative themes and stories should be from regional classical texts like the eleventh-century Persian *Shahnameh* or set around contemporary socialist themes. While early operas composed in Tajikistan told socialist stories of Tajik peasants or of uprisings against the Emir of Bukhara, some of the most lauded operas by local audiences took stories from the Persianate literary canon, such as the 1941 *Kovai Ohangar* (The Blacksmith Kova) from the *Shahnameh* (Kalinovsky 2016: 35). The opera was composed by the Armenian composer Sergei Balasanyan (1902–1982), who was born in Turkmenistan and trained at the Moscow Conservatory. He lived and worked in Tajikistan from 1936 to 1943 and continued to produce Tajik pieces after he moved away, such as the music for the Tajik ballet *Leyli va Majnun* (1949), for which he won the Stalin Prize. Later, in 1957, he was named People's Artist of the Tajik SSR (Tomoff 2006: 71). Despite all this success, in the 1940s Balasanyan published a critical article, which was later banned, entitled "What prevents the development of opera in Central Asia?" In it he claimed that national operas composed for Central Asia by non-Central Asians could not be considered national because of the influence Russian orientalist tropes had on them (Arabova 2020).

For Balasanyan and others like him, attempts to simultaneously "nurture indigenous folklore and to mold it into familiar Western forms" were unavoidably a reflection of "long-standing orientalist cultural policies" (Tomoff 2004: 213). This orientalist reading of Central Asian operas is somewhat shortsighted, however, since "Russian" operas were themselves also influenced by orientalist tropes that Western Europeans held about Russia. Moreover, this view primarily takes into account only the dominant role of Russian-trained, non-Central Asian artists, without addressing the liminal space that Russian-trained Central Asians filled or the roles that locally trained artists played in music production. These are the figures and roles that Munira's accounts highlight. While her father and Ashrafi, both Russian-trained

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0010417523000117 Published online by Cambridge University Press

and socially influential, were "progressives" in favor of synthesizing Central Asian and "Western" music, there is clear evidence that musicians across the spectrum of "progressive" and "conservative" saw opportunities to use to their own advantage the ways in which socialist and nationalist ideas shaped Soviet cultural policy in Central Asia. These ideas and their local appropriation can, I argue, be again understood through the lens of cosmopolitanism and orientalism, and the nebulous space that exists between these that allows for interpretation and even manipulation. This, I believe, is visible in the fascinating ways in which "conservatives" in Uzbekistan appropriated the rhetoric of anti-cosmopolitanism for their own agendas at the peak of the campaign.

Claiming to reject identities and culture that were "not of root nationality," as the campaign's euphemism went, a young cohort of "conservative" Uzbek composers, backed by the Uzbek party and government, promoted what they considered to be "root" national music, notably *shashmaqom* (Tomoff 2004). Since the anti-cosmopolitanism campaign was, in music, focused on promoting Russian musicians and the "Russification" of music across republics, this was a clever reinterpretation of the campaign's attack on "rootless" people and culture, and caused the campaign's main aims to backfire in two ways. First, as a 1950 report for the Central Committee by investigators sent to Uzbekistan stated, *shashmaqom* problematically promoted and "represented 'the archaic culture of thirteenth- and fourteenth-century feudal courts'" (ibid.: 225). Second, *shashmaqom* became heavily endorsed at the expense of the "Russification" of local music (ibid.: 221).[16] By prioritizing *shashmaqom* over Russified music, these composers were promoting an other-than-Soviet cosmopolitanism that connected them spatially and historically to the wider Turko-Persianate world that *shashmaqom* stemmed from, rather than a socialist, internationalist cultural sphere embodied in "Russification." This reappropriation of Uzbek monophonic musical heritage to fit the politics of the moment was spearheaded by young "conservatives," and came at the cost of "progressive" agendas. Ashrafi, for instance, was replaced as head of the Uzbek Composers' Union by a young "conservative" who had yet to even graduate from the local conservatory (ibid.: 230–32).

Similar attempts at promoting local, pre-Soviet music also took place in Tajikistan, which, as Tomoff's archival research reveals, led to a report that was sent to M. A. Suslov, a chief Soviet ideologist and member of the Central Committee Secretariat. In it, Tajik music was derided as "archaic" and "throaty," promoting "amateur performers who have not studied anywhere and who cannot read music" and attempting to popularize *maqams* and improvisational performance traditions (ibid.: 238). The central response to this report was to further fund musical training and infrastructure in Tajikistan: new housing, new and improved performance venues, and better training and education institutions were deployed. Eventually, in the aftermath of the anti-cosmopolitanism campaign and Stalin's death, this instrumentalization of *kosmopolitizm* by both the state and local artists fell by the wayside. *Shashmaqom* soon became fully resurrected into both Tajik and Uzbek

[16]Frolova-Walker (2016: 361–62) believes the Uzbek "separate path" was triggered by the 1948 Resolution, which bolstered a shift of power from "progressives" to "conservatives" within cultural policy, rather than by a local interpretation of anti-cosmopolitanism.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0010417523000117 Published online by Cambridge University Press

national repertoires and was no longer seen as a threat to socialism. These events in both republics importantly reveal some of the contradictions in Soviet orientalist cultural policies, as well as the abilities of local figures to both support and resist Soviet agendas to reshape, or "Russify," local artforms. It also highlights the muddied waters created at ground level between various forms of cosmopolitanism, be it *kosmopolitizm*, internationalism, or a pre-Soviet understanding of it from the Persianate literary and musical sphere, of which *shashmaqom* is a part.

## The Space Between

As shown so far, there appears to be an irreconcilable divide between perceptions of Soviet Central Asian music's development as inescapably driven by orientalist approaches, and accounts like Munira's of this musical development stemming from longstanding cosmopolitan values and practices native to the region. Both these views make post-colonial critiques, but from two markedly different perspectives. The former posits that the active molding of indigenous music to suit European harmonic norms is an inherently orientalist gesture since it presupposes that Western harmonic norms are universally progressive. The latter view, espoused by Munira and her father, is informed by the belief that to preserve cultural practices in the face of modernizing or colonizing forces, a process of synthesis is necessary. To avoid local instruments and genres being banned altogether under socialism, "progressives" in Central Asia believed they should adapt and integrate these into the new, acceptable "national" forms of music. In a 1927 publication, Jadid intellectual Abdurauf Fitrat—who would later be executed in 1938 for his *kosmopolitichni* activities—appropriated the Russian language of classical music to protect indigenous musical forms and elevate their status from "folk" to "classical" music (Shin 2017: 422). In this account, synthesis was not simply imposed upon people by external colonizing forces but was a local response to Russian rule and later Soviet formation. These figures inhabited "a liminal space between the colonial power and native society" (Khalid 1998: 14), appropriating the language and ideas of the colonizer for their own uses.

As Munira has been keen to highlight (Shahidi 2016), synthesis is a locally embedded cosmopolitan practice exemplified by the Persianate cosmopolis, which brought together primarily Arabic, Muslim, and Turkic influences into a transregional Persian-language cultural sphere. More recently, as with other contemporary Muslim modernist movements around the world, the Jadid movement also espoused a form of cosmopolitan ideals. With the Russian Empire's presence in the region, which brought with it some of the economic and technological modernization of the nineteenth century, Jadids recognized the need for cultural and social reform in order to protect local ways of life. In other words, for traditional Muslim life to survive, they felt it needed redefining by connecting to the wider world, both Muslim and non-Muslim (Khalid 1998).

The ways in which anti-cosmopolitan rhetoric was appropriated by Uzbek and Tajik "conservatives" for local agendas of cultural endurance demonstrates the interpretive flexibility of the concepts of cosmopolitanism and orientalism. These figures engaged with and promoted forms of cosmopolitanism and orientalism that slipped beyond their acceptable and intended Soviet definitions, though admittedly

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0010417523000117 Published online by Cambridge University Press

those were malleable and inconsistent. A space opens up, then, *between* ideas of cosmopolitanism and orientalism, in which neither's presence can be fully denied in this important realm of cultural production. In this context, both concepts and their practices exist in relation to one another whereby one is sometimes a measure of the other, and together they generate an in-between space that they "hold" together—what Bhabha calls a "third space" (2009). Out of this, new considerations and discussions can emerge. I will conclude by illustrating this in the work of Hajibeyli and Shahidi. The Azerbaijani example is useful not only because, as Munira recounted, Hajibeyli's *Leyli və Məcnun* was influential in Central Asia's introduction to opera, but also because of Azerbaijan's place within the historic Turko-Persianate world and its strong cultural connections to Central Asia.

While composers were rewarded with better housing, salaries, and awards if they excelled at producing and promoting music that fit Soviet cultural policy (Tomoff 2004: 216; Frolova-Walker 2016), Munira's accounts illuminate how some composers nevertheless leveraged the inconsistencies in concepts like internationalism, cosmopolitanism, and orientalism to their advantage. The official professional positions of Soviet composers may therefore not fully reflect their positionality and agendas, and attempting to ascribe clear-cut motivations behind composers' actions or rhetoric can be arbitrary. Abrahamyan (2022) makes this same point in her study of the ways Armenian and Kazakh composers resisted centralized, colonizing, and often racialized agendas in music and negotiated their identities in subversive ways. As the Balasanyan case exemplifies, successful Russian-trained composers like himself could criticize orientalist approaches, yet nevertheless continue to take up "orientalist codes to propagate musically orientalist national traditions" (Tomoff 2004: 217).

Hajibeyli, too, openly critiqued orientalist works such as those of Reinhold Glière (1875–1956). Originally from Ukraine and trained in Russia, Glière was invited to Baku in 1923 to compose a national Azerbaijani opera, *Shakhsenem* (*Shahsenem* in Azeri), and later sent to Tashkent where he composed the Uzbek opera *Layli va Majnun* (1940) with local composer Tolib Sadykov. Hajibeyli denounced Glière's *Shakhsenem* for its "augmented seconds…, images of the nightingale and rose…, flower-bud ornaments…, multicolored costumes and ceremonious bows…: all this pseudo-Eastern style can only jar on an Eastern people and violate their spirit and tastes" (in Frolova-Walker 1998: 353). In response to Glière's work, Hajibeyli later produced the opera *Koroghlu* (1937) which integrated local *mugham* modal and Western tonal music, vocals, and instruments (Huseynova 2016: 42).[17] While Huseynova argues that *Koroghlu* was Hajibeyli's most successful attempt at "East-West [musical] synthesis" (ibid.: 42), Frolova-Walker (1998) contends that these "Eastern" and "Western" tunings, harmonies and vocals were often irreconcilable and Hajibeyli made numerous compromises at the expense of the *mugham* tradition in order to produce musical forms expected of him by Soviet policy. For Frolova-Walker, the opera still featured strong orientalist musical conventions, and ultimately, "as an anti-orientalist gesture … [*Koroghlu*] was a failure" (ibid.: 361). Given the political pressures he was under, these opposing views on whether Hajibeyli's work was genuinely anti-orientalist make apparent the complicated

[17]The lead performer Bulbul (Murtuza Mammadov) combined operatic *bel canto* with a *mugham* singing style, having been trained in the former from 1927–1931 at La Scala in Milan, Italy (Huseynova 2016: 43).

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0010417523000117 Published online by Cambridge University Press

power relations that national composers like Hajibeyli had to navigate in order to produce music that was "national in form, socialist in content."

As noted earlier, Huseynova argues that Hajibeyli's East-West synthesis "creat [ed] different vectors of power" (2016: 50). These vectors, I believe, correspond to the multiple configurations of cultural influence and authority at play in cultural production at the time: local musicians like Hajibeyli were centers of knowledge and therefore of influence over local music production, and simultaneously, centralized Soviet bodies were foci of influence over local knowledge and cultural production. The intersection of these two vectors or configurations of knowledge and influence produced the ambiguous space in which operas and composers bridged both orientalist and cosmopolitan practices. Hajibeyli's varying degrees of agency and vocalness in the face of Russian and orientalist influence illustrate his fluid and changeable positionality: at times central, at other times slightly more peripheral to musical production within Soviet Azerbaijan and the broader USSR.

When I asked Munira what her father and his family's position was on Soviet ideology and policies in the region, her answer alluded to this ambiguous space, and why and how early Soviet cultural figures inhabited it. Ziyodullo's family, like many others, disagreed with the artificial division of "Uzbeks" and "Tajiks" in cities like Samarqand and Bukhara when Soviet republics were being carved out in the region. These cities exemplified the Turko-Persianate and Islamic cosmopolitanism that the Soviet Union wanted to restrict because it challenged Soviet-constructed national borders and identities. Having grown up around progressive musicians, some of them Jadids, Shahidi witnessed the eventual persecution of numerous "bourgeois" or *kosmopolit* individuals, including his father. Several years after the anti-cosmopolitanism campaign ended, Shahidi became the first Tajik head of the Tajik Union of Composers, from 1956 to 1961.[18] In her account of his life and career, Munira emphasized the importance for her father of attempting to "synthesize" Eastern and Western music and drawing from Persianate literature.

In 1960, Shahidi composed the opera *Komde va Madan*, based on a poem by Bedil Dehlavi, a seventeenth-century Persian-language poet and Sufi philosopher from the Indian subcontinent (Bečka 1968: 517). Described as a progressive humanist, Bedil criticized the authority of the religious clergy, looked down upon courtly poets who sold their talents to the aristocracy, and sympathized with the plight of ordinary people. From the mid-nineteenth century onward, educated middle classes in Central Asia, some of whom became leading Jadid members, championed Bedil's progressive views. While his works were too linguistically complex and dense for socialist realism (ibid.: 541), their themes remained popular and relevant throughout the Soviet period. Shahidi's *Komde va Madan*, inspired by Bedil's *Irfon* (Discovery), tells the love story between Madan, a Central Asian poet, and Komde, an Indian court dancer. Shahidi drew on Bedil's Sufi themes and synthesized European classical music with the local Ushshoq *maqom*, typically associated with lovers, to relay the experience of Madan. He did this, he explains in his memoir, to make the opera accessible to Tajiks by integrating a musical narrative form historically familiar to Central Asian audiences (1986: 33).

[18]Kirasirova (2018) notes that, starting in 1956, in an effort to further discredit the image of Central Asia as a "colonial" region and present it as more equal to Soviet centers, "a new generation of Central Asian 'mediators' [were promoted] to positions of political and cultural power in Moscow, Tashkent, and other Central Asian administrative centers" (ibid.: 54).

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0010417523000117 Published online by Cambridge University Press

Central Asia has a long history of Sufi practice and networks, notably the Naqshbandi and Qodiriya orders which are strongly interlinked to the Persianate sphere. Shahidi's use of Bedil, Munira explained, was intended to illicit cosmopolitan, humanist values stemming from Sufi history and the interconnected Persianate literary canon. Under socialism, religious life, including that of Sufism, was suppressed, but elements of its everyday practice were sustained throughout (Grant 2011; Gatling 2018). The lyrics in Azerbaijani *mugham* and Central Asian *maqom* music, some of which were later integrated into operas, also come from classical Persianate poetry, which often features Sufi themes of devotional love.[19] Munira moreover emphasized that her father incorporated Sufi themes into works like *Komde va Madan* "to escape Soviet isolationism," particularly isolation from the wider, non-Soviet, Persianate world, like the Indian subcontinent, which shares Sufi histories and literature (Shahidi 2015).

This account of integrating *maqoms* and Sufi themes into an opera suggests that Shahidi was motivated to assert shared cultural traits across and *beyond* Soviet borders (a cosmopolitan move), rather than to simply create Soviet national forms of opera by drawing out and exploiting local distinctness (self-orientalization). Given expectations to produce politically acceptable works, it is unsurprising that many artists found themselves in a space somewhere between the pressures to conform to ideological boundaries and the desire to challenge them. Hajibeyli and Shahidi were born about thirty years apart in very different contexts, and their lives and political motivations differed, but their stories reveal that desires to modernize local music and synthesize it with European music were not only or simply a consequence of life under socialism: these efforts and desires prefigured the Soviet Union and stemmed from Soviet and other cultural networks and histories that these places were embedded within.

In our conversations, as well as in her scholarship, Munira does not just trace desires to "modernize" local culture to the Muslim modernist movements of the late nineteenth century. She also draws connections to far earlier figures, such as Bedil and the tenth-century Bukharan philosopher and physician Ibn Sina (Avicenna), who merged Aristotelean and Islamic thought on science and religion (Shahidi 2016). The links drawn in present-day accounts of these operas to centuries-old Persianate and Sufi writers, as well as to Russo-European theatrical and musical genres, highlight the palimpsestuous way in which spheres of influence are conceived and narrated. These accounts do not treat music's transformation under socialism as a unidirectional, linear process led by any single, coherent motivation. Instead, we encounter porous positionalities, multiple agendas, and anachronistic points of reference.

These make sense in a context in which concepts and rhetorics of cosmopolitanism and orientalism shift and have different connotations to different people. The task in Soviet opera, and other artforms, was subtle: productions needed to be suitably "cosmopolitan" by Soviet standards—they needed to promote internationalism, not

[19]Some *did* perceive local operas taking themes from local literary canons, particularly the Persianate, to be problematic. In the early 1930s the *Proletkul't* (*Proletarskaia kul'tura*) claimed "we need contemporary, cultured opera that would serve as a vehicle to educate the working masses…. The content of Azerbaijani operas is absolutely unacceptable. They are permeated by ideas of pessimistic love (*Leyli and Majnun*), religious issues (*Asli and Karam*), or idealization of the kings (*Shah Abbas and Khurshud Banu*)" (Sabri 1929: 68 in Huseynova 2016: 50).

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0010417523000117 Published online by Cambridge University Press

*kosmopolitizm*—and, to achieve this, they often had to make use of well-known orientalist tropes that would make productions accessible and palatable to listeners across the Soviet Union. From the Soviet state's perspective, at the center of this task was the need to influence and unify diverse people by calibrating their knowledge of and familiarity with one another, making them somewhat "legible" to one another. From the perspective of "progressives" in "peripheral" republics, the aim was to use musical synthesis to connect with the wider world, to adapt and protect local life from being eradicated in the name of modernity, and to succeed professionally in this often-turbulent cultural and political landscape.

## Conclusion

It is important to reflect upon why Munira interprets her father's legacy in the way I have discussed. In our conversations, which have spanned far beyond opera and music, Munira has been critical of European colonial and orientalist approaches to Central Asia, and she is well-versed in post-colonial debates. As a scholar and culturally active figure in Dushanbe, she has spent much of her time since Tajikistan's national independence facilitating and promoting cultural exchange and dialogue between Central Asian nations, and between Central Asia and "the West." [20] This has involved many challenges, not least sourcing funding and securing both local and international support for her initiatives. As Kamp (2001) makes clear in her comparison of three different accounts given in different decades and stages of Uzbek political history by the Uzbek journalist Saodat Shamsyeva of her own life, there is a subtle interaction between people's agency and "the politics that organize [their] experience and constitute [them] as a subject" (ibid.: 58). In being openly critical of biases toward Central Asia and promoting the longstanding cosmopolitan, humanist histories of the region through figures like Ibn Sina, Bedil, Hajibeyli, and her own father, Munira can today convincingly impress upon people the imbalance between perceived "centers" and "peripheries" of knowledge and culture, to the point of questioning the value of these intellectual spatial binaries in such complex (post) colonial contexts.

While questions of cosmopolitanism and orientalism feature heavily in scholarship on Central Asia, the Soviet Union, and more generally on knowledge production in colonial and former-colonial contexts, the two are rarely discussed together. This may be because they appear to represent opposite ends of the relationship between knowledge and power, wherein each is instrumentalized as a panacea for the other: orientalism, in the Saidian definition, is the practice by which those who orientalize others are centers of power and knowledge, while those who are orientalized are peripheralized, severed from contexts in which knowledge about them is granted legitimacy and holds influence. Cosmopolitanism is, at least in theory, a cultural and political order that obfuscates centers and peripheries of knowledge and therefore of influence. But, as these histories of opera's development in Tajikistan, Azerbaijan, and Uzbekistan testify to, the definitions of

[20]In the 1990s, Central Asian cultural elites had to navigate "a complex postcolonial terrain" since, in the aftermath of Soviet collapse, it could be difficult to identify "which cultural forms to associate with international culture and which forms to associate with Russian cultural imperialism." This resulted in a "tension between the discourse of global norms and that of anti-imperialism" (Adams 2005: 346).

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0010417523000117 Published online by Cambridge University Press

these concepts were adapted under Soviet ideology and regularly open to further interpretation by various parties. I have shown here that these different "vectors of power" in cultural production have regularly worked hand-in-hand, or at least sat uncomfortably together. By moving away from trying to classify productions and their creators as either cosmopolitan or orientalist, we can pay attention to ways in which both these concepts and their practices coexist, and the productive, ambiguous space that emerges between them.

This bears on both regional studies and anthropology. For the study of twentieth-century Central Asia, the monolithic presence of the Soviet state has sometimes heavily determined how actions and efforts of local individuals are analyzed, as their motivations are measured by how aligned with or opposed to Soviet agendas they were, for instance. At a time when decolonial efforts are rising to the forefront in the region (Kalinovsky 2020; Kassymbekova Chokobaeva 2021; Kassymbekova and Marat 2022), this essay contributes to scholarly challenges to these one-dimensional portrayals of local actors during Russian imperial and Soviet times. Central Asia has yet to be integrated into a broader history of opera: that opera and the forms it took were imposed by centralized state policy onto "peripheries" still dominates perceptions, trumping the role of other socio-cultural, notably cosmopolitan, feeding mechanisms into local opera productions in Central Asia. These alternative mechanisms do not counter claims that opera, even when locally produced, employed orientalist tropes. Rather, it complicates the scope and reasons behind orientalism, and brings it into uncomfortable dialogue with histories and ideals of cosmopolitanism. Acknowledging that orientalism and cosmopolitanism can conceptually and practically fold into and out of one another, that ambiguous spaces exist between them and that neither fully erases the other, provides a more limber tool with which to analyze the complex, inconsistent power relations and positionalities at play in knowledge production.

These ambiguous spaces between cosmopolitanism and orientalism are relevant to the work of anthropology, which today continues to grapple with the power relations of producing texts about others, while, in a decolonial effort, trying to involve those they write about in data-collection, analysis, and theory-making (Bejarano et al. 2019). In anthropology there exists a dance between maintaining an intellectual and creative distance from that which one writes about, and embedding oneself in it, observing and participating in it, and therefore trying to merge etic and emic perspectives. This, too, can produce an ambiguous space between, in which cultural authority and authorial positionality can be flexible and vulnerable to scrutiny. As anthropology continues to confront its orientalist, colonial origins and tendencies, it also revisits its cosmopolitan ambitions to find commonality among humans, to give voice to marginalized communities and ways of life, and to de-center Eurocentric ideas and intellectual histories. Recent scholarship has made explicit the potential naivety of such aspirations in anthropology and why they nonetheless persist (Jobson 2020). The racial, gendered, class, and colonial positionalities of anthropologists and their research subjects, both in the discipline's nascence and the present, highlight the manner in which liberal, humanist, and even cosmopolitan ideals in anthropology might be a symptom of the privileged subjectivity of anthropologists in relation to the often more precarious one of their interlocutors.

While the history of Soviet cultural policies and production in its "peripheries" generally reaffirms this critique, Munira's accounts of intellectuals from Soviet

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0010417523000117 Published online by Cambridge University Press

"peripheries" who could sometimes carefully employ "central" ideas and practices of orientalism and cosmopolitanism for their own agendas *as well as* the state's, exemplifies exactly the conceptual ambiguity argued for here. Opera and anthropology may appear worlds apart, but they share a history of fascination with the Other, of sometimes Othering others, and of trying to make distant Others legible to audiences and readers (Boon 1999: 9–13). Both have emerged from privileged social circles but have since become appropriated and transformed across diverse social and geographical spheres by some of the subjects they traditionally treated as the Other. These irreducible positionalities and histories mean that both opera and anthropology continue to straddle cosmopolitan-orientalist referents and objects. Holding the epistemologies and practices of both cosmopolitanism and orientalism together opens further the space for engaged critiques that reflect the messiness of knowledge production and its power relations.

**Acknowledgments.** This article would not have been possible without the generosity of Munira Shahidi, who encouraged me to learn about opera in Central Asia and challenged my framings of cultural production in the region. She also kindly read and commented on a draft of this article. I would also like to thank Elizabeth Fox for her rigorous feedback and encouragement, and Alex Pillen for her continued support and helping me crystalize this article's contribution. In its various earlier iterations, this text has benefitted from comments by Jagjeet Lally, Rachel Harris, Stefan Williamson Fa, Malika Bahovadinova, Isaac Scarborough, Bruce Grant, Caroline Humphrey, Karolina Kluczewska, Katie Freeze Wolf, and colleagues from Pillen's writing group and UCL Anthropology's seminar series. I'd also like to thank the anonymous *CSSH* reviewers for their thorough and insightful comments, David Akin for excellent editorial support and guidance, and editors Paul Christopher Johnson and Geneviève Zubrzycki. This research and writing were supported by the London Arts and Humanities Partnership (LAHP-AHRC) and ESRC (ES/V012681/1).

## References

Abashin, Sergei. 2007. *Natsionalizmy v Srednei Azii: V Poiskakh Identichnosti* [Nationalisms in Central Asia: the quest for identity]. St. Petersburg: Aleteiia.

Abrahamyan, Knar. 2022. Opera as Statecraft in Soviet Armenia and Kazakhstan. PhD diss., Yale University.

Adams, Laura. 2005. Modernity, Postcolonialism and Theatrical Form in Uzbekistan. *Slavic Review* 64, 2: 333–54.

Amanat, Abbas and Assef Ashraf, eds. 2019. *The Persianate World: Rethinking a Shared Sphere*. Iran Studies, vol. 18. Leiden: Brill.

Arabova, Sharofat. 2020. *Dystopia and Utopia: Soviet Politics and the Musicals of Tajikistan.* East European Film Bulletin vol. 110. At: https://eefb.org/retrospectives/soviet-politics-and-the-musicals-of-tajikistan/.

Asad, Talal, ed. 1973. *Anthropology & The Colonial Encounter*. Amherst: Humanity Books.

Bakhtin, Mikhail Mikhailovich. 1986. *Speech Genres and other Late Essays*. Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist, eds., Vern W. McGee, trans. Austin: University of Texas Press.

Battis, Matthias. 2015. Soviet Orientalism and Nationalism in Central Asia: Aleksandr Semenov's Vision of Tajik National Identity. *Iranian Studies* 48, 5: 729–45.

Bauman, Richard and Charles L Briggs. 2003. *Voices of Modernity: Language Ideologies and the Politics of Inequality*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Bečka, Jiři. 1968. Tajik Literature from the 16th Century to the Present. In Jan Rypka, ed., *History of Iranian Literature*. Dordrecht: D. Reidel Publishing Company.

Bejarano, Carolina Alonso, Lucia López Juárez, Mirian A. Mijangos García, and Daniel M. Goldstein. 2019. *Decolonizing Ethnography: Undocumented Immigrants and New Directions in Social Science*. Durham: Duke University Press.

Bhabha, Homi K. 1994. *The Location of Culture*. London: Routledge Classics.

Bhabha, Homi K. 2009. Preface: In the Cave of Making: Thoughts on Third Space. In Gerhard Wagner and Karin Ikas, eds., *Communicating in the Third Space*. London: Routledge.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0010417523000117 Published online by Cambridge University Press

Boon, James A. 1999. *Verging on Extra-Vagance: Anthropology, History, Religion, Literature, Arts … Showbiz*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Bosworth, C. Edmund. 2011. ṬURĀN. In *Encyclopædia Iranica Foundation*. At: https://iranicaonline.org/articles/turan.

Bustanov, Alfrid K. 2015. *Soviet Orientalism and the Creation of Central Asian Nations*. London: Routledge.

Canfield, Robert L. 1990. *Turko-Persian in Historical Perspective*. Santa Fe: School of Advanced Research Press.

Chari, Sharad and Katherine Verdery. 2009. Thinking between the Posts: Postcolonialism, Postsocialism, and Ethnography after the Cold War. *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 51, 1: 6–34.

Dostoyevsky, Fyodor. 1922. *Dnevnik Pisatelya za1873 God* [The writer's diary for 1873]. Berlin: n.p.

Edgar, Adrienne Lynn. 2004. *Tribal Nation: The Making of Soviet Turkmenistan*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Foks, Freddy. 2018. Bronislaw Malinowski, "Indirect Rule," and the Colonial Politics of Functionalist Anthropology, ca. 1925–1940. *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 60, 1: 35–57.

Frolova-Walker, Marina. 1998. "National in Form, Socialist in Content": Musical Nation-Building in the Soviet Republics. *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 51, 2: 331–71.

Frolova-Walker, Marina. 2007. *Russian Music and Nationalism from Glinka to Stalin*. New Haven: Yale University Press.

Frolova-Walker, Marina. 2016. *Stalin's Music Prize: Soviet Culture and Politics*. New Haven London: Yale University Press.

Gatling, Benjamin. 2018. *Expressions of Sufi Culture in Tajikistan*. Folklore Studies in a Multicultural World. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press.

Gibbings, Julie. 2020. "Their Debts Follow Them into the Afterlife": German Settlers, Ethnographic Knowledge, and the Forging of Coffee Capitalism in Nineteenth-Century Guatemala. *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 62, 2: 389–420.

Gould, Rebecca. 2015. The Geographies of ʻAjam: The Circulation of Persian Poetry from South Asia to the Caucasus. *Medieval History Journal* 18, 1: 87–119.

Grant, Bruce. 2010. Cosmopolitan Baku. *Ethnos* 75, 2: 123–47.

Grant, Bruce. 2011. Shrines and Sovereigns: Life, Death, and Religion in Rural Azerbaijan. *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 53, 3: 654–81.

Green, Nile, ed. 2019. *The Persianate World: The Frontiers of a Eurasian Lingua Franca*. Oakland: University of California Press.

Hamid, Usman and Pasha M. Khan. 2017. Introduction. Moving across the Persian Cosmopolis. *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East* 37, 3: 491–93.

Harrison, Faye V. 1997. Ethnography as Politics. In Faye V. Harrison, ed., *Decolonizing Anthropology: Moving Further Toward an Anthropology for Liberation*. 2d ed. Washington, D.C.: American Anthropological Association.

Helmers, Rutger. 2014. *Not Russian Enough? Nationalism and Cosmopolitanism in Nineteenth-Century Russian Opera*. Rochester: University of Rochester Press.

Hirsch, Francine. 2000. Toward an Empire of Nations: Border-Making and the Formation of Soviet National Identities. *Russian Review* 59: 201–26.

Ho, Engseng. 2002. Names Beyond Nations: The Making of Local Cosmopolitans. *Etudes Rurales* 163–64: 215–32.

Hodgson, Marshall G. S. 1974. *The Venture of Islam, Volume 2: The Expansion of Islam in the Middle Periods*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Højer, Lars and Andreas Bandak. 2015. Introduction: The Power of Example. *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 21, S1: 1–17.

Hopkins, Benjamin D. and Magnus Marsden. 2011. *Fragments of the Afghan Frontier*. London: Hurst Publishers.

Humphrey, Caroline. 2004. Cosmopolitanism and Kosmopolitizm in Political Life of Soviet Citizens. *Focaal —European Journal of Anthropology* 44: 138–52.

Huseynova, Aida. 2016. *Music of Azerbaijan: From Mugham to Opera*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

Jobson, Ryan Cecil. 2020. The Case for Letting Anthropology Burn: Sociocultural Anthropology in 2019. *American Anthropologist* 122, 2: 259–71.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0010417523000117 Published online by Cambridge University Press

Kalinovsky, Artemy. 2013. Not Some British Colony in Africa: The Politics of Decolonization and Modernization in Soviet Central Asia, 1955-1964. *Ab Imperio* 2: 191–222.

Kalinovsky, Artemy. 2016. Opera as the Highest Stage of Socialism. *International Institute for Asian Studies Newsletter* 74. At: https://iias.asia/the-newsletter/article/opera-highest-stage-socialism.

Kalinovsky, Artemy. 2020. Writing the Soviet South into the History of the Cold War and Decolonization. In James Mark et al., eds., *Alternative Globalizations: Eastern Europe and the Postcolonial World*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

Kamp, Marianne R. 2001. Three Lives of Saodat: Communist, Uzbek, Survivor. *Oral History Review* 28, 2: 21–58.

Kassymbekova, Botakoz and Aminat Chokobaeva. 2021. On Writing Soviet History of Central Asia: Frameworks, Challenges, Prospects. *Central Asian Survey* 40, 4: 483–503.

Kassymbekova, Botakoz and Erica Marat. 2022. Time to Question Russia's Imperial Innocence. *PONARS Eurasia Policy Memo*, no. 771. At: https://www.ponarseurasia.org/time-to-question-russias-imperial-innocence/.

Kemper, Michael and Stephan Conermann, eds. 2011. *The Heritage of Soviet Oriental Studies*. Contemporary Russia and Eastern Europe Series 25. New York: Routledge.

Kemper, Michael and Artemy Kalinovsky. 2017. *Reassessing Orientalism: Interlocking Orientologies during the Cold War*. New York: Routledge.

Khalid, Adeeb. 1998. *Politics of Muslim Cultural Reform: Jadidism in Central Asia*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Khalid, Adeeb. 2000. Russia History and Debate over Orientalism. *Kritika* 1, 4: 691–99.

Kia, Mana and Afshin Marashi. 2016. Introduction: After the Persianate. *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East* 35, 3: 379–83.

Kirasirova, Masha. 2018. Building Anti-Colonial Utopia: The Politics of Space in Soviet Tashkent in the "Long 1960s." In Chen Jian et al., eds., *The Routledge Handbook of the Global Sixties*. New York: Routledge.

Knight, Nathaniel. 2000. On Russian Orientalism: A Response to Adeeb Khalid. *Kritika* 1, 4: 701–15.

Koplatadze, Tamar. 2019. Theorising Russian Postcolonial Studies. *Postcolonial Studies* 22, 4: 469–89. At: https://doi.org/10.1080/13688790.2019.1690762.

Kotnik, Vlado. 2016. *Opera as Anthropology: Anthropologists in Lyrical Settings*. Cambridge: Cambridge Scholars Publishing.

Levin, Theodore Craig. 2002. Making Marxist-Leninist Music in Uzbekistan. In Regula Burckhardt Qureshi, ed., *Music and Marx: Ideas, Practice, Politics*. New York: Routledge, 190–203.

MacLean, Derryl N. and Sikeena Karmali Ahmed, eds. 2012. *Cosmopolitanisms in Muslim Contexts: Perspectives from the Past*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.

Moore, David Chioni. 2001. Is the Post- in Postcolonial the Post in Post-Soviet? Towards Global Postcolonial Critique. *PMLA* 116, 1: 111–28.

Morrison, Alexander. 2009. "Applied Orientalism" in British India and Tsarist Turkestan. *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 51, 3: 619–47.

Nurjanov, Nizam. 1967. *Istoriia Tadzhikskovo Sovenskovo Teatra* [History of the Tajik Soviet Theater]. Dushanbe: Donish.

Pickett, James. 2020. *Polymaths of Islam: Power and Networks of Knowledge in Central Asia*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

Pollock, Sheldon. 2001. The Death of Sanskrit. *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 43, 2: 392–426.

Pollock, Sheldon. 2006. *The Language of the Gods in the World of Men: Sanskrit, Culture, and Power in Premodern India*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Pollock, Sheldon, Homi K. Bhabha, Carol A. Breckenridge, and Dipesh Chakrabarty. 2000. Cosmopolitanisms. *Public Culture* 12, 3: 577–89.

Rajabov, Askarali. 2015. An'anahon Badeii Musiqii Samarkand va Naqshi on dar Tashakkuli Kompozitor Ziyodullo Shahidi [Artistic tradition of Samarqand as a base of formation of Composer Z. Shahidi]. In Askarali Rajabov and Muhammadrahim Karimzoda, eds., *Ziyodullo Shahidi va Sunnathoi Bade'ii Musikii Tojik*. Dushanbe: Academy of Sciences of Tajikistan.

Sabri, Gasan. 1929. O Tiurkskoi Opere V Azerbaidzhane [About Turkic opera in Azerbaijan]. In *Na Rubezhe Vostoka* 3.

Said, Edward W. 1978. *Orientalism*. New York: Pantheon Books.

Said, Edward W. 1993. *Culture and Imperialism*. London: Chatto & Windus.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0010417523000117 Published online by Cambridge University Press

Shahidi, Munira, ed. 2015. Ziyodullo Shahidi va Poeticai Musikii Kosmopolitiash [Ziyodullo Shahidi and poetics of his cosmopolitan music]. In Askarali Rajabov and Muhammadrahim Karimzoda, eds., *Ziyodullo Shahidi va Sunnathoi Bade'ii Musikii Tojik*. Dushanbe: Academy of Sciences of Tajikistan.

Shahidi, Munira. 2016. The Impact of the Emergence of Eurasian Art Communities in the Globalizing World. *International Relations and Diplomacy* 4, 3: 209–18.

Shahidi, Ziyodullo. 1986. *Musiqi Dar Haeti Man*. Dushanbe: Irfon.

Shin, Boram. 2017. National Form and Socialist Content: Soviet Modernization and Making of Uzbek National Opera Between the 1920s and 1930s. *Interventions* 19, 3: 416–33.

Spooner, Brian and William H. Hanaway, eds. 2012. *Literacy in the Persianate World: Writing and the Social Order*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.

Todorova, Maria. 2000. Does Russian Orientalism Have a Russian Soul? A Contribution to the Debate between Nathaniel Knight and Adeeb Khalid. *Kritika* 1, 4: 717–27.

Tomoff, Kiril. 2004. Uzbek Music's Separate Path: Interpreting "Anticosmopolitanism" in Stalinist Central Asia, 1949–52. *Russian Review* 63, 2: 212–40.

Tomoff, Kiril. 2006. *Creative Union: The Professional Organization of Soviet Composers, 1939–1953*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

Trouillot, Michel-Rolph. 2003. *Global Transformations: Anthropology and the Modern World*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Weatherford, Jack. 2010. The Wrestler Princess. This Mongolian Princess Rejected Any Man She Deemed Athletically Inferior. *Lapham's Quarterly*, 27 Sept. At: https://www.laphamsquarterly.org/roundtable/wrestler-princess.

Wolff, Larry. 2016. *The Singing Turk: Ottoman Power and Operatic Emotions on the European Stage from the Siege of Vienna to the Age of Napoleon*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.

**Cite this article:** O'Connor, Aeron. 2023. "Opera as Critical 'Synthesis': Theorizing the Interface between Cosmopolitanism and Orientalism." *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 1–27, doi:10.1017/S0010417523000117

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0010417523000117 Published online by Cambridge University Press