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Cosmopolitanism and World Music

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Abstract: 'World music' is a highly problematic category which could be branded as cosmopolitan for providing a transnational platform to the local, indigenous music forms, a space for emancipation of the subaltern cultures with histories of oppression. But at the same time it could be a cosmopolitization, an orientalization and commercial appropriation of the exotic other, by arbitrary fusions of the local elements into the mainstream western classical canonical and popular music sphere. The paper does an ethnomusicological analysis of various music genres, western and nonwestern (opera, Italian art music, classical crossover, Arabic classical, cumbia, Surinamese popular music, Creole Kaseko, Jamaican reggae, Trinidadian calypso, etc.) problematizing the politics of representation, resistance, and conformity that these music forms reflect, undergoing changes, corollary to their socio-political contemporaneity, rekindling redefining identities, where both indigenization cosmopolitanism forge into a complimentary relationship. The paper also looks into the role of mass media in mobilizing the interaction between local and popular music forms, where the dominant, mainstream Euro-American pop music could be appropriated by the 'third world' music genres to ascend to a global forefront, but at the same time this could dwindle into a homogenizing hybridization.

Keywords: cosmopolitanism, cosmopolitization, ethnomusicology, World Music, representation, indigenization, hybridization.

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The romanticized perception of music as a means of self expression, a very personal and sublime emanation of the soul of the artist, distanced from the material reality, reverberates into the delineation of Cosmopolitanism by Kimberly Yuracko who posits: "The goal of cosmopolitanism is self expression and self realization. Cosmopolitanism presents individuals with a wide range of options, they choose the one which will bring them the most pleasure and gratification" (Calhoun 433).

The almost utopian celebration of music and cosmopolitanism dwindles the inherent multiplicity into an unequivocal understanding which contrives a de-politicized and untainted picture, veiling the social foundation and political overtones that underlie them. Yuracko's idea of self is divorced from the socio-political or socio-economic realities surrounding it which makes her understanding of cosmopolitanism quite idvllic. Her almost essentialist idea of self fails to understand the constructed nature of self. Self is inseparably intertwined with the social and political and a product of socio-political constructions. The sociosocio-economic reality and of cosmopolitanism distinguished from the idealistic understanding of cosmopolitanism as an ethic by Ulrich Beck (2011) in his essay "Cosmopolitanism as Imagined Communities of Global Risk", where he re-invokes the Kantian explanation of cosmopolitanism in philosophical terms as "a task, a conscious and voluntary choice, an elitist affair" contrasting it with the socio-political, material reality which is "banal" and "coercive" cosmopolitization, not cosmopolitanism (1348). An ethnomusicological analysis of the convergence of cosmopolitanism and music instigates a politicization that uncovers music as a strong tool for sets of antithetical example, elevation and diminution of identities, functions, for representation misrepresentation, emancipation and and and appropriation.

The western classical canon, Opera, has incorporated many foreign musical influences in its orchestral structure and vocal techniques, especially borrowing from Middle Eastern melodies, which have been derided by many ethnomusicologists as appropriationistic, orientalizing, and assimilatory. There have also been instances of non-pan-European music from across the globe adopting Western classical orchestral and

vocal arrangements at the structural level. Celebrated Lebanese classical and pop vocalist, Majida el Roumi is revered across the Middle East for her impeccable vocal skills that deploy both Arabic classical as well as European operatic elements. The element of *Tarab*, an Arabic musical concept which places great significance upon the evocation of an empathetic emotional response, is an important nuance present in her voice. This element, blending with a western classical arrangement, transcends Majida from a quintessentially melismatic yodelling singer to a global phenomenon. From Arabic classical and ghazals to arias, gospels, jazz and pop, she has an immense diversity to her repertoire. Performing at the forefront of world music, collaborating with European artists, composers and poets, she has mobilized Middle-Eastern melodies, appropriating the dominant mainstream western classical canonical structure to articulate the indigenous nuances on a cosmopolitan platform. Her famous song "Kalimat" (El Roumi 1991), translated to English as 'words', is a prime example of a skilfully arranged interaction of western and eastern classical nuances. It is a balanced blend of a Western classical orchestra and choir, indigenous instrumental arrangements including Arabic percussions, lutes and flutes, and her vocals displaying melisma and Tahrir (a yodeling vocal technique prominent in Persian classical), wherein the indigenous is not just an ethnic exotic, but a serious and indispensable part of the structural integrity of the music. This punctures the hitherto exoticizing and orientalizing assimilations of Middle-Eastern musical elements into western classical pieces undertaken by some noted European composers in musical history. Audrey Wozniak (2014) decries appropriationistic inclusions of eastern elements within hegemonic western classical structures which result in the formation of cultural hierarchies and misrepresentation. Wozniak references the 1903 opera musical Madama Butterfly, composed by Giacomo Puccini as a prominent example of this phenomenon. Puccini is censured by a post-colonial, orientalist discourse for re-constructing Japan in his opera into an image which would cater to a European-Italian audience, essentially a western fantasy of the 'exotic' east. The plot is centred around an American soldier who is portrayed as a caricatured, stereotypical white masculinist explorer in an alien, exotic land exploiting the naïve sentiments of an adolescent Japanese girl by pursuing a matrimonial

affair with her, which he sees as a gratification of his exploratory desires and escapades, while marriage, according to Japanese customs and beliefs, is seen by the adolescent girl as an everlasting, pious bond. Superficially, the opera masquerades as a radical, post-colonial derision of the white imperialist ideologies. But the very structural and musical composition of the entire opera piece is predicated upon the exoticization of Japanese musical tradition and the refashioning of it under an over-arching western orchestral ensemble. A seemly inclusive act of arbitrarily adding some traditional Japanese musical 'flavours' in the form of the "pentatonic scale, tam-tam, and Japanese bells" (Wosniak 4) to an essentially western classical setup, is mere tokenism. It is a reductionist act which distorts and misrepresents the solemnity and richness of Japanese musical tradition, in a portrayal in which the east is clearly otherized and belittled to superfluous adornments which are not at all indispensable to the serious, disciplined western classical orchestral and vocal structure which dominates as the subject throughout. This reiterates the dichotomy and colonial hierarchy of the orient and the oxidant, where clearly the orient is misrepresented as less important or serious, and is merely a topping to gratify western fantasy of the east, while the oxidant counterpart swells in its represented grandeur and solemnity. An overtly cosmopolitan attempt of Puccini dwindles into an orientalization of Japanese musical legacy.

Majida el Roumi's music is an antidote to this orientalization. Her engagement with cosmopolitan world music of pop culture and western classical canons, sans any erosion of the Middle Eastern traditional roots, ranging from the basic instrumental arrangement and composition to vocal techniques and timbre, elevates the orientalized east and retains its seriousness and integrity on a global front. Hailing from the hub of musical, poetic and literary diversity and interactions, Kfarshima in Beirut, her father Halim el Roumi being a well established Lebanese musician, in Majida's growing years her house was a meeting place for many artists. Majida is a perfect example of the Kantian philosophical idea of cosmopolitanism as an elitist affair, a voluntary, conscious and accessible choice to her disposal. Hybridizing music is a cosmopolitan choice available to her by the virtue of her elitist origins that allow her trans-national fluidity to explore plurality of cultures, languages and music. But at the same time what cannot be denied is her triumph in

transcending the national, taking the indigenous to a cosmopolitan exposure without a vulgar annihilation of its core seriousness or blind conformity to the mainstream normative. In fact, her covers of western classical canons are not innocent imitations of western musical traditions but shrewd appropriations of the dominant normative to alleviate the Middle Eastern music traditions from oriental margins to the world music centre. Her vocal rendition of "Ave Maria" (El Roumi 2008) in operatic soprano fashion does not sound like a quintessentially European soprano voice but the soprano voice keeping alive her vocal roots and incorporating the essential Arabic mellisma. While her interpretation of Belgian-Italian lyric-soprano Lara Fabian's "Adagio" (1999) follows the same western orchestral arrangement, the major digression is in the form of a linguistic shift. Very title is changed from Italian to Arabic, "Habibi" (El Roumi 2006), which translates to English as 'my beloved' and is sung entirely in Arabic. Language is loaded with power and is a carrier of a culture (Thiongo 13). The eastern musical tradition is not merely toppings for extra flavours or secondary additions but reigns throughout Majida's world popular songs and interpretations of western classical. It is a vindication of eastern musical tradition from orientalist appropriations as well as retention of its seriousness on a global front, through appropriation of the hegemonic structure itself, under the prerogative of world music. But what problematizes her engagement with the world music is the between her cosmopolitan identity enhancing indigenousness and the subduing of the indigenous identity by a cosmopolitizing homogenization. Searching her on the internet shows her as a 'Lebanese soprano' on Wikipedia, which nullifies her representation of the east. Soprano, an essentially western classical operatic category when imposed upon a singer of Middle Eastern musical cultural background, despite the overt cosmopolitanism of world music, reinforces the hierarchical structure of the western hegemony over the east.

Kenneth Bilby (1999) critiques the cosmopolitanism of World Music by unmasking the commercialization and commodification of diverse musical forms upon which it is predicated. He goes to the limits of debasing World Music as a "commodity", "a new unit of exchange" in the "cultural economy of global capitalism" (259). His derision of

World Music as a coercive imposition of the global capitalist market upon diverse musical traditions to yeild a hybrid category, wherein underlies a subversive homogenization, reverberates Ulrich Beck's distinction between cosmopolitanism and cosmopolitization. The global capitalist forces, the transnational recording companies are the cosmopolitizing forces, arbitrarily chunking together diverse music forms from various regions of the world to cater to the fantasy of the 'music exotica', a bricolage of incongruities subduing the social identities that the particular music otherwise embodies. Hip-hop is one of the most proliferating genres in the world music scene. Originating from the resistance and struggles against oppressions, it represents a historicity of the intersectionality of identities, where the artist assumed more than one role, responding to the modalities of oppression – race, sex, class, etc. negotiating in the social space, participating, teaching, learning and protesting through music and dance. The category of hiphop feminist activist, that Lauren Gardner (2004) lauds, affirms the appropriation of the cosmopolitan, global world music stage by the black and colored artists to mobilize resistance and foster multidimentional identities, like scholar-activist, psychologist-activist, dancer-scholar-activists, and artist-activist (7). The participation of hiphop women artists in the mainstream popular music with the lyrics, voice and instruments of subversion redefines their identities from the subalterns at the fringes of the economy and society, to the powerful dissenters, engaging, negotiating and empowering themselves in a white masculinist world music, capitalist dominated. conversational tone of rap, a sub genre of hip-hop, its blatant, colloquial lyrics, often expressing indignation, resentment and annoyance against oppression, establish it as an antidote to the mainstream, whitedominated classical/pop music. The coalition of hip-hop with the commercial music industry is a subversive event, which endows the oppressed with a global platform to dissent. But the capitalist forces do not fail to dwindle the dissenting voices, despite hip-hop's roots of resistance and struggle. Contemporary mainstream hip-hop music, steered by the demands of commercialism and the popular 'taste' that it fabricates, is far distanced from the very historicity of hip-hop. The idea of hip-hop activist-feminist is susceptible to censure with modern hiphop black artists subscribing to the heteronormative gender roles and

sexism that the music form hitherto struggled to dismantle. For instance, the idea of feminism of one of the most powerful black artists, Beyonce Knowles goes awry with the song like "Who run the World...Girls" (2011), which portrays a battle of women against men, the literal armies of opposing gender, where the women triumph. The very idea of the man-woman battle itself is heteronormative, which reinstalls the patriarchal construction of gender binary, and doesn't recognize the multiplicity of gender. Her exclusivist, Amazonian warrior women imaginary doesn't comply with the contemporary feminist struggle where the binary polarity of gender is put to scrutiny and the category of 'woman' itself is problematized. Judith Butler (1999, 39) questions 'the subject' of feminism, as pre-supposing the category of woman as the representative of the subjects of feminism would pose more set of questions like - what comprises the category of woman? Does this category include, as the subjects of feminism, the groups which are external to the gender binary and not adhering to the conventions of womanhood? What makes one a woman? Is being a woman a matter of mere performativity? Simply placing women against men in an ostentatious battlefield and projecting an unequivocal defeat of men is just an exoticization and romanticization of feminism to market Beyonce, an artist, as a product in the capitalist music industry. Her misconstrued representation of feminism which reframes itself on the patriarchal construction of gender binary, and an unproblematic victory of one part of the binary over the other, does not obliterate the dominant symbolic of patriarchy; rather, re-installs it. She becomes an interpellated subject of the white masculinist music producers who appropriate her to sell romanticized a misrepresented black feminism. What Beyonce and the commercially smeared feminism seek is a total rejection and obliteration of the dominant symbolic, i.e. masculinity, which itself is a utopian wish, ironically, fabricated by a patriarchal, white heteronormative music industry. This misconstruction of commercial feminism in world music could be corrected by referring to New Zealander feminist psychoanalyst Juliet Mitchell, who, in her essay "Femininity, Narrative and Psychoanalysis", talks about the language itself being male-centric, "phallogocentric", and a woman novelist, co-optiong this masculine language is resisting against the oppression from within the oppressive

symbolic, by a subversive appropriation of the dominant symbolic (153). An imagination of a feminine symbolic, what she opines is unrealistic because such a thing does not exist. Also a creation of a whole new feminine symbolic is not a subversion of the over-arching gender binary, but just a reversal of it. This is what the commercial world music is diminishing into. Mitchell suggests a co-option of the dominant symbolic and its appropriation into a critical and subversive production. Beyonce's self-proclaimed feminism is an attempt to satiate the commercial demand of the exotic, glamourized feminism popularized by mass-media which misrepresents and smears the dialectics of feminism. The projection of female body, the direction of male gaze through camera lens and the lyrics of objectification of women in contemporary popular rap music punctures the resistance and revolution that it emanates from. Famous American hip-hop singer Akon's song "Belly Dancer" (2005) falls into the trap of trivializing and vulgarizing the Middle-Eastern classical form of Belly Dance for an American commercial pop market. Akon, being Black American, belonging to a race with a history of oppression himself, participates in an orientalizing, appropriationistic practice of misrepresenting a serious art form. The video displays young black American women almost mimicking belly dancers, supposedly clad in belly dance costumes (appropriated to titillate the American fantasy of the orient), and moving their waists and hips in a way that has no serious connection to the nuanced movements of belly dance. The song reduces dancer girls to mute toys of male pleasure and entertainment, wriggling their bodies around men, who touch them and dance with them. The lyrics - "Don't be shy girl, be bonanza. Shake your body like a belly dancer", blatantly commodify belly dancers by co-opting the very commercial, capitalist term 'bonanza'. This misconstruction of belly dance by the popular culture is delineated by a video in a website named Reclaiming Identities: Dismantling Arab Stereotypes, where Ella Shohat, a professor of Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies in Tisch School of Arts, New York, attacks the very title 'Belly Dance', which is a French construction (originally 'Dance a Ventre') by Western-European travelers who witnessed the folk and classical dance forms of the Middle East like Rags Beledi, Oryantal, Rags Shargi etc., superficially observed the prominent belly and gyrating hips, and homogenized the

diversity of these dances into one generalizing, western fantastical creation of Belly Dance. The very title is suggestive of the western travellers' fetishization of the Eastern exotic and fixation upon the sexual aspect, i.e. the visible, seemingly sensual movements of belly and the hips. But this fixation and fetish overshadows the complexity and actual nuances of an otherwise solemn dance form which involves the movements and subtle utilization of each part of the body, from head to toe, a corporeal harmony that causes the visible belly and hips movements. Shohat talks about the intersectionality of Harem, the forbidden private space, and Belly Dance, a social dance form, in the western narratives and imagination, which leads to a hyperbolic sexualization of Belly Dance. The conception of harem as almost a pornographic space of unbridled pleasures in the form of seductive dances with multiple dancers around one man and possibilities of orgy, are all Western imaginations of the East that are popularized by western media and literature, that form the orientalist discourse. This orientalist discourse and its hegemony coalescing with capitalist forces producing commercial music, to cater the audience which too, is interpellated by the same discourse, has metamorphosed the hip-hop artist activist into a marketable product, subduing the identity that was forged by resistance.

Cosmopolitanism in the Australian aboriginal music scene is a paradox of voicing oppression, yet remaining unheard. 1970s onwards it was the time of protest music by aboriginal bands, adopting rock and roll and reggae forms to tell stories of racism, displacement and oppression. The music and protest film Wrong Side of the Road (Lander 1981) presents the plights of the 'Stolen Generation', a prominent historical event in which the Australian Government forcibly removed aboriginal children from their families, placing them in white institutions. It tells the story of the loss of aboriginal identity at the hands of institutional racism and oppression in Australia. Ned, the white director, portrays the aboriginal struggle through these rock and roll bands. The low budget film was screened in Sydney Film Festival, reaching a mainstream white audience. In addition, there are a number of aboriginal bands in Australia appropriating American rock and roll and African reggae in their protest music. The song "We Have Survived" (Harrison 1981), by the band No Fixed Address, with its very lucid and blunt lyrics, celebrates the defiance and resistance to white

domination. The very title of the band reverberates loss and displacement. The electronic bass guitar and reggae percussion beats with lyrics of resistance combine to voice the aboriginal struggle and defiance on a mass media level. While rock music had already strengthened its roots in the world music framework as a nonconformist, defiant music genre and reggae originating from African-Caribbean roots, embodying slave history and struggle and gaining the global platform in mainstream pop and hip-hop, American culture, the adoption of these two forms by Australian aboriginal musicians appears as an empowering cosmopolitan choice to ascend their dissenting voices and melodies on a global platform under the brand of World Music. But what punctures the tag of World Music for the bands is the reality of its accessibility. It is cosmopolitan in its structure and form and appropriationistic techniques but in terms of popularity it is limited to the fringes of certain communities or Australian national boundaries, unless explicitly sponsored or promoted by white filmmakers or producers for their own benefit. Minimal consumption, popularity and marginalization of aboriginal musicians in the mainstream pop music scene nullify its qualification for the category of World Music. The dearth of its popularity can be guessed by a very petty number of online interactions on the music videos of aboriginal popular music and also a total unavailability of the lyrics to most of their songs on the internet. They are far removed from the celebrated music scene in Australia itself. An absence of proper recognition makes it erroneous to consider it trans-national or even national. It is rather local to specific communities of shared experience and coteries of researchers and artists

Colombian pop/rock and folk icon Shakira Isabel Mebarak Ripoll's global image as a representative of Latin American cultural heritage on a cosmopolitan forefront problematizes the politics of representation and identity as well as the lines between cosmopolitanism and cosmopolitization. Her hybridization of Latin American and Middle Eastern folk music and dance traditions of African roots, like *merengue* and *cumbia*, and Middle Eastern classical Belly Dance, with Euro-American pop and rock could be lauded as a radical appropriation of world music to represent indigenous and marginal music traditions with histories of oppression on a cosmopolitan framework. One of her most

successful songs "Hips Don't Lie" (Shakira and Jean 2006) is an example of her hybridizing and resistance politics through a manoeuver of the mainstream pop market. An overtly peppy, saucy and entertaining dance number is loaded with redefinition of identities, representation and resistance. The music video displays Shakira dancing in a setting which represents the celebration of Carnaval de Barranguilla, which is the most important native carnival of her homeland Barranquilla, Colombia. The carnival is a celebration of the old, pre-colonial, oral and intangible heritage, myths and history of Latin American and African culture and also the dance and music forms that emerged during the times of colonialism, slavery and displacement, most of which were forms of resistance. For instance, the music and dance form merengue reverberates the slave history of the Dominican Republic. Its drum beats and dance steps originate from the slaves whose legs were chained which forced them to drag their legs as they cut sugar to the beats of the drum. The costume worn by Shakira and the people in the background (presented as refugees and carnival participants) and most of the instrumentation, especially the percussion, such as the 'conga', are all akin to the Carnaval de Barranquilla. The lyrics of the song, written by Shakira and Wyclef Jean, a Haitian rapper, have undertones of resistance, attacking the xenophobic and racist surveillance of the US Government through its Central Intelligence Agency (CIA).

Why the CIA wanna watch us? Colombians and Haitians
I ain't guilty, it's a musical transaction
No more do we snatch ropes
Refugees run the seas 'cause we own our own boats.

(Shakira and Jean 2006)

Shakira's "Hips Don't Lie" is a song by Third World artist that decries American supremacy and yet proliferates in the widely dominant American pop market and reigns in clubs and bars across the globe. But Shakira's cosmopolitan image as a Latina 'pop diva' could also dwindle into exoticization and orientalization under the mask of representing the indigenous. Her live performances of one of her famous songs "Ojos Asi" (1998), which translates to 'Eyes like Yours', are an arbitrary mash of Arabic and Spanish lyrics, an Arabic string

instrument, *quanun* and Arabic percussions mixed with Latin American percussions, belly dance mashed with Brazilian Zumba and Indian classical form, *Tandav*, in which Shakira impersonates Lord Shiva of Hindu mythology, and his misrepresented image flashes on a gigantic screen with multiple arms.

popular complicates politics Surinamese music the indigenization, cosmopolitanism and modernity. Kenneth Bilby locates modernity in the context of Surinamese Maroon urban youth where being 'modern' is in association with mobility, keeping in pace with transforming "sounds and sights" and taking a "self-consciously cosmopolitan stance" (275). Collaboration of Surinamese indigenous music forms, especially reggae, calypso and kaseko with world pop and hip-hop mainstreams, is not simply a mobility to globalizing music scene and assertion of indigenous identity in the dominant capital market, but also a resistance to a history of domestic colonization that takes the form of hostility by coastal creoles towards the 'forestdwellers' maroons, stereotyping them as uncouth and uncivilized. The politics of indigenization and hybridization in music genres of Surinam, where a convergence with globalization and modernity leads to expression, mediation and contestation of identities, in a world pop music space, could be linked to the idea of 'cosmopolitan public sphere' as coined by Gerard Delanty (47). World pop music is a highly problematic category which could be translated into a global public sphere for reassertion, contestation and mediation of identities, yet it is a product of capitalism, commercializing and homogenizing diverse music forms, overshadowing the resistance and identity politics by catering to the commercial demands and constructed exotic fantasies.

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