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Dramatic Islamic Preaching: A Close Reading of ‘Amr Khālid

Abstract This chapter focuses on a rhetorical technique used by different Islamic preachers on the basis of the prominent example of ‘Amr Khālid, namely the mimetic telling of stories within his sermons. It provides a detailed analysis of his dramatic technique and of the effects it produces. For this analysis, I have chosen a close reading of a short passage from one of his programmes. The advantage of this approach is that it allows for a detailed discussion of the narrative and performative techniques used. The theoretical analysis builds on crucial concepts of the so-called Greco-Roman rhetorical tradition (which modern European rhetorical theory is a part of). However, the reason for recourse to this theoretic tradition is not only due to the fact that it provides a useful theoretical frame. Instead, as I point out, the Greco-Roman (or European) tradition has considerably influenced modern Arabic rhetorical manuals as well. Connecting the theoretical rhetorical reflections with some insights from the field of neuroscience, I argue that the analysed rhetorical techniques provide a particular form of religious aesthetic experience, which is geared towards bringing the past to the present, making it experienceable for modern listeners today.

Modern Islamic preaching on TV, sometimes referred to as Islamic Televangelism,¹ as practiced by ‘Amr Khālid, Muḥammad Ḥassān, Mu‘izz Mas‘ūd, or Muṣṭafā Ḥusnī, to cite just a few of the most prominent preachers, has become well-established. Indeed, there have been a number of studies focusing on this phenomenon in recent years.² The scholarly literature has approached the topic from different perspectives: at the beginning there was a particular emphasis on anthropological and sociological analysis, and rhetorical perspective—which focuses on the different rhetorical devices used, including the performance of the speech—has also gained in importance over time.³

Different studies have focused on the peculiar oratorical style of ‘Amr Khālid.⁴ One main point that has been repeatedly underlined in discussion of his preaching is the mimetic telling of his stories, which is understood as being partly responsible for his success:⁵ “Khālid dramatizes and acts out the stories by switching person and entering the role of the stories’ characters.”⁶

While the importance of this mimetic preaching has been noted and discussed in general terms, it is worthwhile taking a closer look into this technique and into the effects it produces. The aim here is to discuss in some detail the different aspects of this way of preaching from the perspective of aesthetic and rhetorical theory. This means focusing on ‘Amr Khālid more concretely in terms of religious aesthetics, and thus looking into those aspects of religion which are sensually perceptible.⁷ The issues inherent to this sensual perception shall be discussed by means of rhetorical theory, and they will be supplemented by a basic observation made by neuropsychological research. This will allow us to draw further conclusions about the peculiar dramatic, aesthetic experience made possible by narrative and performative techniques, including those used by Khālid.

1 Yasmin Moll, “Islamic Televangelism,” *Arab Media & Society* 10 (2010).

2 Jacob Høigilt, *Islamist Rhetoric: Language and Culture in Contemporary Egypt*, Routledge Arabic Linguistics Series (London: Routledge, 2011); John Erik Sætren, “Two Narratives of Islamic Revival: Islamic Television Preaching in Egypt” (PhD diss., University of Bergen, 2010); Yasmin Moll, “Islamic Televangelism”; David Hardaker, “Amr Khaled: Islam’s Billy Graham,” in *The Independent* (January 2006); Patrick Haenni, *L’Islam de marché: l’autre révolution conservatrice*, La république des idées (Paris: Seuil, 2005).

3 This is particularly true for Høigilt, *Islamist Rhetoric* and Sætren, “Two Narratives of Islamic Revival.”

4 E.g. Asef Bayat, “Piety, Privilege and Egyptian Youth,” *ISIM Newsletter* 10 (2002): 23; Lindsay Wise, “‘Words from the Heart’: New Forms of Islamic Preaching in Egypt” (M.phil. thesis, St. Antony’s College, Oxford University, 2003), 6, 57.

5 Sætren, “Two Narratives of Islamic Revival,” 39f, 146f, 200.

6 Sætren, “Two Narratives of Islamic Revival,” 200.

7 Hubert Cancik and Hubert Mohr, “Religionsästhetik,” in *Handbuch religionswissenschaftlicher Grundbegriffe*, vol. 1, ed. Hubert Cancik, Burkhard Gladigow, and Matthias Laubscher (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1988).

This analysis builds in some regards on Rudolf Otto's reflections on religious and aesthetic experience, which he outlines in his *The holy*.⁸ One of Otto's basic assumptions is that in order to elucidate the 'religious experience' (religiöse Erfahrung) one needs to compare it with aesthetic experience. However, this chapter is not concerned with the sublime as Otto is, neither does it draw on the aesthetic category of the sublime. Instead, this chapter analyses a certain preaching technique, a certain preaching style, which is not limited to Amr Khālid, but which has become particularly prominent with him. The basic claim of this chapter is that a detailed analysis of this technique is an essential element when trying to understand Islamic televangelism, and, in a more general sense, an important aspect of aesthetic experience in the religious field.

The Approach: A short passage in close reading

The aim here is not to discuss a whole episode in one of Khālid's numerous preaching programs. Instead, I propose a close reading of one very short passage. The advantage of this approach is that it allows for a detailed discussion of the narrative and performative techniques used. While it is not possible, for technical reasons, to offer screenshots within this publication, in order to be as precise as possible I will try to verbally describe the different facial expressions and gestures Khālid uses in combination with what he says at every given point. The reader might want to watch the selected passage in the video, which is (at the moment of writing) available online.⁹

The short sequence, which this article focuses on, stems from the fifth episode of Khālid's program "Ma'a at-tābi'īn," which was broadcast during Ramadan 2011. As the title indicates, the episode centers around Ḥusayn ibn 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib (626–680), a grandson of the Prophet, and an important figure, particularly in Egypt where Ḥusayn's veneration goes back to Fatimid times.¹⁰ His head is believed to be buried in the *maqām* of the Ḥusayn mosque in Fatimid Cairo, where important festivities take place in his honor to this day.¹¹

In the section chosen for the close reading¹² Khālid narrates a short episode in which Ḥusayn is told by his father 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib about the

8 Rudolf Otto, *Das Heilige: Über das Irrationale in der Idee des Göttlichen und sein Verhältnis zum Rationalen* (Munich: Beck, 2014).

9 'Amr Khālid, *al-Ḥalqa 5: Sayyidnā al-Ḥusayn, Ma'a at-tābi'īn*, 2011, accessed 28 June 2017, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RGLaR57rPig>.

10 Yaacov Lev, *State and Society in Fatimid Egypt* (Leiden: Brill, 1991), 151–152.

11 Cf. Michael Gilsenan, *Saint and Sufi in Modern Egypt: An Essay in the Sociology of Religion* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1973).

12 The section has been chosen because of its dense accumulation of rhetorical and aesthetical effects. These include, but are not limited to, address of the audience, switching of voice (from preacher to narrator, from narrator to figure, from one figure to another), and imitation of emotions of the imitated figures.

beginning of Muḥammad's prophethood in Mecca. The selected clip starts with the beginning of 'Alī's account and stops at the end. The first step will be to provide some brief remarks on how Khālid presents himself in the program. Following this, the second step will discuss Khālid's oratory performance in some detail. I will particularly outline how far his narrative and performative techniques are aimed at effecting an identification of the spectator with the 'characters' Khālid plays in the selected passage. I will then discuss this identification within rhetorical theory and its techniques for the emotional affectation of the audience, including some findings from neuropsychological research, which are of great interest in this context. Finally, I will conclude with some summarizing remarks, interpreting the presented preaching style as a peculiar way of remembering the past emotionally and linking it to the present.

The Setting and Khālid's Oratory Ethos

Before entering into further detail, some remarks with regard to the setting are in order. In terms of rhetorical theory these regard the realm of *ethos*, which—in its original meaning—designates the 'character.'¹³ However, it is not the character of the orator per se that is intended, but rather, as the rhetorician Joachim Knape points out, "the consciously presented character of the orator."¹⁴ In our context, the term *ethos* can be paraphrased using the modern term 'image.'¹⁵

The ethos regards both the character as presented outside a given speech, as well as the character as presented within the speech. As Khālid's image has been discussed in some detail elsewhere, including in the different projects he contributes to,¹⁶ I will limit myself to his *ethos* as presented in the program.

Khālid sits, as is usual in most of his programs, particularly in the beginning of his career, at a desk; he wears a dark grey suit with a white shirt and a striped tie. On his left lies a small Qur'ān, and in front of him he places his speaking notes for the program. As regards his image, he differs greatly from the image of the "traditional" preacher,¹⁷ who is often associated with a *gallabiyya* and the red fez (*tarbūsh*). The expression "sheikh in a suit," which was used in the press to describe Khālid, particularly at the

13 Gert Ueding et al., "Affektenlehre," in *Historisches Wörterbuch der Rhetorik*, ed. Gert Ueding, vol. 1 (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1992), 220.

14 Joachim Knape, *Modern Rhetoric in Culture, Arts, and Media: 13 Essays* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2013), 58.

15 Knape, *Modern Rhetoric*, 58–59.

16 E.g. Julia Gerlach, *Zwischen Pop und Dschihad: Muslimische Jugendliche in Deutschland* (Berlin: Links, 2006), 34–35.

17 Cf. Bayat, "Piety, Privilege and Egyptian Youth," 23. Wise, "Words from the Heart," 5. Sophia Pandya, "Religious Change Among Yemeni Women: The New Popularity of Amr Khaled," *Journal of Middle East Women's Studies* 5, no. 1 (2009): 65–66. Haenni, *L'Islam de marché*.

beginning of his career,¹⁸ further illustrates this difference. In style, Khālid is more similar to a young Egyptian business man¹⁹ than to the traditional religious scholar. His audience is particularly made up of young middle and upper-class Egyptians, "Egypt's globalizing youth."²⁰ Khālid also prominently addresses women.²¹ Accordingly, the topics of his programs have always differed from the 'traditional' sermon in the mosque. In fact, from the very beginning of his career he has addressed topics central to his audience's everyday life but not usually addressed in the mosque, including the risk of committing sins while on summer holidays at the beach in Alexandria.²² While these aspects are important for a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon, I mention them only to contextualize his preaching along the most important lines. The main interest of this chapter lies with Khālid's oratory performance.

The Oratory Performance

The section that this chapter focuses on²³ narrates a short account, which took place when Husayn was about ten years old. Khālid, who at this point has already been talking about Husayn for some minutes, introduces the account as follows: "and when he [i.e. Husayn] grew up a little bit, and reached the age of ten, his father, 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib, told him"²⁴ For the duration of the first part of the sentence, the camera films Khālid from some distance, and as soon as it focuses on Khālid, the viewer sees him in a frontal camera angle. Both of his hands are spread out in front of him as he continues "all the Quraysh went to your other grandfather,²⁵ Abū Ṭālib." Now, his hands draw a circle thus underlining the entirety of the Quraysh. At the point where Khālid refers to Abū Ṭālib he points with his right forefinger to the right edge of the screen. Through this finger pointing, the screen (or the view frame) is treated like a stage, just as the finger pointing outside the frame 'suggests' that Abū Ṭālib is waiting at the side of the 'stage' for his appearance. In the next sentence, the preacher further describes Abū Ṭālib: "that means to the father of *sayyidnā* 'Alī." Khālid now turns his forefinger towards himself, hereby underlining the

18 Cf. Moll, "Islamic Televangelism," 2.

19 Khālid worked as an accountant before becoming a successful preacher.

20 Asef Bayat, *Life as Politics: How Ordinary People Change the Middle East* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2010), 134.

21 Pandya, "Religious Change Among Yemeni Women: The New Popularity of 'Amr Khaled," 66–67.

22 For an account of one of his sermons, see Gerlach, *Zwischen Pop und Dschihad*, 35–36.

23 The episode is available on 'Amr Khālid's YouTube channel (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RGIaR57rPig>), the selected passage is from 5:58 to 6:02.

24 'Amr Khālid's account is slightly confusing, because in the selected section he only mentions Husayn as a listener of the account, from a certain point (6:41) on, however, he always mentions Husayn and his older brother Hasan as listeners.

25 In this numbering, Husayn's first grandfather is Muḥammad.

possessive relation of *sayyidnā*. 'Alī is "our" master; Khālid's gesture identifies him as a representative of the believers. At this point, he reports the direct speech of the Quraysh: "And they [i.e. the Quraysh] told him [i.e. Abū Ṭālib]: 'Hand us over Muḥammad, [in order that] we will do with him what we want.'" While citing the Quraysh's request, Khālid imitates 'them.' His mimics express the mandatory character of the request, and they are supported by his gestures: a rapid movement with both hands symbolizing the request of delivery.

The interesting point here is that Khālid does not speak in his own person or—in terms of narratology—with his own voice.²⁶ Instead of speaking as the preacher 'Amr Khālid or as the narrator of the story—two roles which are clearly distinguished in narratology²⁷—the voice that is speaking here is that of the Quraysh. His speech is mimetic: Khālid speaks in the role of someone else, and in doing so he also imitates the gestures of a person (in this case the 'spokesperson' of the Quraysh). This technique is very typical for Khālid. He uses it not only here, where he imitates the Quraysh, but several times in the following of the passage. Before I contextualize the meaning of this technique further in terms of the aesthetic experience, the remainder of the selected clip must be described.

Before the spectator learns about Abū Ṭālib's answer to the Quraysh's request, he is first informed about a change of scenery: "Your grandfather went to the Prophet and told him." This phrase makes the question of roles even more interesting than it has been so far. The possessive determiner *your*²⁸ qualifies the grandfather as Ḥusayn's. This means that the grammatical addressee here is not the spectator of Khālid's program, but instead Ḥusayn who listens to the account of his father 'Alī. I have used the term "grammatical addressee" here in order to differentiate between different addressees. While the grammatical construction indicates clearly that Ḥusayn is addressed, this does not mean that the TV-spectator is not addressed. Already the genre of the sermon necessarily implies that the spectator is an addressee, as there is no sermon without a preacher addressing his audience. In order to distinguish both roles analytically I suggest differentiating between the grammatical addressee, namely Ḥusayn who is being addressed by his father 'Alī, and the factual addressee, namely the TV-spectator who is addressed by Khālid.²⁹ The doubling of the addressee roles (Ḥusayn and TV-spectator) corresponds with a doubling of the speaker ('Alī and Khālid). This doubling is obviously not only at

26 This distinction between *diegesis* and *mimesis* has its origins in Greek philosophy. See Plato, *The Republic of Plato* [Res publica], 3rd rev. and corr. throughout ed. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1888), 77. Gérard Genette, *Figures III* (Paris: Seuil, 1972) also builds on him. Among others, Genette's chapter "voix" has been translated into English in Genette, *Narrative Discourse*, trans. Jan E. Lewin, (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1980), 212–262.

27 Cf. Genette, *Figures III*, 226.

28 In the Egyptian Arabic original, it is the possessive suffix *-k* in *abūk*.

29 I adopt this differentiation from Adrian Graffy, *A Prophet Confronts his People: The Disputation Speech in the Prophets* (Rome: Biblical Institute Press, 1984), 48.

stake in the cited phrase, but it also stretches through most parts of the sermon. From the perspective of aesthetic response (*Wirkungsästhetik*),³⁰ a crucial aspect of this role doubling is that the TV-spectator 'becomes'—to a degree—Ḥusayn. This is the role, at least, that the sermon provides for him when Khālid addresses him as Ḥusayn. We will see below that this deduction is not an arbitrary one, but instead corresponds to the communicative strategy as well as to the aesthetic one.

After the change of scenery, Khālid/Alī reports on Abū Ṭālib's reaction before the Prophet: "he told him: 'I am helpless against them.'" Khālid expresses Abū Ṭālib's helplessness through mimics and gestures: He slightly tilts his head back stretching both hands out in front of him showing the open palms as a symbol of helplessness and impotence.³¹ Introducing the Prophet's reaction, Khālid continues: "Then the Prophet said his famous word." In this place, the Prophet is not referred to as 'your grandfather.' Instead, the chosen general reference "the Prophet" suggests that the speaking voice in this place is Khālid's.³² In fact, at this point in the sermon Khālid abandons his mimetic style for a short moment, speaking in the role of the preacher instead. He expresses this role change also in the gestures. In this part, his hands do not perform any significant gestural movements as they continuously did before, but rather lie still and relaxed on the desk in front of him.

Immediately after this short gestural and mimic pause, Khālid returns to his mimetic style and imitates the Prophet through gestures. He raises his right forefinger, a gesture which is sometimes described as having been typical for the Prophet, and cites a very famous and central prophetic *ḥadīth*:³³ "O my uncle, by God, if they put . . ."—at this point Khālid stretches out the right hand on his right side—" . . . the sun in my right hand . . ."—Khālid leaves the right hand outstretched, and now performs symmetrically the same movement with his left hand, while continuing the *ḥadīth*—"and the moon in my left hand . . ."—concluding the quotation, he energetically shakes the out-stretched right forefinger to express decision and anger—" . . . in return for giving up this cause, I would not give it up, until God makes it victorious, or I die in His service." During the last phrase, the right forearm with the out-stretched forefinger decidedly underlines the negation by performing a 90-degree movement from a horizontal to a vertical position.

30 The term stems from the literary scholar Wolfgang Iser. Cf. Wolfgang Iser, *The Act of Reading: A Theory of Aesthetic Response* (London: Routledge, Kegan Paul, 1978).

31 Cf. Charles Darwin, *The Expression of the Emotions in Man and Animals*, ed. Francis Darwin, 2nd ed., Cambridge Library Collection—Darwin, Evolution and Genetics (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 277. The gesture performed by Khālid in this place closely corresponds to Darwin's description.

32 Nonetheless, the second option is possible as well; the chosen wording does not exclude Alī as narrating voice in this place.

33 The Arabic term *ḥadīth* designates a report of a saying or deed of the Prophet. See James Robson, "Ḥadīth," in *Encyclopaedia of Islam: New Edition*, ed. Bernard Lewis, et al., vol. 3 (Leiden: Brill, 1971).

The sequence comes to a preliminary end, and the camera's focus is again the distant one used at the beginning of the clip. The spectator sees Khālid from some distance sitting at his desk in the inner court of the Ibn Ṭūlūn mosque.

Khālid Commenting on his Performance

The following passage constitutes a sort of comment to the first one. It comments on the effect of the account on the listener, thus making the emotions his account aims to evoke in him or her explicit. 'The' listener has been described above as doubled, on the one side Ḥusayn and Ḥasan as intradiegetic listeners, and on the other the extradiegetic ones—that is, the TV-spectators. Also, this passage seems to refer to both listeners; however, it is only the intradiegetic listeners, Ḥusayn and Ḥasan, that are mentioned explicitly. In order to describe the effect of 'Alī's account on the two children, Khālid raises the right hand as if he was indicating the height of the child while, saying: "The small child . . .," then corrects himself: "both, Ḥasan and Ḥusayn"—raising his left hand and holding it in the same position, at the same height as the right one—"heard this speech." In order to underline the children's attentive listening, he puts both his hands behind his ears thereby enlarging his auricles in order to mimetically depict the act of listening. His hands only remain in this position for some seconds, however, just long enough to underline the children's attentiveness. Now, both hands are brought to the fore again, holding them at some height over the desk; both fists are strongly balled. Khālid's face increasingly expresses emotions of hurt and anger while he describes the effect that 'Alī's account had on the two children: "They are touched deeply and they feel . . .," during these last words Khālid's facial expression changes, his mimics express a mixture of growing anger and decision. "As if . . ." at this point, underlining the climax of the description, Khālid leaves only one fist balled towards the camera, his head is slightly bowed to the other side, ". . . it is a part of them." While pronouncing this conclusion, Khālid stretches his right hand towards the camera and pinches it with the left one. In doing so he illustrates the bodily experience 'Alī's account has provoked for Ḥasan and Ḥusayn. This short but complex passage expresses a clear message, one which is crucial for the whole sequence: Ḥasan and Ḥusayn have experienced the account they have heard of the Prophet as if it had happened to them; as if they themselves, had been in the place of the Prophet.

The interesting point here is that Khālid's description of this bodily reaction goes well beyond a mere comment on the children's reaction. The goal is not only to describe the effect on the children. Instead, the description of the bodily experienced emotional effect implicitly refers to the extradiegetic listener as well—that is, to the spectator in front of the television. In doing so the doubling of the role of the listener, at once intradiegetic and extradiegetic, is reproduced in the comment. This means,

in other words, that while Khālid explicitly refers to the reaction of Ḥasan and Ḥusayn, he at the same time implicitly refers to the television viewer. The goal of this strategy is to emphasize the effect the narration had (or is aimed to have had) on the viewer. Not only do Ḥasan and Ḥusayn experience the story bodily, but the viewer does as well. Emphasizing this bodily experience might have even served to increase it; it certainly makes it explicit. This bodily experience constitutes, I argue, a central aspect of the sermon's aesthetic experience, in other words—to take up Iser's term—of the aesthetic response that is the sermon's aim.

Rhetorical Theory and the Affectation of the Other

Among the most central concerns of rhetorical theory³⁴ is the affectation of the other. Since the very beginning of its systematization, rhetorical theory has focused on the emotional effectiveness of a speech. Modern rhetorical manuals repeatedly rely, to different degrees, on the ancient rhetoricians. Among these, Aristotle was the first to provide a systematic theory of rhetoric. He noted that oral delivery has the greatest effect, while also underlining that so far nobody had approached the matter.³⁵ He also undertook the first steps in this direction, and subsequent theoreticians, most importantly Cicero and Quintilian, have further elaborated

34 I use the term rhetorical theory here in its Greco-Roman meaning. Confusion has to be avoided with Arabic *'ilm al-balāgha*. Although the latter term is often translated as rhetoric, this translation is rather ambiguous. In fact, *'ilm al-balāgha* mainly treats that section of rhetoric which in the Latin terminology is referred to as *elocutio*, namely the stylistic elaboration of a text or speech and questions of pragmatics and semantics. Whereas within the Greco-Roman rhetorical tradition, apart from *elocutio*, quite some attention has been dedicated also to the speech's vocal and bodily delivery (*pronuntiatio* and *actio*). (Cf. Renate Würsch, "Rhetorik und Stilistik im arabischen Raum," in *Rhetorik und Stilistik (Rhetoric and Stylistics): Ein internationales Handbuch historischer und systematischer Forschung (An International Handbook of Historical and Systematic Research)*, ed. Ulla Fix, Andreas Gardt, and Joachim Knape, vol. 2, (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2009), 2041; Kristina Stock, *Arabische Stilistik* (Wiesbaden: Reichert, 2005), 4; "Warum so viele Worte? Ein Annäherungsversuch an arabische Stilnormen," *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft* 147, no. 2 (1997): 267 n. 2. Furthermore Philip Halldén, "What is Arab Islamic Rhetoric? Rethinking the History of Muslim Oratory Art and Homiletics," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 37, no. 1 (2005); Abdurazzak Patel, "Naḥḍah Oratory: Western Rhetoric in al-Shartūnī's Manual on the Art of the Orator," *Middle Eastern Literatures* 12, no. 3 (2009). I discuss the transcultural character of modern Arabic rhetorical manuals, which refer to Arabic rhetoric (*'ilm al-balāgha*) and to the Greco-Roman rhetorical tradition as well, in Jan Scholz, "Modern Arabic Rhetorical Manuals: A Transcultural Phenomenon," in *Engaging Transculturality: Concepts, Key Terms, Case Studies*, ed. Laila Abu-Er-Rub, et al. (London: Routledge, 2018, in press) and in Jan Scholz, "Cicero and Quintilian in the Arab World? Latin Rhetoric in Modern Arabic Rhetorical Manuals," in *Latin and Arabic: Entangled Histories*, ed. Daniel König (Heidelberg: Heidelberg University Publishing, 2019 in press).

35 Aristotle, *On Rhetoric: A Theory of Civic Discourse*, trans. George A. Kennedy (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), 218.

on the different questions regarding delivery.³⁶ Even then, the question of affectation was already at the intersection of rhetorical and dramatic theory. In fact, the Greek term used for delivery in rhetorical theory (*hypokrisis*), refers to the actor.³⁷ In his *Poetics*, dealing with the Tragedy, Aristotle notes: "So far as possible, one should also work out the plot in gestures, since a natural affinity makes those in the grip of emotions the most convincing, and the truest distress or anger is conveyed by one who actually feels these things."³⁸ This Aristotelian quote provides a good description of Khālid's performance: working out the plot in gestures is precisely what he does in his mimetic performance. However, this reference to the Greek philosopher in the context of a rhetorical analysis of an Islamic preacher is not only motivated by the fact that Khalid's performance corresponds to the importance attached to bodily techniques in the Greco-Roman tradition. In fact, the modern rhetorical manuals used for training preachers also rely on this heritage.

The widespread rhetorical manual by al-Ḥūfī, *The Art of Rhetoric*,³⁹ first published in 1949, will serve as one example.⁴⁰ The book, which relies on an Aristotelian conception of rhetoric, as becomes clear from the very beginning,⁴¹ devotes a chapter to religious rhetoric (preaching).⁴² The book's importance is well illustrated by the frequency with which other preaching manuals cite it as a reference.⁴³

With regard to our topic, the author outlines that the orator should penetrate (*taghalghal*)⁴⁴ his listener's souls, which will allow him to direct them as he wants.⁴⁵ The direction of souls stands in the same tradition of Plato's concept of psychagogy, namely the leading/direction of souls.⁴⁶

36 Although Aristotle insists on the importance of performative aspects, most of the elaborations in this regard go back to his Roman successors, and have been further elaborated in the history of 'Western' rhetoric. An influence of Roman rhetoricians is also manifest in modern Arabic rhetorical manuals, as I discuss in Scholz, "Cicero and Quintilian in the Arab World?" (in press).

37 Aristotle, *On Rhetoric*, 218 n. 1.

38 Aristotle, "Poetics," in *Aristotle: Poetics, Longinus: On the Sublime, Demetrius: On Style* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1995), 89.

39 Ahmad Muḥammad al-Ḥūfī, *Fann al-khaṭāba*, 5th ed. (Cairo: Nahḍa Miṣr, 2007).

40 The WorldCat lists its 2nd edition published by Nahḍa Miṣr in 1949. Given that another copy at the American University in Cairo dating from 1952 is registered as 2nd edition as well, it is plausible to assume 1949 as the year of the publication of the 1st edition.

41 Al-Ḥūfī, *Fann al-khaṭāba*, 5–7.

42 Al-Ḥūfī, *Fann al-khaṭāba*, 99–111.

43 Among these might be noted Muṣṭafā Aḥmad Abū Samak, *Madkhal li-dirāsāt al-khaṭāba wa-ṭarīq at-tablīgh fī l-islām* (ash-Sharika al-Waṭaniya li-ṭ-Ṭibāa, 1999); Sharaf ad-Dīn Aḥmad Ādam, *al-Khaṭāba: 'Ilm wa-fann* (Maṭba'at al-Ḥusayn al-Islāmiyya, 2000); Ḥasan 'Abd al-Ghanī Ḥassān, *al-Khaṭāba wa-i'dād al-khaṭīb an-nājih fī l-islām* (Cairo: no publisher, 2006); 'Abd ar-Rahmān Jīra, *al-Khaṭāba wa-i'dād al-khaṭīb*, 3rd ed. ([Cairo]: Maṭba'at Wizārat al-Awqāf al-Idāra al-Āmma li-l-Marākiz ath-Thaqāfiyya, s.a.).

44 Al-Ḥūfī, *Fann al-khaṭāba*, 19.

45 Al-Ḥūfī, *Fann al-khaṭāba*, 19.

46 Cf. On psychagogy Thomas Schirren, "Rhetorik und Stilistik der griechischen Antike," in *Rhetorik und Stilistik (Rhetoric and Stylistics): Ein internationales*

In order to achieve this rhetorical goal and in order to be able to lead his audience, the orator should be able to stir the emotions of his listeners and to light up their passions (*ithārat 'awāṭifihim wa-ish'āl mashā'irihim*).⁴⁷ In order to stir the emotions, different means are regarded as crucial. As the manual explains, the voice, and particularly the change of its tones, are important.⁴⁸ This principle is demonstrated in Khālid's performance, in which he changes his voice according to the mood he wants to transmit; however, the orator's gestures are also discussed in the manual as something that should support the voice. Again, this is precisely what Khālid does in his performance. His gestures support the telling of his story, for instance he points outside the screen as if to indicate that the protagonists are waiting for their appearance on the side of the stage; he not only talks about the figures, he also imitates them, thus speaking in their place. In doing so, he uses his arms and hands to express the emotional states of these figures. Here, the term 'bodily eloquence' which was coined by Cicero, is most fitting.⁴⁹ The suggestions offered in the mentioned rhetorical manual are not limited to the hands but also include the head (*ra's*) and the shoulders (*mankibayn*), as well as the mimics (*malāmiḥ al-wajh*), and the gazes of the eyes (*naẓarāt al-'aynayn*) and even the movements of the eyebrow (*ishārāt al-ḥājib*). The manual's outlines on performative aspects enter into some detail. To cite just one example, looking to the ground is explained as a sign of resignation and hopelessness (*ya's*) and of submissiveness or humility (*khushū*).⁵⁰ While these aspects are all regarded

Handbuch historischer und systematischer Forschung (An International Handbook of Historical and Systematic Research), ed. Ulla Fix, Andreas Gardt, and Joachim Knape, vol. 1 (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2008), 10. The concept is still valid today. See Joachim Knape, "Rhetorik der Künste," *ibid.*, 918.

47 Al-Ḥūfī, *Fann al-khaṭāba*, 19.

48 Al-Ḥūfī, *Fann al-khaṭāba*, 27.

49 "Est enim actio quasi sermo corporis." Marcus Tullius Cicero, *On the Orator: Book 3. On Fate. Stoic Paradoxes. Divisions of Oratory*, trans. Harris Rackham (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1942), 178. "The [bodily] delivery is in a sense the body language." And "Est enim actio quasi corporis quaedam eloquentia," Cicero, *Brutus. Orator*, trans. George L. Hendrickson and Harry M. Hubbell (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1939), 346. English translation: "For delivery is a sort of eloquence of the body." (I have slightly adapted the translations offered by the respective translators.)

50 Al-Ḥūfī, *Fann al-khaṭāba*, 27. The mentioning of the head (*ra's*), the two shoulders (*mankibayn*), the mimics (*malāmiḥ al-wajh*), the gazes of the eyes (*naẓarāt al-'aynayn*) and the movements of the eyebrow (*ishārāt al-ḥājib*) seems to be a reference to a passage in al-Jāhīz, who mentions nearly all of these aspects in the same order. (Abū 'Uthmān 'Amr ibn Baḥr al-Jāhīz, *al-Bayān wa-t-tabayīn*, ed. 'Abd as-Sallām Muḥammad Hārūn, 7th ed., 4 vols., vol. 1 (Cairo: Maktabat al-Khānī, 1998), 77.) This passage from Jāhīz is one of the comparatively rare places in which an author of autochthonous Arabic rhetoric mentions bodily performative aspects. The subsequent explanation of the feelings that can be evoked instead is clearly influenced by Greco-Roman rhetoric, which has traditionally attributed far more importance to these aspects than did Arabic rhetoric. The Lebanese author Sa'īd ash-Shartūnī, one of the first modern authors adapting Greco-Roman rhetoric in Arabic, discusses performative aspects in a very similar vein. (Sa'īd ash-Shartūnī, *al-Ghuṣn ar-raṭīb fī fann al-khaṭīb* (Beirut: al-Maṭba'a al-Adabiyya, 1908), 49.) One of the few studies concerned with the influence of

as very important, it is the face that is regarded as the first and foremost medium for the emotions and for emotional reactions (*infi'ālāt*).⁵¹

Performance and Self-Affectation

I have already provided a number of extracts, but what has only very briefly been touched upon here is how the orator should perform these different bodily aspects. In fact, the effectiveness of the bodily techniques mentioned is dependent on a good performance, and the orator is thus counseled on *how* to perform them. At this point it might be useful to refer back to 'Alī Maḥfūz, one of the founders of the *kullīyyat al-wa'z wa-l-irshād*, who addressed this issue in his manual.⁵²

While his manual was only published posthumously, his book seems to have been one of the first preaching manuals used in Egypt. In it, Maḥfūz advises the preacher to “excite himself in order that this excitement translates into his voice, his gestures, and his mimics.”⁵³ The orator, in a sense, functions as a medium, and only when he feels the ‘appropriate’ feelings in himself will he be best able to transmit them to his audience. This general observation was made in other rhetorical and dramatic theories, ones that, incidentally, also provided a foundation for the homiletic theories of Luther and Melancthon.⁵⁴ In short, not only are contemporary Islamic preachers like Khālid directly linked to American televangelists through their practice (a tradition which Khālid and his producers explicitly refer to),⁵⁵ the underlying rhetorical theories of modern Islamic preaching and American televangelism both also draw on ancient Greco-Roman rhetorical theory.

Although Maḥfūz does not cite any specific reference for his reflection, other preaching manuals do draw more explicitly on Greek theories and Roman antiquity. For instance, al-Ḥūfī's rhetorical manual cites Horace's

Greco-Roman rhetoric in the context of the *nahḍa* has focused on this book, underlining important parallels with Cicero: Patel, “Nahḍah Oratory.” Further see Scholz, “Cicero and Quintilian in the Arab World?” (in press).

51 Although Cicero and Quintilian are not listed as references here, the passage seems to be particularly influenced by the Roman rhetoricians, who in fact elaborated the mimical questions in particular detail, with most attention to facial expressions. E.g. Quintilian: “dominatur autem maxime vultus” Hartwig Kalverkämper, “Mimik,” in *Historisches Wörterbuch der Rhetorik*, ed. Gert Ueding, vol. 5 (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 2001), 1339. I discuss the influence of Roman authors on modern Arabic rhetorical manuals focusing particularly on performative aspects in Scholz, “Cicero and Quintilian in the Arab World?” (in press).

52 'Alī Maḥfūz, *Fann al-khaṭāba wa-i'dād al-khaṭīb* (Cairo: Dār al-Itisām, 1984).

53 Maḥfūz, *Fann al-khaṭāba*, 66.

54 Klaus Dockhorn, “*Rhetorica movet*: Protestantischer Humanismus und karolingische Renaissance,” in *Rhetorik: Beiträge zu ihrer Geschichte in Deutschland vom 16.–20. Jahrhundert*, ed. Helmut Schanze, (Frankfurt am Main: Athenäum-Fischer-Taschenbuch-Verlag, 1974), 27–29.

55 Lindsay Wise, “Amr Khaled: Broadcasting the Nahda,” *Transnational Broadcasting Studies* 13 (2004), accessed June 28, 2017, <http://tbsjournal.arabmediasociety.com/Archives/Fall04/wiseamrkhaled.html>.

reflections on the need for self-affectation: "If you would have me weep you must first express the passion of grief yourself."⁵⁶ Although Horace was referring to theater, the fact that these dramatic observations appear within rhetorical theory and vice versa is not surprising. As has been previously mentioned, the performance of the orator lies at the intersection between dramatic and rhetorical theory; in antiquity, actors⁵⁷ taught orators how to effectively express different emotional states.⁵⁸ In this case, the Arabic manual cites Horace's quote probably because his formulation is the most famous with regard to self-affectation.⁵⁹

The Transcultural Character of Rhetorical Theory

One might wonder, why, as has been noted thus far, so much of Islamic rhetorical theory stems from the Greco-Roman tradition? Especially as there is an established and so-to-say genuine (as far as any culture can ever be genuine) Arabic tradition of rhetoric—namely *'ilm al-balāgha* (literally: science of eloquence). The difference between what I refer to as Greco-Roman tradition and the Arabic tradition of rhetoric is that while Arabic *'ilm al-balāgha* is particularly concerned with questions of good style, syntactical stylistics, the use and classification of metaphors, and other stylistic figures,⁶⁰ Greco-Roman rhetoric, being a theory of public speech, besides the mentioned aspects also assigns great importance to oral and bodily delivery (*pronuntiatio* and *actio*). This emphasis did not find a real counterpart in the Arabic rhetorical tradition.⁶¹ To this one might add that within the Greco-Roman context the theater played a larger role, and a number of reflections, particularly those regarding the delivery as well as the emotional affectation of the audience, have in fact been discussed in both rhetorical as well as dramatic theory. It is down to this difference between the Arabic and

56 Al-Ḥūfī, *Fann al-khaṭāba*, 128: *Idhā aradta minnī an abkiya fa-'alayka an tabkiya awwalan*. ("If you would have me weep you must first weep yourself.") The original is "Si vis me flere, dolendum est/primum ipsi tibi." Quintus Horatius Flaccus (Horace), *The Works of Horace*, ed. Christopher Smart and Theodore Alois Buckley (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1863), lines 102–103. Cf. on the question of self-affectation in Islamic sermons also Max Stille, "Conceptualizing Compassion in Communication for Communication Emotional Experience in Islamic Sermons (Bengali *wa'z maḥfils*)," *Contributions to the History of Concepts* 11 (2016).

57 Cicero, *On the Orator: Books 1-2*, 106–107.

58 This does not allow for a confusing of the two roles. A clear distinction is usually made between the actor and the orator; at least in antiquity and during the Middle Ages, the conceptualization changes with Humanism in early modernity. Jutta Sandstede and Gustavo Becerra-Schmidt, "Deklamation," in *Historisches Wörterbuch der Rhetorik*, vol. 2 (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1994), 491.

59 Rüdiger Campe, "Affizieren und Selbstaffizieren: Rhetorisch-anthropologische Näherung ausgehend von Quintilian, *Institutio oratoria*, VI 1–2," in *Rhetorische Anthropologie: Studien zum homo rhetoricus*, ed. Josef Kopperschmidt (Munich: Fink, 2000), 138. Here the references for Aristotle and Cicero are also given.

60 Würsch, "Rhetorik und Stilistik," 2041.

61 Würsch, "Rhetorik und Stilistik," 2041.

the Greco-Roman traditions that the rhetorical manuals, which began to appear in the Arabic context from the beginning of the twentieth century onwards, appear in many regards to have been built on the Greco-Roman heritage. At the same time, however, these manuals also included references to Arabic rhetoric, which particularly regards *faṣāḥa* (purity of language) and *balāgha* (eloquence).⁶² Taking into account this mixture of two traditions, the manuals constitute a transcultural phenomenon⁶³; however, within the context of the approach examined here, which focuses on the dramatic dimension of the preacher's performance, the categories stemming from the Greco-Roman tradition are of particular importance.

Preaching and Dramatic Aesthetic Experience

When it comes to a theoretical analysis of Khālīd's preaching performance, it is on the basis of the above-mentioned categories in rhetorical and dramatic theories that this performance must be understood, insofar as it allows for a particular dramatic aesthetic experience. Thus far, I have provided a description of the selected section of Khālīd's program and have subsequently linked Khālīd's performative techniques to some central outlines made in rhetorical and homiletical theory. In a last step, a number of the observations which have been made will be taken up again in order to discuss how far it is justified to speak of a concretely dramatic aesthetic experience.

The quotation from Horace provides an apt starting point from which to explain this experience, because Horace connects the audience's weeping to the orators/actors weeping. It goes without saying that what Horace says on the act of weeping and the feeling of sadness can be applied to other emotions and their expression as well. For anger or joy, the orator or actor is likewise advised to feel the emotions in order to affect his audience. While it is clear that when it comes to conveying emotions, the whole body plays a role, the biggest attention is given to the face or rather to the facial expressions. This is owed to the fact that we express emotions particularly through our mimics. A closer look into this process will allow us to better understand the effectivity and also the importance of this mechanism.

Identification and Neuroscience

The affectation of the spectator has been a crucial point of rhetorical as well as dramatic theory over the last 2500 years; in the last decades it has been increasingly explored by neuroscientists. They have been able to

62 See, for example, Aḥmad Aḥmad Ghalwash, *Qawā'id al-khaṭāba wa-fiqh al-jum'ā wa-l-ṭayn*, 3rd ed. ([Cairo]: Mu'assasat ar-Risāla, 2012 (1986)), 25–26, 75, 109.

63 I explore the differentiation between the two traditions and their modern entanglement in Scholz, "Modern Arabic Rhetorical Manuals" (in press) and in Scholz, "Cicero and Quintilian in the Arab World?" (in press).

discover the neuronal basis for what scholars from different fields in the humanities had described on the basis of observations. It is because of the mirror neurons that when we watch someone performing a certain action we often feel (at least to a degree) as if we were performing the action or feel the emotion ourselves. These neurons, which were discovered in the mid-nineties, mirror the actions of those we observe by triggering similar neuronal actions that make us feel as though we were actually performing the factual and active actions.⁶⁴

One of the most famous descriptions in this regard—well before the discovery of the mirror neurons—is Theodor Lipps's account of the ropedancer. Lipps described his experience when observing the ropedancer's performance with the telling phrase "I feel myself in him."⁶⁵ To express that he not only followed the dancer's movements, which he observed, but that he also felt them, in a sense, as if he was dancing himself. The German term which he coined in this regard, *Einfühlung*, (which has since been translated as empathy)⁶⁶ expresses the idea of feeling *into* somebody else.⁶⁷ Indeed, when observing the ropedancer we can't avoid twitching when the dancer risks losing his balance.⁶⁸

With regard to the expression of emotions, experiments have shown, for example, that "humans, when watching people showing facial expressions corresponding to well-defined emotions, covertly activate the same muscles which are involved in the creation of those expressions."⁶⁹ As the activation of these muscles is also linked to the perception of the connected emotional states, this allows us to experience the corresponding emotions.⁷⁰ These processes, which depend on the mentioned mirror neurons, thus allow us—simply speaking—to experience, to a degree, what we see on the screen. In this case, therefore, the experience which the actor or preacher depicts, affects us in such a way that we feel the same feelings the preacher or actor depicts. In a further step one might add that the degree to which we believe the story to have happened in the

64 Meike Uhrig, *Darstellung, Rezeption und Wirkung von Emotionen im Film: Eine interdisziplinäre Studie* (Wiesbaden: Springer VS, 2015), 20.

65 Allan Young, "Kultur im Gehirn: Empathie, die menschliche Natur und Spiegelneuronen," in *Wie geht Kultur unter die Haut? Emergente Praxen an der Schnittstelle von Medizin, Lebens- und Sozialwissenschaft*, ed. Jörg Niewöhner (Bielefeld: Transcript-Verlag, 2008), 35.

66 Gustav Jahoda, "Theodor Lipps and the Shift from 'Sympathy' to 'Empathy,'" *Journal of the History of the Behavioral Sciences* 41, no. 2 (2005): 151.

67 For a brief survey of Lipps's use of this term, see Jahoda, "Theodor Lipps." For a discussion of the origins of empathy as concept, see Jørgen B. Hunsdahl, "Concerning Einfühlung (Empathy): A Concept Analysis of its Origin and Early Development," *Journal of the History of the Behavioral Sciences* 3, no. 2 (1967).

68 Hans Bernhard Schmid, *Moralische Integrität: Kritik eines Konstrukts* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 2011), 163.

69 Antonella Corradini and Alessandro Antonietti, "Mirror Neurons and their Function in Cognitively Understood Empathy," *Consciousness and Cognition* 22, no. 3 (2013): 1154.

70 Corradini and Antonietti, "Mirror Neurons," 1154.

depicted way (i.e. with the depicted emotions) is the degree to which we have “experienced” the believed story ourselves.

On the basis of these short outlines it becomes clear that narrative and performative techniques, such as those used by ‘Amr Khālid, making extensive use facial expressions, gestures, and voice modulations, can provide a particular dramatic aesthetic experience.⁷¹ We no longer merely listen to the (possibly) distanced report of events, we also experience the story that is being told bodily, just as ‘Amr Khālid tells us that Ḥasan and Ḥusayn did when listening to their grandfather.

This particular dramatic experience can be further discussed from different perspectives. One might, for example, approach the different functions of the described dramatic delivery, among which the bodily experience is only the first. Such functions certainly include aspects like entertainment, religious edification, effective religious teaching etc. but are not limited to these. It would be beyond the scope of this chapter to list and discuss all possible functions even if only superficially; however, one aspect which seems to be of particular interest in this context, might be briefly sketched, namely Khālid’s preaching as a form of remembering the past and linking the past to present.

Remembering the Past Emotionally: Linking it to the present

The past only comes into being when it is referred to,⁷² and the means and places by which we refer to the past are manifold. As for the places, preaching can certainly be counted among the most prominent memory-institutions: In sermons the past, or rather that part which is regarded as relevant for a given group, is continuously referenced and re-told. With regard to the means of telling the past, Khālid’s preaching is certainly particular.

Based on the outlines mentioned above, it is characteristic of Khālid’s dramatic preaching that it not only refers back to the past, but also that it brings the past to the present. Obviously, dramatic preaching as described in this article is not completely exclusive in this regard; talking about the past always brings the past to the present. However, Khālid not only talks *about* the past, but he in a sense *re-enacts* (episodes) from the past, when he acts out how the figures of early Islamic history (are believed to) have behaved. He not only *tells* the events diegetically, he also *shows* them mimetically. Taking into account rhetorical theory and the insights provided by neuropsychological research, it makes a difference whether we approach the past by reading about it in third person or listen to someone talking about it, or whether we intensively experience it emotionally and

71 The described aesthetic experience is only one possibility; the spectator might also avoid such an identification by keeping what has been called a certain aesthetic distance.

72 Jan Assmann, *Das kulturelle Gedächtnis: Schrift, Erinnerung und politische Identität in frühen Hochkulturen*, 5th ed. (Munich: Beck, 2005), 31.

“reproduce” the emotions which the preacher’s (or actor’s) facial expressions, gestures, and voice evoke. This is obviously not to say that a written text or an oral account in the third person does not produce emotional responses. Written and oral texts also produce responses and can eventually even contain them, to cite one recent theory.⁷³ Such processes and responses have been differently analyzed and reflected upon throughout the history of literary theory. However, given the prominent importance of stimulation through the moving image, the acting out of the story and the preacher’s bodily as well as vocal performance add further emotional stimuli to our own experience.⁷⁴

In the chosen passage Khālid exploits the possibilities of presenting and showing the past emotionally. He does so not only for the sake of remembrance, but also to link the past to the present, and to present it as a model. What further characterizes Khālid’s preaching is that the previously established identification with the protagonists, for which his empathy evoking delivery plays a central role, serves as a basis for addressing the spectator. Having told the story of Ḥasan and Ḥusayn listening to what their grandfather, the Prophet, had experienced, and having underlined that their experience of this account was a bodily one that the two children felt as if it had happened to themselves, “as if it was a part of them,” Khālid suddenly interrupts his account. He does so, in order to address the spectator; his hands, which have been performing vividly the different gestures, now lie still on the desk, and his face no longer depicts the protagonists’ emotions. Instead, he raises his eyebrows in a quizzical expression: “Do you love the truth? You have taken somebody’s right (*ḥaqq*). Are you close to the Prophet? Are you close to Ḥusayn?”

It is important to underline the contrast of this address with the preacher’s previous performance. For about a minute, the spectator’s role was one of identification with the different protagonists; the same applies to different sections before the analyzed passage as well. He was not addressed in his role of the spectator, but virtually, in the place of Ḥasan and Ḥusayn: Khālid geared his mimetic performance towards the spectator’s identification with the story’s protagonists. The spectator was expected to be affected by the story of the Prophet, just as Ḥasan and Ḥusayn were. When Khālid addresses the spectator, asking about his closeness to the Prophet and his closeness to Ḥusayn, he builds on this previous identification. Through his dramatic aesthetic identification, the spectator has in a sense experienced the story ‘bodily.’ While asking the spectator about his closeness to Ḥusayn, however, Khālid shakes his head and answers the question himself: “You have taken somebody’s right.” This assertion,

73 Simone Winko, *Kodierte Gefühle: Zu einer Poetik der Emotionen in lyrischen und poetologischen Texten um 1900* (Berlin: Schmidt, 2003).

74 Cf. “Keine andere Kunstform produziert so intensive und vielfältige Gefühlsreaktionen wie das Kino.” Margrit Tröhler and Vinzenz Hediger, “Ohne Gefühl ist das Auge der Vernunft blind: Eine Einleitung,” in *Kinogefühle: Emotionalität und Film*, ed. Matthias Brütsch (Marburg: Schüren, 2005), 7.

encapsulates the general message of Khālid's preaching, which often boils down to an exhortation to improve yourself in order to lead a better life. What is important here is obviously less in the message than in its form.

Conclusion

Linking his reflections to rhetorical theory, Charles Hirschkind has underlined that preaching practices often "serve as a vehicle of ethical improvement."⁷⁵ In the present analysis I built on his work by trying to insist on concrete rhetorical strategies and on the theories these strategies relate to or stem from. Khālid's core narrative and performative strategies have been analyzed through a close reading of a short section. By reflecting upon his preaching in terms of rhetorical and aesthetical theory, under recourse to some central observations made by neuropsychological research, it has been described in analytical terms as enabling⁷⁶ a concretely dramatic aesthetic experience. Despite its entertaining dimension, the aesthetical aspects discussed in this chapter also serve a concretely rhetorical goal: persuading the spectator. Two rhetorical manuals used in the context of Islamic preaching have allowed me to sketch out the theoretical basis for oratory performances like Khālid's. On the one hand, relying on the Greco-Roman rhetorical tradition and on the other including elements from the Arabic tradition of *'ilm al-balāgha* (science of eloquence), these manuals are markedly transcultural. The analyzed rhetorical strategies, which are characteristic for Khālid's preaching style, have been particularly theorized within the Greco-Roman rhetorical tradition: mimetic representation, identification of the spectator with the actor or orator, and affectation of the spectator. This is due to the circumstance that the performative reflections on oratory delivery were developed in the context of Greco-Roman rhetoric, whereas Arabic rhetoric was more concerned with stylistic matters. Obviously, it would be completely essentialist to conclude that therefore Khālid's style is more 'Western' than 'Arabic.' One must not forget that the Arabs dealt with Greek rhetoric in the 'Middle Ages.' Furthermore, the modern Arabic rhetorical manuals, which not only draw extensively on the Greek and Greco-Arabic but also on the Roman, and later European rhetorical heritage started appearing at the end of the nineteenth century. Rhetorical theory, as I have used it in this article, is therefore not Arabic or European, but rather a historically well-established transcultural frame of reference; and this despite the fact that research focusing on the modern rhetorical manuals uniting different traditions has not yet received much attention in the field of Islamic Studies. If Khālid's example can serve to

75 Charles Hirschkind, *The Ethical Soundscape: Cassette Sermons and Islamic Counterpublics* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2006), 37.

76 I use the term enabling here, because the factual aesthetic experience will always depend, to a degree at least, on the spectator's pre-dispositions.

illustrate the importance of a 'transcultural' theoretic frame of reference, this corresponds well to Asef Bayat's proposition to understand the phenomenon of 'Amr Khālīd as "a reinvention of a new religious style by Egypt's globalizing youth."⁷⁷ It is not surprising that in times of New Media this youth style is marked by its dramatic performances. However, while it is partly an expression of what Partick Haenni calls 'market Islam,' the dramatic element may also have to be understood as an important dimension of religious experience today.

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77 Bayat, *Life as Politics: How Ordinary People Change the Middle East*, 134.

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