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REGIONALISM IN THE VIRTUAL ERA

CULTURAL IDENTITY OF KASHMIRI MUSLIMS AS REPRESENTED IN POPULAR MUSIC

ABSTRACT The symbolic concept of *kashmiriyat*, dated back to 16th century, generally covers most of the aspects of Kashmiri Muslims' culture perceived as traditional. However, in the modern era of globalization and rapid growth of the media, particularly the Internet, the world is changing really fast, together with local cultures and identities. The budding influence of social media on the culture of participation, opens a new field for artistic activity. It is especially the younger generation, prone to rebel against the existing reality, who make use of those aims to express oneself. One of the most alluring means to do so is music. It stimulates people's awareness and tends to unite people beyond boundaries by its universal language. Thanks to its emotional potential, popular music recently gathered its momentum among Kashmiri Muslims as well. The paper presents the examples of two young Kashmiri musicians, MC Kash and Ali Saffudin, as the carriers of Kashmiri Muslim cultural identity. Pointing out the traditional symbols, how they are being reinterpreted and mixed with the elements of current reality and Western culture, I will try to show some aspects of this identity, focusing on the place of regionalism in it.

Key words: Kashmiri Muslims, *kashmiriyat*, popular culture, cultural identity

Music expresses that which cannot be said and on which it is impossible to be silent.

Victor Hugo

INTRODUCTION

Kashmir is a region whose inhabitants have been living in the shadow of the ongoing conflict since 1947. The history of the Indo-Pakistani dispute over Kashmir and the politics behind it is an important subject and has been the subject of numerous publications.¹ Apart from this, the region is known for its rich cultural heritage, perceived as distinct from what we encounter in the subcontinent. The traditional aspect of the Kashmiri culture has also been elaborated on by numerous scholars. However, it has only been recently that the focus shifted somehow toward people's history, reflecting the global trend of interest in identity studies. Such a perspective in Kashmir studies is represented, for example, by Rekha Chowdhary² or Chitrlekha Zutshi, who made a huge contribution to the field.³ But the situation in the region is quite dynamic, deserving further investigation. Changing reality brings young generation of Kashmiris to express their frustration in different, popular modes, which "are part of a longer continuum of antioccupation struggles that can be traced to India's historic denial of the Kashmiri right to self-determination".⁴ Rejecting the military path, many decide to turn their anger into artistic activity. The main aim of this paper is to present the two examples of young Kashmiri musicians, MC Kash and Ali Saffudin. By providing some personal background of the artists, their notions expressed in interviews and analyzing pieces of their works, I would like to present some aspects of new generation Kashmiri Muslim cultural identity. Pointing out the traditional symbols, how they are being reinterpreted and mixed with the elements of current reality and Western culture, I will try to show how cultural regionalism may reveal itself in popular culture.

¹ See e.g. P.I. Cheema, M.H. Nuri, *The Kashmir Imbroglia: Looking Towards the Future*, Islamabad 2005; S.B. Roy, *New Approach. Kashmir: Violence in Paradise*, Calcutta 1999; V. Schofield, *Kashmir in Conflict: India, Pakistan and the Unending War*, London 1996; R. Wirsing, *India, Pakistan, and the Kashmir Dispute: On Regional Conflict and its Resolution*, Basingstoke 1998; M. Y. Ganai, *Kashmiri's Struggle for Independence (1931-1939)*, Srinagar 2003; S. Bose, *Kashmir – Roots of Conflict, Paths to Peace*, Cambridge, Mass. 2003.

² See: R. Chowdary, *Jammu and Kashmir. Politics of Identity and Separatism*, New Delhi 2015; R. Chowdary (ed.), *Identity Politics in Jammu and Kashmir*, New Delhi 2010; R. Chowdary, "The Muslim Identity and the Politics of Fundamentalism in Kashmir", *Reader in Political Science*, University of Jammu, Jammu 1998.

³ See: C. Zutshi, (ed.) *Kashmir: History, Politics, Representation*. Cambridge, 2018; C. Zutshi, *Kashmir's Contested Pasts: Narratives, Geographies, and the Historical Imagination*, New Delhi 2014; C. Zutshi, *Languages of Belonging*, New Delhi 2003.

⁴ M. Bhan, H. Duschinsky, A. Zia, "Introduction. 'Rebels of the Streets' Violence, Protest, and Freedom in Kashmir", in M. Bhan, H. Duschinsky, A. Zia, C. Mahmood (eds.) *Resisting Occupation in Kashmir*, Pennsylvania 2018, p. 3.

MUSIC AS A MEDIUM

Music is one of the most universal means of communication and the form of art which particularly stimulates emotions. Being neither positive nor negative in its nature, it has a huge potential to influence the feelings of its listeners. By evoking the state of anxiety, pleasure, rage or elation, it may direct the listeners towards either the good or the evil and thus affect the way they perceive certain circumstances. It is, for example, known for its soothing features, which are used in the so called music therapy. On the other hand, it may become a weapon. J. Martin Daughtry, an ethnomusicologist and the author of *Listening to War, Sound, Music and Survival in Wartime Iraq*, states that *sound is the most expansive vector through which violence is administered*.⁵ Just imagine a war scenery – both with eyes and ears. It will probably be a sinister vision of ruins or corpses together with some frightful noise, such as the sound of shots and screams, or, on the other hand, an ominous silence. Indeed, sound is an unavoidable element accompanying any military action and an element which can be used to create a particular atmosphere in most persuasive way. This is how it is used, for example, by filmmakers. And take the word ‘tumultuous’ which is commonly used in the context of conflict. It aims to describe the state of uncertainty, something violent and rapid but originally referred to as a loud, sudden noise. Language itself pinpoints that this linkage is natural and undeniable.

But sound is also music. It is this field of culture which, like visual arts, speaks in universal language, hence it is particularly prone to becoming a product of global popular culture. Music may easily absorb different influences, which enhances its potential to unite people beyond boundaries, as well as it may be used as a tool for building self-consciousness, tolerance to otherness or develop people’s inner self. What is more, it can stimulate people’s awareness on some important issues. Olivier Urbain in his introduction to the collection of articles gathered under the title *Music and Conflict Transformation: Harmonies and Dissonances in Geopolitics*, notices that music has a particularly great potential to transform conflicts. He states that it *can be used to enhance human life or destroy it*.⁶ Along with numerous examples of the music healing power, he recognizes at the same time its possible destructing impact on people, which may lead to violence or manipulation. For example, it may accompany some ambiguous situations to draw listeners towards particular reactions, especially negative ones, such as the Nazis playing Wagner’s music in concentration camps. Nevertheless, the aim of the work Urbain edited is to *explore the ways music can promote a more peaceful world, and how people can use music to move from a culture of war and violence to a culture of peace*.⁷ So let us now move to the examples and see how this can be applied to the Kashmiri conflict.

⁵ M.J. Daughtry, *Audible Inaudible* (2016), at <<http://www.hayvkahraman.com/2017/01/21/martin-daughtry/>>, 20 February 2018.

⁶ O. Urbain, *Music and Conflict Transformation: Harmonies and Dissonances in Geopolitics*, London 2008, p. 3.

⁷ O. Urbain, *Music...*, pp. 2-3.

KASHMIRIYAT AND ITS BACKGROUND

In Kashmir, the reality has been soaked with conflict for 70 year now. It appeared along with the emergence of Pakistan and India as independent republics divided briefly on the basis of religious criteria. Kashmir as a borderland inhabited mostly by Muslims but ruled by a Hindu raja, became a common bone of contention between these two countries. Over the decades it evolved into a multidimensional dispute, revolving around dominance in the South Asia region.⁸ The insurgency was particularly harsh at its beginnings during the Indo-Pakistani War of 1947, in 1965 known as the second Indo-Pakistani War, then reappeared in the 1990s, and again escalated quite recently as the unrest of 2016.⁹ Throughout this period, militancy in its multiple aspects has dominated each and every discourse on the region, be it popular or academic. And noise became a part of everyday living and an instant trigger for fear and anxiety.

But before it all started, the situation of the region was far from peaceful as well. Its geographical location of an only valley between the Great Himalayas and the Pir Panjal Range, enabling the access to the Indian subcontinent, resulted in numerous changes of authority. It had been taken over mainly by external rulers, who would influence the original Kashmiris not only politically, but culturally as well. The Valley used to be governed by Buddhists, Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs, almost all the rulers coming from the outside, bringing along their traditions and customs. The composite history of Kashmir gave rise to the formation of a specific local conglomerate culture, combining those religious and other influences. It is referred to in general as *kashmiriyat*, 'the kashmiriness'.

According to Antonina Kłosowska, symbolic culture is the system of meanings which covers the field of art, beliefs, history and traditions that is common for all the members of a particular community.¹⁰ As Mirosław Sobecki states, it is preserved in different forms of art and shall be treated as a semiotic space of communication made of symbols to fulfill particular values recognized by the community. And thus it becomes an area in which identity is created.¹¹ *Kashmiriyat* seems to fit in these terms. This concept is dated back to 16th century, to the pre-bhakti poets of Nund Rishi and Lal Ded.¹² It is perceived as the traditional Kashmiri Muslims' culture, passed down through generations. It was popularized in the modern era by Sheikh Abdullah for political reasons in the 1930s. He secularized the idea and made it to become some kind of a national myth, thus providing the roots for the community in order to create its separate national

⁸ See more at: R.G. Wirsing, *Kashmir in the Shadow of War: Regional Rivalries in a Nuclear Age*, New York 2003.

⁹ H. Jacob, "Living in denial on Kashmir", *The Hindu*, 14 July 2016 at <<http://www.thehindu.com/opinion/lead/Living-in-denial-on-Kashmir/article14486818.ece>>, 11 February 2018.

¹⁰ M. Sobecki, *Kultura symboliczna a tożsamość: studium tożsamości kulturowej Polaków na Grodzieńszczyźnie z perspektywy edukacji międzykulturowej*, Białystok 2007, p. 71.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 72.

¹² M.I. Khan, *Kashmir's Transition to Islam. The Role of Muslim Rishis (Fifteen to Eighteen Century)*, Delhi 1994, p. 167.

identity. Therefore *kashmiriyat* at present is sometimes understood as a synonym of the independence movement, mainly connoting the radical wing, which rather seems a misuse of the term. Regardless of its original form, which is no longer existent, *kashmiriyat* is now what Kashmiris make of it. As noticed by Gordon Mathews, in the modern era of omnipresent relativity, people tend to long for their cultural motherland, where they would belong. According to the author, it is impossible to reconstruct it in its original form, though what can be done is to build it from the products available in the Global Supermarket of Culture. The term is referred to by Mathews as a non-material repository of identities and information with global extent.¹³ The elements which are being selected as representative for *kashmiriyat* and reproduced in works of art are: Sufism with its music and literature, attachment to land with its natural features, folk traditions, including music and handicraft, and values such as unity, tolerance and peace.¹⁴

In the modern era of globalization and rapid flourish of the media, particularly the Internet, the world is changing very quickly, and together changing local cultures and identities. The growing popularity of social media enhances the culture of participation, where everyone is free to express their opinions. As a result, even the long-lasting Kashmiri conflict is entering a new phase, extending it to the virtual space. The Web, enabling easy access to global content, and making elements of culture from all around the world accessible, opens a new field for artistic activity as well. People chose products in the global Cultural Supermarket, which determines their cultural identity – the way people define themselves according to the choices of information and identities they make in this Cultural Supermarket.¹⁵ The degree to which they make those selections consciously may, however, vary.

RAP AND REBEL

In the Land of Saints each man raised is called a rebel
MC Kash, *Why We Rebels*

The young generation of Kashmirs, people who are now in their 20s and 30s, do not know of their region without troops and every-day-life restrictions. “The Occupation”, or in more neutral terms the military control of the state by the Indian Army, is a generational experience, impossible to erase from one’s mind and thus becomes a prevailing and ubiquitous discourse. The inconvenient reality, as a natural source of rebellious moods, as we know it from some western examples, is often a trigger for the counter-culture to emerge. And so it made people like MC Kash turn to rap music and give birth to Kashmiri underground.¹⁶

¹³ G. Mathews, *Supermarket kultury. Globalna kultura – jednostkowa tożsamość*, Warszawa 2005, p. 25.

¹⁴ C. Zutshi, *Languages of Belonging*, New Delhi 2003, p. 23.

¹⁵ G. Mathews, *Supermarket...*, p. 27.

¹⁶ See: J. McCarthy, “A New Generation of Kashmir Rappers Vents Its Rage in the Valley”, *NPR Music*,

Roushan Illahi, known as MC Kash, was born in 1990 in Srinagar, where he spent his childhood as well. His career started with a hip-hop single *I protest*, when he was just 17. In 2012 he released his first studio album titled *Rebel republik*, which was the first Kashmiri hip-hop. The music he performs is rap, a genre originating in the US and embedded in the urban context.¹⁷ MC Kash, who took his stage name from his region of origin, is a conscious and mature artist and citizen. His songs revolve around social issues, and thus fall within the concept of hip-hop as such. He is profoundly influenced by the reality he grew up in. The Valley of Kashmir of his childhood, which he recalls in interviews, was a place where guns, shots, rapes were part of everyday life, considered “normal”, though he never accepted them as such. As a representative of a young generation, he naturally contests the present times, as any youth may do anywhere in the world. But it is not a rebel for its own sake, marked by nihilism. MC Kash underlines his roots he is proud of and stands for values identified with the concept of *kashmiriyat*. He defines himself as a street poet whose aim is to be the people’s voice. The voice which they are deprived of by the biased media. He’s interested in the humane perspective of the traumatic events he experienced by himself as well, and the values he emphasizes are honor and dignity.¹⁸ His songs are definitely politicized, though it does not seem that he wants people to fight in a military way. For example in his song *My people* we see how from the generally dark backdrop, full of bitterness and pain, the author is able to retrieve hope evoking the ideas of equality and dignity, which people should strive for. He admits the rebellious nature of his songs, though he never calls for taking arms, nor refers to any religious motifs. Titles of his other songs are rather meaningful and give a clue about the artists attitude; these are for example *Bring them home*, *Valley of saints*, *Liberation*, *Family portrait*, *Everyday hustle*.

Apart from the subject matter of his lyrics, which actually could correspond to the situation in a few other militarized places around the world, what is local in his songs is the background to his videos. They were mostly shot in Srinagar, showing the city streets, the picturesque Dal Lake or mountainous scenery.

MC Kash currently resides in London, where he can openly express his wishes about a free and demilitarized Kashmir. The influence of Western culture on him, apart from the hip-hop he performs, may be noticed as well in some other aspects. The most visible one is the way he used classical music in one of his songs, which is *Orchestra of War*, where he sampled a universally recognizable piece by Beethoven. He engages himself into various activities in Europe to popularize Kashmiri culture and enhance people’s awareness of the Kashmiri issue, for example cooperates with the Kashmir Solidarity Movement at SOAS, University of London, is involved in the Young Connectors of the Future program at the Swedish Institute, and performs around both Europe and

27 March 2017 at <<https://www.npr.org/2017/04/25/524903956/a-new-generation-of-kashmir-rappers-vents-its-rage-in-the-valley>>, 8 February 2018.

¹⁷ *Biography* at <<https://web.archive.org/web/20141023093302/https://www.mckashofficial.com/bio>>, 8 February 2018.

¹⁸ J. Mccarthy, “A New Generation...”

India. However, he was recently stopped from entering the concert venue in Bangalore, accused by the police of being antinational.

MC Kash raps in English because, as he states in one of his interviews, he aims to reach a greater audience all around the world.¹⁹ Nevertheless, many of his songs feature other artists, both Kashmiri and those interested in the Kashmiri issue, such as the band Alif from Pune. They speak of their music as a fusion of contemporary poetry, in Urdu and Kashmiri, with ethnic sound. Having no Kashmiri origins, the band members are engaged in the local culture. Together with MC Kash they released a piece titled *Like a sufi*, which was labeled as first sufi rap. Remarks to the original religion are though not truly deep. It is more of a popular revision, a stereotypical representation through presenting singers in ethnic dress or some references to the general idea of being a sufi. There is just little resemblance to traditional sufi music.²⁰ It inspired numerous other Kashmiri rappers, such as: Rapper Ashu, Basim Wani, Cherii, Haze Kay. But hip-hop is still perceived as an underground music in Kashmir and the audience only have access to the songs via the Internet, as transmitting any politically inconvenient content at live events is restricted.²¹ Performing rock and music inspired by local traditions is not prohibited though, and luckily for Ali Saffudin, a student from Srinagar, whom I would like to elaborate on now.

ROCK AND RESISTANCE

Unlike MC Kash, Ali Saffudin seems much more embedded in the local culture. Identifying with the resistance movement, he is involved into the Kashmir Valley of Artists initiative, which has associated Kashmiri artists since August 2016. He appreciates Kashmiri culture a lot and speaks about it openly. The artist's roots are also vivid through the language—he sings in Urdu or Kashmiri, often adopting poetry to lyrics, e.g. Mirza Ghalib's ghazals. Sometimes his performances are accompanied by a drummer, though Saffudin himself plays the guitar, an instrument rather alien to traditional Kashmiri music. The lyrics he chooses aim to express his resistance towards violence and conflict. For Ali Saffudin, music itself is a continuation of his beliefs and the ideas he supports, but can also be used as a tool to document history. For example, in his song of 2016 titled *Broken promise* he used a speech by Jawaharlal Nehru as lyrics, in which he pledges for plebiscite in Kashmir, which never took place, and some excerpts from the news: *Our pledge to the people of Kashmir – if you like, to the people of the world – that this matter can be affirmed again or cancelled by the people of Kashmir according to their wishes. We do not want to win people against*

¹⁹ Roushan Illahi aka MC Kash's speech at Maqbool Bhat day in Luton, 5 February 2017 at <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mA-Jkq3HHeY&t=221s>>. [access?] 30 Dec 2018

²⁰ Qawwali or *şūfyāna mūsīqī*. See: J. Pacholczyk, *Sufyana Musiqi – The Classical Music of Kashmir*, in M.P. Baumann (ed.), *Intercultural Music Studies*, vol. 9 (1996).

²¹ J. Mccarthy, "A New Generation..."

*their will and with the help of armed force; and, if the people of Jammu and Kashmir State wish to part company with us, they can go their way and we shall go ours. We want no forced marriages, no forced unions.*²²

Another piece, *Zindagi kya – inqalab o inqilab*, mixes Safuddin's music composition with lyrics of a poem *Inqalab o inqalab* by Abdul Ahad Azad (1903-1948), a Kashmiri poet believed to be the father of modern Kashmiri poetry and first literary researcher,²³ and the famous "Get up stand up" by Bob Marley. This is a musician Ali Saffudin names as one of his gurus, along with Bob Dylan, who both used to fight social injustice in his lyrics as well.²⁴ As the author says: *This one is a medley of three different works of revolutionary minds from three completely different worlds but with a common belief in the idea of revolution based on human conscience.*²⁵ Indeed, Azad was a witness of the emergence of the Kashmiri conflict and the resistance movement in the region. Bob Marley on the other hand, is known to have supported social issues, for example he condemned apartheid in Africa, and the song "Get up..." was released in 1980 to support the people of Haiti.²⁶

Another song, *Mayi chani* is an interpretation of an old Kashmiri folk song. Saffudin recorded also a traditional Pakistani patriot song, *Aye rah e haq ke shabeedo*, sung originally by Noor Jahan to barrack Pakistani soldiers during the 1965 war. In Safuddin's version, the anthem is meant as a tribute to Kashmiri martyrs, *to all those Kashmiris who stood up against Occupation, against Oppression, who left home but never came back.*²⁷ The video to the song presents pictures of people who died in the insurgence, including Burhan Wani, whose death triggered the 2016 unrest. It is visible that the artist is rather supportive towards the Freedom Movement and has respect for those who died for it, even if their activity can be objectively perceived as terroristic. In an interview given before the recent conflict escalation in July 2016, which broke up after a militant Burhan Wani was killed, Ali Saffudin said: *I am a Kashmiri, a proud Kashmiri. I am a firm believer of the movement. My heroes are Maqbool Bhat²⁸, Afzal Ghuru²⁹,*

²² J. Nehru's Speech in the House of the People, New Delhi, August 7, 1952 at *Jawaharlal Nehru Selected Speeches*, vol. 2: 1949-1953, Delhi 1954, pp. 109-123.

²³ "Abdul Ahad Azad (1903-1948)", *Kashmiri Pen*, 5 July 2017 at <<http://www.kashmirpen.com/abdul-ahad-azad-1903-1948>>, 11 February 2018.

²⁴ "Interview of Kashmiri Student..."

²⁵ <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=plgoToAlh14>>, 11 February 2018.

²⁶ J. Genegabus, "HIFF Review: 'Bob Marley: Making of a Legend'" at *Honolulu Star-Advertiser*, 20 October 2011, 11 February 2018.

²⁷ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U_kh_YKoELM>, 11 February 2018.

²⁸ Maqbool Bhat (1938-1984) – a Kashmiri separatist leader, the founder of the Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF), who was sentenced to death and hanged accused of terrorist activity. He became a symbol of martyrdom and his death anniversary is celebrated by the followers of freedom movement.

²⁹ Mohammad Afzal Guru (1969-2013) – a Kashmiri separatist sentenced and executed for participation in the attack on Indian parliament which was conducted on December 13, 2001 by the Jaish-e-Mohammad (JEM) jihadist group.

*Ishfaq Majeed*³⁰, *Nadeem Khateeb*³¹ and all those great souls who lost their lives for this movement. My heart cries and my blood boils in their name. For me Azaadi is not a means to get featured on the newspaper or to remain in the limelight. It's a cry which resonates in me and which ll never let me forget and forgive those who have wronged my people. (...) I'll go and perform kashmiri music for kashmiri people. I'll sing my lungs out to bring smiles on the faces of my people, I ll play to share some joy and some happiness with my people because we ve always shared our sorrows and we have always shared our struggles. I am a kashmiri muslim and I ll strongly condemn and dissociate myself from any such thing which is filthy, obscene or immoral. I have a strong conscience, I know my roots my values.³²

This quote, which can be treated as a manifesto, is a pretty good representation of Saffudin's attitude to both conflict and music. The message he conveys in the above post is definitely politicized, though it cannot be said with certainty what is the artist's exact understanding of words, or often clichés, such as 'the Movement' and 'Azaadi'. The idea of *kashmiriyat* as the kashmiri identity appears here as the resistance identity, understood after Castells as the one *emerging from actors within cultures that are marginalized by dominant discourses and power relations, and who therefore build "trenches of resistance and survival" against these forces*³³. It is further proved by what the artist said in the close aftermath of the July 2016 events, when the situation was still really tense: *We were the nineties kids, raised in curfewed night and under brutal army suppression. That took a toll on every kid. The Kashmir conflict resonates in every Kashmiri's lifestyle. Every now and then we ended up starting a discussion about the conflict of Kashmir. When you have a consciousness and you belong to an oppressed state, resistance becomes a necessity.*³⁴

These words points at the noticeable fact that most of the current discourse on Kashmir, be it artistic or any other, revolve around the conflict. However, the issue can be referred to from different perspectives and in various modes. It is both a trauma and a trigger for action. As proved by numerous examples around the world, the more unpropitious the situation, (usually as far as politics are concerned), the more prolific the artists. The above mentioned examples of musicians show a budding tendency present among the young generation of Kashmiri Muslims to reject militancy to seek another method of opposition. Some musicians attempt to transform the potential

³⁰ Ashfaq Majeed Wani (1966-1990) – a Kashmiri separatist, trained in Pakistan, then leader of JKLF, accused of anti-Indian terrorist activity and killed by Indian Paramilitary Forces.

³¹ Nadeem Khatib (1967-1999) – a Kashmiri pilot who studied aviation in the US but returned to Kashmir to join the military group called Al-Badr. He was shot in Udhampur and is praised by other freedom fighters as the first non-resident Kashmir person to have returned to fight the Indian rule in the state.

³² <<https://www.facebook.com/alisaffu/posts/861066487345278>>, 22 March 2017 [original spelling].

³³ M. Castells, *The Power of Identity*, Oxford 1997.

³⁴ "Interview of Kashmiri Student and Singer Ali Saffudin", *The Perspectives*, 5 September 2016 at <<http://experimentwithperspectives.blogspot.com/2016/09/interview-of-kashmiri-student-activist-ali-saffudin.html>>, 01 March 2017.

of the traumatic reality they live or grew up in into power and positive energy, which may be used to enhance people's feeling of unity and solidarity. As Khuram Parvez, the chief organizer of Haqeeqat-e-Kashmir³⁵, said: *We also have historically cultivated a sublime tradition in, and love for, music. Music – which appeals to the higher truths of love, justice, dignity, and peace; which genuinely acknowledges the long suffering, and yet bravely resisting, Kashmiris; and which is performed for the actual public – is wholeheartedly welcomed.*³⁶

Thus, on the basis of shared memories reproduced through works of art, collective identity is being built.

CONCLUSION

We cannot explicitly say that the message conveyed by the artists in their works as well as what they express in interviews is apolitical. It is clearly vivid that they oppose the reality they live in, marked by what it is called by most of the Kashmiris – the Occupation by the Indian State. But the militarization became an inseparable part of Kashmir's history and therefore collective memory, which has a huge impact on cultural identity. Such as after the trauma of World War II and the Holocaust it impossible to build culture forgetting about this terrible experience, it is imprinted in the consciousness of all Europeans, the Indo-Pakistani conflict, as still vibrant, is resonating in everything that is produced by Kashmiri artists. It is a generational experience, which one cannot eradicate from his mind. The line between politics and culture is thus, very thin.

Along with that, the musicians, as shown on the example of Ali Saffudin, are proud of their roots, appreciate the cultural heritage of Kashmir and are putting effort into promoting it to wider audience. Identity indeed, as Wojciech Burszta states, needs to be received by someone from the outside to be recognized as such.³⁷ The aforementioned examples show Kashmiri Muslim identity as a full one, recognized by both its transmitters and receivers.

The modern Cultural Supermarket, as Gordon Mathews states, eradicates the traditional roots, but instead offers a vast array of means from which these roots may be recreated, then presented on social scene and finally people may be able to believe in them.³⁸ It seems that Kashmiri Muslims have already reached this final stage and are consciously representing the cultural identity of their region. They may be seen as

³⁵ A music event that took place in September 2013 in Srinagar in opposition to the elitist event named *Ehsaas-e-Kashmir*, organized by Zubin Mehta in collaboration with the German Embassy in New Delhi.

³⁶ N. Ganai, "Unlike Zubin show, Haqeeqat-e-Kashmir is inclusive, says Khuram Parvez", *India Today*, 3 September 2013, at <<https://www.indiatoday.in/india/north/story/zubin-mehta-show-haqeeqat-e-kashmir-inclusive-khuram-parvez-209792-2013-09-03>>, 28 December 2018.

³⁷ W. Burszta, 1999. *Ideologia różnicy i tożsamość zbiorowa*, „Sprawy Narodowościowe”, z. 14/15, pp. 51-60.

³⁸ G. Mathews, *Supermarket...*, p. 281.

continuing the ideas behind *kashmiriyat* in its modern interpretation and thus being the voice of peace in the surrounding state of violence.

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Magdalena PIECH – doktorantka na Wydziałowych Kulturoznawczych Studiach Doktoranckich na wydziale Studiów Międzynarodowych i Politycznych Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego w Krakowie, absolwentka filologii orientalnej – indianistyki na Wydziale Filologicznym UJ oraz Studiów Podyplomowych dla Tłumaczy Specjalistycznych w zakresie języka angielskiego w Katedrze do Badań nad Przekładem i Komunikacją Międzykulturową UJ, tłumacz, lektor języka hindi. Prowadzi badania w zakresie szeroko pojętej kultury Kaszmiru, w tym historii regionu, islamu w Kaszmirze, kwestii tożsamości oraz jej funkcjonowania w diasporze i przejawów w sztuce. Interesuje się również zagadnieniami socjolingwistycznymi w zakresie języka hindi.