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Emotions in performance: Poetry and preaching

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Emotions are largely interpersonal and inextricably intertwined with communication; public performances evoke collective emotions. This article brings together considerations of poetic assemblies known as ‘mushā’ira’ in Pakistan with reflections on sermon congregations known as ‘wa’z mahfil’ in Bangladesh. The public performance spaces and protocols, decisive for building up collective emotions, exhibit many parallels between both genres. The cultural history of the mushā’ira shows how an elite cultural tradition has been popularised in service to the modern nation state. A close reading of the changing forms of reader address shows how the modern nazm genre has been deployed for exhorting the collective, much-expanded Urdu public sphere. Emphasising the sensory aspects of performance, the analysis of contemporary wa’z mahfils focuses on the employment of particular chanting techniques. These relate to both the transcultural Islamic soundsphere and Bengali narrative traditions, and are decisive for the synchronisation of listeners’ experience and a dramatisation of the preachers’ narratives. Music-rhetorical analysis furthermore shows how the chanting can evoke heightened emotional experiences of utopian Islamic ideology. While the scrutinised performance traditions vary in their respective emphasis on poetry and narrative, they exhibit increasingly common patterns of collective reception. It seems that emotions evoked in public performances cut across ‘religious’, ‘political’, and ‘poetic’ realms—and thereby build on and build up interlinkages between religious, aesthetic and political collectives.

Keywords: Emotion, performance, Islam, South Asia, music, public, *musha’ira*, *wa’z mahfil*

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Introduction¹

Sympathy, compassion, *hamdardī*, *sahānubhūti*—all these words testify to a basic interpersonal process in which one person feels *with* another person. This interpersonal nature of emotions, inextricably intertwined with communication, has long been part of theoretical discussion in poetics and rhetoric. The dramatic arts have proved to be particularly fruitful for developing models that seek to describe how emotions are transmitted from one party (say, a performer) to another (an audience). The Aristotelian concept of mimesis and the formulation of *rasa* theory—commonly traced back to Bharata's *Nāṭyaśāstra*—have been fundamental to discussions of aesthetics in Europe and South Asia for the past two millennia. Considerations of emotional response in antiquity differentiated the field of rhetoric from philosophy and created overlaps between rhetoric and stylistics (how emotions are evoked) as well as psychology (how emotions can be classified).²

Recent research into the evocation of emotions has confirmed and extended many ancient assumptions, for instance, that emotions constitute expressive *communication* and are not just interior states; that both the imagination and the body are of central importance in evoking emotion through aesthetic experience; and that devices such as voice, meter and rhyme are key elements in inducing pleasure and emotional involvement.³ Rhetoric and literary theory converge at numerous points when it comes to describing the evocation of emotions. As *rasa* theory observes, emotions cannot be ordered explicitly but must be induced by suggestion.⁴ Literary theory provides elaborate models of how texts accomplish such suggestion, involving and guiding their recipients to particular affective states.

Just as paratexts, the 'thresholds of interpretation'⁵ have proven fruitful in delineating the intention and effect of texts, so too have recent directions in the study of emotions emphasised the importance of paratextual thresholds to emotional communities:⁶ emotions are practices⁷ which develop according to styles⁸ in particular spaces.

¹ This joint paper was inspired by a workshop entitled 'Feeling the Community' organised jointly by the Max Planck Institute for Human Development, Berlin and Emopolis, Paris. Presenting on *mushā'ira* (Carla Petievich) and *wa'z mahfils* (Max Stille), we realised the possibilities of a common framework for both performance traditions. The expertise and responsibility concerning the single performance traditions of course remains with the respective author.

² For an overview, cf. Behrens et al., 'Affektenlehre', p. 218.

³ Obermeier et al., 'Aesthetic and Emotional Effects'; Huron, *Sweet Anticipation*; Meyer-Kalkus, 'Stimme'.

⁴ Bhaṭṭyācārya, *Sāhitya-Mīmāṃsā*, p. 35.

⁵ Genette, *Paratexts*.

⁶ On the concept of Barbara Rosenwein, see the introduction to this special issue.

⁷ Cf. introduction to this volume.

⁸ For an explication of this term as employed by Benno Gammerl, see the introduction of this volume.

This understanding is especially helpful in analysing audience response and how emotion is experienced as a collective phenomenon.⁹ In this essay we extend literary studies' focus on the individual recipient in order to think about a larger audience, all of whose members are simultaneously receiving/experiencing a performance. Live performance produces a more linear reception process than reading a text silently because its pace and order are fixed and cannot be interrupted or reversed by the recipient, as they can when being read or heard by an individual.¹⁰ This increased possibility for a synchronisation of recipients' experience adds to our understanding of a process by which they continually adjust to the ever-changing horizon of a narrative and, thus, re-evaluate how they feel at any given moment towards characters or events to which (or whom) they may have felt differently a moment earlier. This process also includes the memory of the mindful body to past reception experiences, of joint emotional responses in a space shared by a company of fellow audience members. While it might be an overstatement to say that 'the large number of listeners present gave [the listener of a sermon] more satisfaction than the sermon itself',¹¹ the fundamentally collective nature of public performances does impact their reception.

Our analysis of the evocation of collective emotions in performance takes as a starting point insights from theories of aesthetic response¹² and affective stylistics¹³ for an analysis of the ways in which texts shape the experience of reading. The recipient relies on her/his imagination to 'create' the texts s/he experiences. On the other hand, recognising this role of the recipient does not mean falling back on mere subjectivism, as the imagination is the response to textual structures which can be analysed. This approach thus enables us to access reception processes without having to rely primarily on individual statements of recipients.¹⁴ However, as has been mentioned, the analysis must include not only the relationship of the individual to the 'text'; in public performance, it must also take into account equally the individual recipient's relationship to fellow recipients and to the space and time of the performance.¹⁵ In other words, it is important to pay close attention to ways in which factors beyond language shape the reception process: via rhetorical protocols, by spatial and technical staging, and through the gestures, voice and antics of both speaker and audience.

⁹ Recent approaches on collective emotions are, for example, explicated in Scheve and Salmela, *Collective Emotions*.

¹⁰ Koselleck, 'Politische Sinnlichkeit'.

¹¹ Canetti, *Crowds and Power*, p. 21.

¹² These thoughts have been laid out in the seminal work Iser, *Act of Reading*.

¹³ Fish, 'Literature'.

¹⁴ This does not mean that such a point would be worthless, and to an extent talks during fieldwork and participatory observation shape the reading strategies put forward here. However, we consciously do not limit reception research to interviewing the recipients.

¹⁵ This has long been argued by performance studies, as exemplified in the copious work of Schechner, *Performance Theory*.

In this article, we highlight some of these aspects as we discuss two kinds of performance: poetic assemblies known as *mushā'ira* in Pakistan; and sermon congregations known as *wa'z mahfil*¹⁶ in Bangladesh. Each of these performances reinforces crucial elements of identity. In Pakistan, Urdu and Islam are central to national identity; and while the relationship is configured differently in Bangladesh, Islam continues, there too, to be one of the main factors in identity formation. The role of these not-directly-political elements is especially important as public culture venues shrink in both countries. Despite significant genre distinctions—and important specific expectations are noted as each tradition is introduced below—both types of performance are excellent examples of how emotions are evoked for the purposes of communal solidarity. Our focus on collective emotions in general emphasises shared processes which question the distinctions between different genres while seeking to study their interrelatedness. This article shows that not only do *mushā'ira* and *wa'z mahfil* draw on joint performance protocols and commonplaces, but both also call on us to address the question of how emotions evoked in performance are related to everyday emotions. In performance, both traditions constitute communication processes which are highly protected¹⁷—that is to say, they are sanctioned because their content is assumed to be inherently valuable—and thus allow for particular experiences that are removed from everyday restraints.¹⁸

The Performance Traditions

The *mushā'ira* is, by its very definition,¹⁹ a forum for striving, for seeking to produce an emotional or subjective impact. Poets vie with one another to do this, competing to produce the greatest impact on their audience. Competition centres on exploitation of words and sounds to convey meaning (*ma'ānī*) and thoughts or ideas (*khayālāt*) which, in turn, evoke emotions (*jazbāt*)²⁰ in those who have heard and understood them. Poetic reputation derives in large part from reports of the impact of a recitation on an audience of cognoscenti (known, in Sanskrit aesthetic theory, as *sahrdaya*—those whose hearts are joined; or as *rasikas*—those who are discriminating, those who are full of emotion, passion).²¹ But this impact cannot be quantified, it must be felt. One could say that a *rasika*'s ability to discern, to

¹⁶ The following observations on *wa'z mahfils* are based on transcriptions of about 35 sermons partly recorded and partly bought during field work in Bangladesh between 2012 and 2015 as well as interviews with preachers and analysis of preaching manuals, etc.

¹⁷ For the 'hyper-protected cooperative principle', cf. Culler, *Literary Theory*, p. 25.

¹⁸ Jauss, 'Levels of Identification', p. 288.

¹⁹ Platts, *Dictionary*, p. 1037: 'Vying or contending with in poetry; excelling in poetry; a meeting at which poets recite their poems...'

²⁰ While we know of no literature for *jazbat* that compares with the aesthetic literature in Sanskrit around *dhvani* and *rasa*, for the purposes of this discussion, we roughly equate *jazbāt* and *bhāvas* as those feelings induced by the successful evocation and play of sound and image in Urdu poetry.

²¹ McGregor, *Dictionary*, p. 856.

imbibe the aesthetic emotion produced through performance, is an acquired skill that is emotional as much as it is intellectual. Successful evocation of *rasa* depends on the emotional skill(s) of the *rasika*(s) and can only be agreed upon subjectively.

Ghazal, the lyric genre most popular and valued in Urdu poetry, is a highly condensed, layered, form. It is the privileged genre of the *mushā'ira* although a newer form, the *nazm*, gained ground beginning in the early twentieth century. The audience's familiarity with *ghazal* conventions is assumed, even required, for a successful performance. Though the audience in a *mushā'ira* is physically gathered together, the expertise with which individual members receive the recitation and respond to it need not have developed in one another's physical company. Rather, this expertise is acquired over a lifetime of imbibing poetry (often at home or in small groups). Lessons in rhetoric and formal poetics that have been essential parts of the Indo-Muslim cultural elite's training for generations are necessarily brought to bear on a recitation in any poetic assembly. In this way, a *ghazal* audience can be compared to the audience of *rasikas* imagined by Bharata in the *Nāṭyashāstra*, though few of today's audience members at a public *mushā'ira* will have come from that earlier imagined, elite social milieu. But the major difference between then and now is not the 'education' of the audience; rather, it is that Bharata was more concerned with sight and movement than with sound and words, given that his theory of aesthetic experience drew so heavily on the example of *nāṭya*, the dramatic arts.

Wa'z mahfils are an integral and ubiquitous aspect of religious life in contemporary Bangladesh. *Wa'z*, admonition, is an Arabic word referring to admonishing advice, often offered from an authoritative standpoint.²² In *wa'z*, knowledge is transferred to listeners in order to persuade them towards a life more pleasing to God. Traditionally, the *wa'z* preacher played the role of a storyteller (*qāss*), and examples of exuberant rhetoric and highly emotional reactions to it are reported as early as the twelfth century.²³ In South Asian Sunni traditions, *wa'z* seems to have become a broader term, referring to any sermon in the vernacular, for example, those parts of the Friday sermon delivered in Urdu or Bengali prior to the liturgical *khutba*, which is predominantly in Arabic. In contemporary South Asia, there is a relatively high degree of flexibility regarding the performance of *wa'z*-preaching, with a good deal of space existing for adaptations to regional forms of rhetoric and poetics, as we will see below.

When the term *wa'z* is joined with *mahfil*, many connotations are added about what is to be expected from this preaching occasion. In a minimal definition, *mahfil*

²² The terminologies are far from stable. In contemporary Bangladesh, we find in the place of *wa'z* terms such as *tāphsīr*, *koran*, *tāphsīrul korān*, *milād*, *doyā*; for differences in contemporary Egypt, cf. Hirschkind, *Ethical Soundscape*, p. 108.

²³ Ibn-Jubair, *Rihla*, p. 219; these connotations seem to remain in contemporary Egypt, often with a great emphasis on emotions of fear and terror, cf. Hirschkind, *Ethical Soundscape*, p. 198.

might denote any social gathering,²⁴ but in South Asia it came to be associated overwhelmingly with music and dance, with an intimacy between performer and audience and a high degree of emotional participation from both.²⁵ Such joyous aspects of *mahfil* also predominate in its religious usage. In a collection of Shi'i sermons, for example, *mahfil* and *majlis* are used to denominate sermons dealing, respectively, with the life and death of each holy figure.²⁶ *Wa'z mahfils* in villages of contemporary Bangladesh often involve the typical set-up of rural festivities, and while in Bangladesh's religious schools (*madrasas*) they are quite disciplined, annual *wa'z mahfils* constitute one of the schools' main festivities. As is reported for poetry recitation, these public presentations often involve fundraising activities,²⁷ with all the dynamics of pious philanthropy set in place.²⁸ In both cases, the performance relies on interaction between the audience and performer, the timed and enthusiastic responses of which are a required condition (in this respect *wa'z mahfils* resemble other Bengali performance traditions). In short, while the sermons are clear instances of religious rhetoric, designed and staged to persuade their audience towards a lifestyle and worldview pleasing to God, they also abound in aesthetic and emotional display, not least with their frequent inclusion of poetry recitation, a foundational aspect of the genre.²⁹ Compared to other sermons, such as the Friday sermon (*khutba*) linked to mosque and prayer or the explanation speeches (*bayan*) at gatherings of the Tablighī Jamā'at,³⁰ the *wa'z mahfil* distinguishes itself by its festive mood, vocal art and audience interaction.

Some groups might 'carry more or less affective loads than others will ... with emotional displays being looked upon favourably in some contexts while being discouraged in others',³¹ and particular genres are associated with typical emotions and social groups.³² Already from this short introduction to the performance traditions, we can sense that *mushā'iras* and *wa'z mahfils* both demand a high degree of emotional involvement and display from their audience.³³ Both genres do so by creating a particular 'atmosphere' of the performance. 'Atmosphere' here emphasises not the defining, delimiting aspects of things but their impression-making qualities. This is particularly interesting for linking the two traditions in question,

²⁴ Sharār, *Guzashta Lakhna'ū*, pp. 207, 340, thanks to C. Oesterheld.

²⁵ Brown, 'Music'.

²⁶ Zīshān, *Mahāfil o Majālis*.

²⁷ Stille, 'Islamic Non-Friday Sermons'; Oesterheld in this volume.

²⁸ Pernau, 'Love and Compassion', in this volume.

²⁹ In the preface to one of the rare written handbooks with sample sermons, Ājhār Ālī Bakhtiyārī mentions several poetic genres in several languages as belonging to the foundational conventions (*rīti-nīti*) of *wa'z* sermons, cf. Bakhtiyārī, *Majmūye Oyāj Sharīph*, p. ga.

³⁰ The Tablighī Jamā'at is a very prominent Islamic movement in South Asia whose activities are evangelical, very public and at times political.

³¹ Brennan, *Affect*, p. 51.

³² Eder et al., 'Introduction', p. 43.

³³ Cf. footnote 9.

as it allows analysis to extend beyond fields of ‘high culture’ to include everyday aesthetic productions³⁴ created through the performers and audience as well as by the efforts of local committees organising the *mushā‘iras* and *wa‘z mahfils*. Let us look at their creation of performance space.

The Performance Space

Mushā‘iras may take place in large, open spaces such as parks, hotel ballrooms, or large assembly halls. They almost always feature a raised stage, where the poets and the Master of Ceremonies sit, while the audience sits on the ground below, or in chairs. This scenario differs from the poetic assembly that we read about in nineteenth century historical literature (*tazkiras*). While the contemporary *mushā‘ira* has become a performance spectacle (*tamāshā*) for the public, *tazkira*³⁵ literature of the past 200 years tells us that the norm for poetic assemblies was formerly a *mahfil* in the court (*darbār*) or a private home. Participants sat in a circle on the floor and a candle or lamp was passed around. The person in front of whom it was positioned ‘had the floor’. These would have been considerably more intimate affairs, though by no means less competitive, than the modern day *mushā‘ira* as we know it.³⁶ While poets were judged (often unsparingly) by their peers, and while decorum was not always maintained, there was also great aesthetic appreciation inherent in the occasion. We have no evidence of these actual terms being used to denote such gatherings, but everyone present at a *mushā‘ira* would have been a *rasika*, a cultivated recipient of the performance.

The staging of *wa‘z mahfils* is comparable to that of the contemporary *mushā‘ira* in many ways. They are predominantly held outside, in open spaces such as road crossings or, in the countryside, in harvested paddy fields. In the contemporary diaspora they might be held inside a mosque. The performance space, in this narrower sense, is that of a festive *pandal*, a tent made of coloured and ornamented

³⁴ Böhme, *Atmosphäre*, p. 41.

³⁵ *Tazkira* is a literary genre in which literati construct genealogies of poets and their teachers, contemporaries and pupils. Reference here is mostly to late-eighteenth and nineteenth-century works by (and about) poets of Delhi and Lucknow, the two main late-Mughal cultural centres. Cf. Pritchett, *Nets of Awareness*, esp. pp. 63–76. See also Petievich, ‘Feminine Authorship’.

³⁶ Reportedly, attendance at a *mahfil* tended to be by invitation only, with the audience consisting of reputed poets and their pupils. Often the host would set the *zamīn* (metre and rhyme scheme) by composing the opening *misra‘* of a *ghazal* and send it around as the invitation. His guests were then expected to take up the challenge, with each composing his own *ghazal* in that *zamīn* for the occasion. Cf. Pritchett, *Nets of Awareness*; Beg, *Dehlī kā Ākhrī Sham‘a*. See also Nasir, *Tazkirah-i Khush Ma‘rikah-i Zebā*, and Nurani, *Urdū ke Adabi Ma‘rikē*, passim, for the competitive aspects of poetic performance. Nathan Tabor, however, points to a history of commemorative *mushā‘ira* in the eighteenth century suggesting a very public, *carnavalesque* kind of occasion. His point—well taken—is that nineteenth-century literature constructed a history, through *tazkiras*, by highly self-conscious writers that read backward onto earlier times and became established as a norm that may bear only tangential relation to the events which actually took place (personal communication, 27–28 March 2015).

cotton with a stage and the audience arranged as in the *mushā'ira*. Here, too, a small stage is erected for the performer while the audience sits in front of it; the role of the *mushā'ira*'s compère in introducing the poets is paralleled in *wa'z mahfils* by an 'announcer'³⁷ who conveys the preachers' names and affiliations. The inside of the tent is brightly illuminated, a technique reinforcing via visibility the communal reception process of the audience and the feedback loop³⁸ between it and the performer. The preacher's entourage is often seated beside him and honorary guests on a *wa'z mahfil* stage. This small group is clearly visible, serving as a 'model-audience', a *mise en abyme* which is important for the transmission of rhythm, of timing the audience's response, and, more generally, for the communication of emotions between audience and preacher. Turning to them, the preacher might simulate a situation of intimate conversation with his disciples, and the responses of the model audience are, of course, more privileged than the responses of the general audience because of being included in the audio amplification.

Whatever their verifiable history, in present times, both performance traditions are very public affairs. Huge audiences convene and patronage is common, whether by cultural organisations or capitalist enterprises (corporate sponsorship) in the case of the *mushā'ira* or by local committees, *madrasas*, or political parties in the case of *wa'z mahfils*. People who are not poetic adepts—or even particularly interested in poetry—will join the crowd of a *mushā'ira* simply for the spectacle, or because civil society in contemporary Pakistan affords all too few opportunities for public sociability. A *mushā'ira* is a 'happening'. Similarly, *wa'z mahfils* provide a religiously (and, thus, culturally) sanctioned occasion for nocturnal sociability that is otherwise limited, particularly in rural areas. Moreover, *wa'z mahfils* often accompany a village fair and might involve a community meal at the end of the event, thus building up the associated sociability of a *melā*.³⁹

In the *mushā'ira* today, rather than candles or lamps circulating, microphones are passed around or else a single mike dominates the stage and poets approach it in order to recite their compositions. Amplification is crucial for both performance traditions, contributing significantly to the creation of atmosphere within the physical performance space while simultaneously 'transcending space'.⁴⁰ *Wa'z mahfils* aim at maximum radiation, putting immense effort into the organisation of the sound system, including the positioning and connection of loudspeakers far away so that the congregation's acoustic space encompasses several villages.

Sound amplification transmits the whole of the performance, including the audience interaction. This includes rhythmic audience responses, prefigured by the model-audience onstage vocally and visually. Such a synchronic interaction leads

³⁷ The announcer is a distinct role for which distinct booklets with guidelines are published.

³⁸ Fischer-Lichte, *Transformative Power*, p. 38.

³⁹ When *mahfils* close with a communal meal of blessed food (*tabarruk*), they perform much like *langar* at a *gurudwara* or after the Shi'a *majlis*.

⁴⁰ Qureshi, 'Transcending Space'.

to reassuring audience members that their ‘own’ emotions are shared. Furthermore, the audience of *wa‘z mahfils* might be asked to chant in unison with the keynote of the preacher’s discourse or join in *dhikr* (collective, rhythmic, repeated utterance of the name of God or the profession of faith) or songs. While similar forms of repetition and audience involvement exist in other forms of Islamic preaching,⁴¹ they are particularly stressed in *wa‘z mahfils*, often leading to rhythmic patterns of participation.⁴² Many forms of consent used in political mobilisation are common to *wa‘z*, for example, bodily responses of consent and ascription (like raising hands) and the shouting of slogans, which might not symbolise ‘anything else than the presence of the the human mass itself’.⁴³

Mushā‘ira and *wa‘z mahfil* follow a nearly identical sequential protocol. Junior poets go first in a *mushā‘ira*, while more established masters will not recite till near the end. Indeed, the final recitation of the evening should come from the most distinguished poet present. We hear tales of senior poets vying for this position in the line-up, or refusing to recite if they felt that their name was called too soon. In *wa‘z mahfils* as well, a succession of preachers performs, with the star preacher (the one who is announced on posters beforehand) coming last, usually quite late at night, and he is eagerly awaited by the audience. This protocol contributes to the heightening of expectation over the course of the event. Junior poets and preachers—‘warm-up acts’, if you will—set the tone, get the crowd into the mood. It is presumed that as performers of increasing skill present their work the mood builds further and the audience enters into the conventionalised world of the poetic or religious discourse. By the time the great masters address the assembly, the hour is late and the crowd has been primed for a significant experience. The last preacher of a *wa‘z mahfil* conducts the final supplicatory prayer, a moment of great salvific power combined with collective emotions.⁴⁴ It abounds in the common display of emotions and is worked towards during the sermon. Thus, space and timing create a particular atmosphere that make a performance conducive to heightened, synchronised, and climactic emotions.⁴⁵

Let us now turn in more detail to the ways in which the audience is emotionally addressed by the performances. They encompass two axes: that of interlocution between a given performance and its tradition (how this poem, or story, refers to or resonates with others within the inherited tradition); and that between the

⁴¹ Particularly in the Shi‘a *majlis*, but also as reported for Egypt in Hirschkind, *Ethical Soundscape*, p. 84.

⁴² For example, passages where call and response occur exactly every 20 seconds.

⁴³ Zumthor, *Poésie orale*, p. 54.

⁴⁴ Cf. also Hirschkind, *Ethical Soundscape*, p. 123.

⁴⁵ While also the *mushā‘ira* is nowadays concluded by a religious element, Quranic recitation, this is rather a formality which is neither worked towards in the performances before nor constitutes the emotional climax of the whole evening.

performer and the audience.⁴⁶ In the following discussion, we will inquire into both axes and exemplify each with one tradition. Examples from the cultural history of *mushā'ira* will focus on the evolution of the tradition, while examples from *wa'z mahfils* will focus on the interaction between preacher and audience, particularly on the employment of chanting techniques. We turn first to the *mushā'ira*.

Aspects of the Cultural History of *Mushā'iras*

From Ghazal to Nazm in Mushā'iras

What are the emotional properties of the texts recited at *mushā'iras* and *wa'z mahfils*? In the *mushā'ira*, there is a continuum between the conventions of classical *ghazal* poetry and those of modern *nazm* genre which draws directly from it. Yet they can also be worked to purposes other than the merely conventional. The lyric genre (*ghazal*) works on the condensed, internal worldview of the individual listener and is not particularly exhortatory, while the *nazm*, less condensed, can be said to constitute a more externalised realm. Indeed, the advent of *nazm* as a popular genre in the twentieth century coincided with an expanded Urdu public sphere.⁴⁷ And though the *ghazal* continues to be the flagship genre of more intimate literary *mahfils* and Urdu poetry overall, the *nazm* comes into its own in large, public *mushā'iras*, especially political *mushā'iras*. Different genres create different communities.

In the *mushā'ira*, as we have stated, achievement is measured by how successfully emotions can be invoked in an audience of cognoscenti (*rasikas/ahl-i zauq*). Here, success proceeds from the individual poet's ability to channel a shared literary tradition through her/his own composition, to make it resonate for the audience, and to evoke in that audience a sense of something new having been expressed within a highly structured framework. The audience should not just 'recognise' what the poet is saying, but should be drawn into it and feel it personally. This internal effect would more closely resemble the state of *rasa* than the kind of emotional effect that motivates crowds.⁴⁸ In other words, there is the emotional state inhabited when *rasa* is achieved, and there is another kind that resonates back and forth between an individual's inner state and the physical context of a performance. While *rasa* theory is useful in helping to understand how Urdu poetic conventions induce an emotional state within an individual, it only hints at describing the emotional community created at a public *mushā'ira*.

⁴⁶ Zumthor, *Poésie orale*, p. 32.

⁴⁷ Cf. Oesterheld in this volume, and her discussions of Hali's and Iqbal's public recitations.

⁴⁸ A notable exception would be the evocation of *raudra* (anger) or *virya* (warrior-like) *rasas*. We are not aware that Bharata speaks of trying to move audiences to battle, but it is not implausible that a patron might commission a drama with warlike themes in order to motivate his subalterns when a battle is at hand.

Much expressive Indo-Muslim culture was associated with the royal court, the *darbār*, which Victorian colonials and modern political Islamists view(ed) as decadent. These groups particularly reviled the more circumscribed, erotic world of the *ghazal*. That world, or emotional universe, had at its centre the concerns of the individual human striving towards the metaphysical (even the mystical). The central character in this universe was the *‘āshiq*-narrator, the perennially aspiring lover. It has been said that classical *ghazal* is about *‘ishq* (love) and that, if *‘ishq* is not the subject of a poem, it cannot be a *ghazal*.⁴⁹ To give a couple of examples:

The intense, inward focus of the human story of love’s struggle, and the manner in which its exaggerated dimension is celebrated, can be seen in the following *she‘r* by the great Mirza Ghalib (1797–1869) of Delhi. It evokes the struggles and pain of *‘ishq* suffered by Majnun, that iconic *‘āshiq* whose love deprived him of his sanity:⁵⁰

Tum ko bhī ham dikhāyen kih Majnūn ne kyā kiyā
Fursat kashākash-i gham-i pinhān se gar mile

I’d show you, too, what Majnun suffered,
if only I could just
gain some short respite from the agony
of my own suppressed, internal grief.

The poet assumes that his audience knows Majnun’s story well; that he is, for them, already a paragon of lovers because of the suffering he willingly underwent in his attachment to his love for Layla. The recitation convention of repeating the opening line of a *ghazal* verse, before going on to provide its resolution with the second line, works to build up the tension and anticipation inherent in both the recitation and its content. But the expected resolution of tension is actually withheld in the second line, as this *‘āshiq* competes with Majnun, claiming that he cannot demonstrate Majnun’s suffering right now (resonance with which would release the audience’s built-up tension) because his own suffering prevents it!

In the first line the audience was invited to recall the qualities of Majnun: his devotion, his grief, his distraction, the loud and crazy professions of love that resulted in his social ostracism. The audience—all of us—is thereby transported, and inhabits the deep melancholy of Majnun’s tragedy. We have become Majnun. When the verse’s narrator-*‘āshiq* invoked Majnun’s condition, we were already transported there by our own ‘preparation’. But now the narrator, instead of joining with us, holds himself apart, saying, ‘I *would* explicate what Majnun suffered

⁴⁹ Barker, *Naqsh-i Dilpazīr*, Vol. I., p. xxiv: ‘a composition which does not employ the traditional language, imagery and concepts of the *ghazal* is not technically a *ghazal* at all, even though it may conform to the genre in other respects ...’ Norms change, of course. In the twentieth century, plenty of political *ghazals* were composed by a variety of poets in the subcontinent.

⁵⁰ *Dīwān-i Ghālib*, p. 313.

(and thereby join with you) but right now I am too distracted by the far greater turmoil that currently occupies me.’ This *‘āshiq* claims to have achieved, through *‘ishq*’s suffering, a higher state than Majnun’s (and ours), and it keeps him at a remove: we are one with Majnun, while he is in a place of *‘āshiqī* even beyond that. We now apprehend a deeper condition of *‘ishq* than the one we know. The narrator’s extravagant claim carries a further claim by the verse’s poet; that he is the greatest lover there ever was—because how could he put such words into the mouth of his *‘āshiq* if he didn’t know from his own experience? Our aspirations are directed now towards Ghalib’s *‘āshiqī* rather than Majnun’s, and the tradition sanctions the poet’s extravagant claims. Perhaps counterintuitively, our appreciation for Ghalib’s masterful achievement precludes resentment of his arrogance. We are charmed and delighted instead, and brought into communion with him.

Darbār to Public Sphere

When poetry began to be put to political purposes, those art forms elaborated so exquisitely within *darbāri* culture were considered too ‘oriental’ and too despotic, from the nineteenth and twentieth century’s colonial point of view; and too secular or too, dare we say, ‘Hindu’ to be appropriated to the nation-building needs of a post-colonial Pakistan.⁵¹ These art forms were therefore dealt with quite dismissively in Indo-Victorian critical literature and in much official discourse in Pakistan.⁵² Yet the poetic language of the *darbār* has survived and remains a cultural lingua franca.⁵³ Its complex grammar, once learned, remains embedded, perhaps at a level even deeper than the conscious. The transition from a largely discredited *darbāri* ethos to that of the *mushā‘ira* with its modern-day critiques of post-colonial politics and society, would not be possible were poetry not disseminated mostly orally, employing this grammar, on the public stage.

The audience for twentieth century protest poetry, while generally low in literacy, was nevertheless high in political acumen and sufficiently versed in the aforementioned poetic grammar for it to have its desired effect. Though its members’ training might not be as refined as that of a courtier, a skilful recitation outside the *darbāri* context could (and can still) induce in its audience an emotional effect that creates community, one which understands itself to have descended, aesthetically, from the *darbār*.

The *nazm* genre, though looser in structure than the *ghazal*, thus represents old poetics clothed in new garb. Its lines may, but are not required to, all bear exactly the same metrical values; its rhyme scheme is neither as fixed nor, indeed, is it

⁵¹ Ironically, this same *darbāri* culture has been exploited in India exactly for the purpose of building a nation whose culture is composite—at least until the recent resurgence of Hindutva.

⁵² Cf. Petievich, *Assembly of Rivals*; *idem*, ‘Making “Manly” Poetry’; Pritchett, *Nets of Awareness*; *idem*, *Āb-e Hayāt*.

⁵³ This is elaborated upon in Petievich, ‘From Court’.

required to be, as in the case of the *ghazal*. Its longer verses allow for more prosaic verbal constructions, and, in a public *mushā'ira*, for a different kind of emotional effect to develop, aided by recitation.

It would be plausible for the opening line of Faiz Ahmed Faiz's (1911–84) modern manifesto, '*Mujh se pahli sī muhabbat merī mahbūb na māng*' [Do not ask me, my beloved, for that former kind of love]⁵⁴ to have been a line in a *ghazal*, as it fits a traditional metre;⁵⁵ but in a *ghazal*, each successive line (*misrā'*) of the poem would have had to conform to the exact same scansion and rhyme scheme. Furthermore, with a proposition such as the opening line declares, it would usually be the work of the second line to explain why the *āshiq* no longer wishes to deliver the former kind of love; and it would need to be a complete, concise thought.⁵⁶ But in *Mujh se pahli* the second line reads: '*Main ne samjhā thā kih tū hai to darakhshān hai hayāt*' [I had thought that life's splendour required only your presence]. Here the poet reiterates his proposition but does not resolve it. Unlike Ghalib (above), who completed his work in two highly condensed lines, Faiz's *nazm* creates a different kind of tension and resolution by spending five further lines to finish declaiming what that former kind of love consisted of:

*I had thought that your presence was the basis of life's glory,
that the pain of you eclipsed the tribulations of the world;
From your countenance was derived the splendour of the age.
What pull did the world have other than that of your eyes?
To obtain you would be to turn the world upside down.*

The sixth line is transitional, moving away from the *pahli sī muhabbat*, the former kind of love, critiquing it for its myopia, building its effect through a repetition, with slight variation, in strong cadences:

*It wasn't so, I had only wanted it to be.
There are other kinds of sorrow in this world than just Love's pain;
There are other kinds of pleasure than just those of being with you.
The dark, fearsome enchantments of countless centuries
woven into silk and satin and brocade;
bodies sold everywhere, in alleys and bazaars,
wallowing in dirt and flowing with blood...
The eyes return to them, what else can be done?
Your beauty still allures, but what is to be done?*

⁵⁴ Faiz, *Nuskahā-e Wafā*, p. 40.

⁵⁵ *Ramal*: _ ^ _ _ / _ ^ _ _ / _ ^ _ _ / ^ ^ _ _ ^

⁵⁶ This construction is known as *she'r-i tamsil*, or a verse of comparison. It dominated nineteenth-century Urdu *ghazal* composition.

The poem concludes with a firm rejection of the old ethos:

*There are other kinds of sorrow than just the pain of Love.
There are other kinds of refuge than just that of being with you.
Love, do not ask me for that former kind of love.*

In addition to being bound to just two lines, a traditional *ghazal* would not mention images of bartered, bloody bodies in order to create a gruesome effect. Rather, as in the next verse, even as he puts his head on the chopping block, Ghalib's '*āshiq*' creates a different image:

*'ishrat-i qatl-gah-i ahl-i tamannā mat pūchh
'īd-i nazzāra hai shamshīr kā 'uryān honā
Don't even ask the people of desire
about the joys of the slaughterhouse:
the sword unsheathed is a feast for their eyes.*

Here we see how the first line sets up the proposition that is demonstrated or 'proved' by the second line. The narrator invokes not the dread of a gory decapitation but, rather, the anticipatory joy of becoming a martyr to love. The image of the unsheathed sword almost throbs with sexual arousal, rather than with fear or dread. The joy is almost too much to contain.

The '*āshiq*'s vision, again, is directed inward towards 'his' own joy, whereas in *Mujh se pahlī*, the rhetorical force of the narration was to tear the '*āshiq*' away from Love's self-focused vision and direct it outward, towards other people and their benefit. Also notable in the *nazm* is that the '*āshiq*' asks 'his' beloved to release 'him' from their former contract. 'He' is demanding, at least implicitly, that they both relinquish their old, fixed roles and begin to privilege new roles in answer to the call of the times.

In another very popular anthem by Faiz, *Bol* (Speak!),⁵⁷ the silent suffering of the narrator- '*āshiq*' is excoriated, and in cadences similar to those we saw working in *Mujh se Pahlī*, a demand is made for movement from silence to speech. Indeed, rather than celebrating the silent suffering of Majnun, here Faiz's narrator grows increasingly urgent because of how much might be lost if silence continues to be maintained:

<i>Bol kih lab azād hain tere</i>	Speak! For your lips are free
<i>Bol zubān ab tak terī hai</i>	Speak—your tongue is still yours;
<i>Terā sutwān jism hai terā</i>	your body, stripped bare, is [still] yours.
<i>Bol kih jān ab tak terī hai</i>	Speak, for your breath, your spirit is still yours.

⁵⁷ Faiz, *Nuskahā-e Wafā*, p. 55.

<i>Dekh kih āhangar ki dukān men</i>	Look how, in the ironsmith's forge,
<i>Tand hain sho 'le surkh hai āhan</i>	the flames heat up, the iron reddens.
<i>Khulne lage quflon ke dahāne</i>	The padlocks' mouths have broken open,
<i>Phailā har ik zanjīr kā dāman</i>	the welded shackles pulled apart.
<i>Bol yih thorā waqt bahut hai</i>	Speak: this scrap of time before the body
<i>Jism-o zabān kī maut se pahle</i>	and tongue die—it's still plenty!
<i>Bol kih sach zinda hai ab tak</i>	Speak, for Truth is not yet dead.
<i>Bol jo kuchh kahnā hai kah le</i>	Speak, give voice to what must be said!

Different Kinds of Exhortation: The Poet as nāsih

A context of political repression underlies the entire composition of *Bol* and the times in which it was composed. Published during the height of the Freedom Struggle, before Independence in 1947, *Bol* remains a potent clarion call today. Its aspirations to democracy notwithstanding, the Pakistani state and, indeed, its political culture, have been largely authoritarian and controlled by elites (feudal, military, and now industrial). These have never particularly sought subaltern input. In fact, dissent has been largely discouraged and often brutally suppressed, as if to replace the brutality of the long-vanquished colonial regime.

So if we look again at Faiz's narrator in both *nazms* discussed above, we see that poetic tradition turns a corner, and this narrator speaks in a new role, that of the *nāsih* (advisor, counsellor) rather than the *āshiq*. Conventionally, the *nāsih* of the *ghazal* tries to 'save' 'his' friend by counselling an abandonment of 'his' hopeless love; while here Faiz's narrator encourages the audience—a community of *āshiqs*—to speak out, to take on the fight, to see a world beyond that internal, emotional universe of the past; a world replete with suffering that can be remedied. The *nāsih* in the *ghazal* advises the *āshiq* to 'man-up', to abandon 'his' hopeless pursuit of the beloved, and his advice is unwelcome; but here Faiz's narrator reminds the *āshiq(s)* of suffering's productive possibilities. The body may be stripped bare, the tongue stuck, the breath shallow. One may be on the brink of death, but still, says Faiz, 'this short time left is plenty' to raise one's voice and say what must be said. He is giving heart, not counselling prudence. He is reminding citizens of their potential power.

The emotional impact of this poem is not static, not confined to the aesthetic, to the pleasure of beautiful, mellifluous sounds washing over us, an aesthetic effect sometimes referred to as *kaiḥiyat* (lit. quality, condition).⁵⁸ The tone here is more

⁵⁸ The best definition of this term is found in Pritchett (*Nets of Awareness*: 119): '...in English *kaiḥiyat*, or "mood", ... is elusive. The term *kaiḥiyat* has a central meaning of "state" or "condition", with a tendency to mean a desirable state: an exquisite, inwardly flourishing, even ineffable mood, sometimes with mystical overtones ... *kaiḥiyat* is a quality of response located in the hearer or reader of the poetry; it is a mood evoked by the verse as a whole.'

dynamic, one of hope and determination, and it is certainly communally directed. The poet, through the voice of his narrator, is not understood to be speaking to just one soul; rather, he is exhorting the collective, much-expanded Urdu public sphere to speak up and challenge tyranny.⁵⁹

Emotions and Melodic Voice in *Wa 'z Mahfils*

Introduction to the Role of the Voice

We follow this enquiry into changing textual patterns and roles of recipients in *mushā'ira* performances—which can be related to changes in the public sphere—with consideration of ways in which non-textual levels of performance contribute to evoking collective emotions. We take as our example a particular chanting technique employed in *wa 'z mahfils*.

The dimension of sound is crucial for the performance of communal emotions.⁶⁰ Everyone hears at once and is affected, even when not listening.⁶¹ Perceiving sound entails a reproduction of it within the recipient's body.⁶² Studies on oral poetics and language philosophy therefore have highlighted that the voice does far more than just transmit words.⁶³ Insights into oral and aural aspects of the telling of texts in South Asia are increasing and their importance is emphasised in recent scholarship.⁶⁴ This confirms the importance rhetoric has long attributed to voice, particularly so for group phenomena such as emotional entrainment.⁶⁵

Wa 'z mahfils combine possibilities for intimate communication opened up by amplification⁶⁶ with a characteristic style of chanting that links it to earlier times, times when the voice was not technically amplified. Back then, conveying texts was particularly bound to meter and melodies that served simultaneously to transmit perspectives and emotions through space and time.⁶⁷ Notably, in these aspects, Bengali narrative traditions drew prominently on the teachings of lyrical and musical arts (*sangīta*)⁶⁸ and were therefore quite possibly influenced by *rasa* theory. 'Speaking melodically' (*sure balā*), as the chanting of *wa 'z mahfils* is called in Bengali, is characterised by a limited number of dominant melodies, each of

⁵⁹ Of course, there is no guarantee that the call will be answered.

⁶⁰ For a still unsurpassed analysis of one prominent performance tradition of South Asia cf. Qureshi, *Sufi Music*.

⁶¹ While we do not follow the strict difference between mediated and non-mediated listening practices, cf. Hirschkind, *Ethical Soundscape*, p. 82, for a description of what we might call 'distracted listening'.

⁶² Koselleck, 'Politische Sinnlichkeit'.

⁶³ Krämer, 'Stimme', p. 271; Zumthor, *Poésie orale*.

⁶⁴ Orsini and Schofield, *Tellings*.

⁶⁵ Brennan, *Affect*.

⁶⁶ Peters, *Air*, p. 216.

⁶⁷ Stille, 'Metrik und Poetik'; D'Hubert, *Vernacular Transitions* – compare also the analysis of Hansen for another genre, Hansen, *Grounds for Play*.

⁶⁸ D'Hubert, *Golden Palace*.

which is identified with one region or famous preacher, and which is emulated. All of the melodies are recognised as belonging to the genre because of their close relationship to particular sets of text, being ‘word-centred’.⁶⁹ Furthermore, all of them feature a specific manner of tension release and voice quality, which will be described below. The melodies thereby establish the genre’s coherence while at the same time allowing individual differentiation in a competitive and creative preaching scene.

Tahera Qutbuddin has highlighted the importance of rhythmical structures stretching back as far as early Islamic sermons⁷⁰ and we can also trace concern for melodic ways of speaking in Arabic *wa‘z*-preaching back to the twelfth century.⁷¹ The chanting of Bengali *wa‘z mahfils* additionally relates to a variety of South Asian Islamic traditions, such as Shi‘i sermons and story traditions (*majlis*⁷² and *jārigān*⁷³), devotional praise of Muhammad (*mawlid*, *na‘ī*) or Bengali storytelling traditions (*puthi pāth*).⁷⁴ However, the characteristic melody of a very influential preacher, which came to be emulated by many other preachers to the extent that it even came to be called ‘common *sur* [melody]’,⁷⁵ closely resembles the final phrase of an Egyptian Quran reciter from the first half of the twentieth century.⁷⁶ While *puthis* and, even moreso, Quranic recitation, exhibit a high degree of fixity, this is not the case with the sermons. They are not ‘read’ (the literal translation of *pāth*) but are rather part of what one might call an oral tradition.⁷⁷ In other words, the melodies are an example of the transcultural creation of an Islamic soundsphere⁷⁸ through the dissemination of technically reproduced media (the global advent of Egyptian Quranic recitation in the 1960s) which at the same time is part of the Bengali regional aesthetic regime.

⁶⁹ Qureshi, ‘Islamic Music’, p. 47.

⁷⁰ Qutbuddin, ‘Sermons of ‘Alī’.

⁷¹ Cf. the polemics against such practice by the Arabic star-preacher Ibn al-Jawzī (*Sayd al-khātir*).

⁷² For the many structural similarities between *majlis* and *wa‘z mahfil*, cf. Qureshi, ‘Islamic Music’, pp. 44–47.

⁷³ While there are more recent discussions by Saymon Zakaria in Bengali (Jākāriyā and Murtaajā, *Jārigān*), the most accessible introduction to this Bengali narrative genre remains Dunham, *Jarigan*.

⁷⁴ An unfortunately unpublished dissertation on the musical aspects of this performance tradition as practiced today is Kane, ‘*Puthi-Pora*’.

⁷⁵ Interview, 9 July 2014.

⁷⁶ While it is not possible to ‘prove’ this, the resemblance between the final cadence of Shaykh Muhammad Siddiq al-Minshawi as transcribed by Nelson (*Reciting*, p. 129) to the melody of the chant of Delwar Hossain Sayeedi does strongly suggest that the latter adopted it from the former.

⁷⁷ There are important differences to the term as classically developed by Lord and Parry. For example, the sermons contain ‘tales’ but also other parts; various recording techniques of script and digital recordings attribute a different meaning to memory; there is little stress on meter. The closest we find to a ‘composition in performance’ is the rhetorical technique of self-affection as described in Stille, ‘Conceptualizing Compassion’.

⁷⁸ The dynamics of this important process have, for example, been described in relation to Indonesia by Gade, *Perfection Makes Practice*. The exceptionally strong bodily aspect of the voice among the sensual registers is highlighted on p. 12.

The chanting technique is not taught explicitly, let alone theorised in the discourse of Islamic schools (*madrasas*) in Bangladesh and India, despite their stress on rhetoric education. Just as listening to radio and audio recordings was important for the spread of learning proper Quranic recitation, listening to the sermons of famous preachers educates and informs young preachers. They pick up much of the melodies through exposure to performances of sermons from early childhood onwards (remember that *wa'z mahfils* often start in the early evening with an audience consisting predominantly of children) while listening along with other children—in much the same fashion as Urdu audiences learn the grammar of Urdu poetry.

As noted above, '[t]he individual responses must be synchronised in order to produce a shared affective experience',⁷⁹ and melodic and rhythmic qualities are key in achieving such synchronisation by the timed fulfilment of shared expectations.⁸⁰ Musical aspects of *wa'z mahfils* build up their own patterns of expectation. These link up with emotional responses that prior sermons have elicited. As public performances of a recognisably unique sound, they are 'necessarily organised according to a set of underlying principles',⁸¹ principles that are to be made transparent. The sermons thus consist of inextricably intertwined semiotic layers which prominently include their text as well as their melodic structure. Therefore, it is our task to inquire precisely how emotional involvement increases by the overlapping of poetic and acoustic layers. We do so on two different scales: first, we interrogate the occurrence of chanting in the sermons; second, we examine the micro-level dynamics of individual sentences.

Voice and Dramatisation for Emotional Identification and Collective Salvation

When interrogating the occurrence of chanting in *wa'z mahfils*, we have to take into consideration a basic difference between it and the *mushā'ira*: the increased importance of narrative. As the sermons are quite long (often around 1–3 hours), even short digressions leave a lot more space for narrative dynamics than does the presentation of poems, which generally last no longer than a few minutes each, only 10–15 minutes per speaker. The core of *wa'z mahfils* are long narrations about holy and exemplary characters, and about everyday situations. Recipients relate to these characters' emotional roles and create their own ways of feeling, navigating between the roles which display, for example, different degrees of distance: between feeling *with* the characters (identification), feeling *for* them (pity) or even evaluating the overall situation, in the latter case guided by the commenting voice of the preacher.⁸² On the one hand, we thus must consider which roles are offered

⁷⁹ For this summary of Randall Collins, cf. Salmela, 'Shared Emotions', p. 41.

⁸⁰ Huron, *Sweet Anticipation*, pp. 167, 184.

⁸¹ Nelson, *Reciting*, p. 100.

⁸² For an overview about relations to characters, see Eder et al., 'Introduction'.

to the recipient, and on the other how s/he is guided to adopt them. Both questions are interlinked, as the kind of role offered might also 'ask for' a particular kind of relationship to this role.

The fictional roles offered to recipients in *wa'z mahfils* are deeply influenced by a conceptual connection between religious salvation and collective emotions. That connection is exemplified in the term *ummat*, which refers to both the entire Islamic community and a single member of it. It occurs particularly in descriptions of the Day of Judgement, a powerful commonplace of community imagination in Islam,⁸³ and certainly one of great emotional force. The overarching theological aim of the *wa'z mahfils* is the redemption of the *gunahgār ummat* ('sinful community'). The space in which this is to be achieved is imagined, in a common adaption of the above-described *darbār* tradition, to be the *mahfil*'s audience speaking at Allah's *darbār*. It is here that the intercession (*shafā'a*) of holy figures takes place, particularly that of Muhammad. He is the 'compassionate [*daradī*] prophet' who shows similar reactions as the *āshiq* (restlessness, sleeplessness) when he thinks of the *ummat*'s pain. He sheds tears as he anticipates his *ummat* entering hellfire. In this process of imagining the compassionate prophet, the line between mercy and compassion becomes blurred, and passion is established as a precondition for this compassion.⁸⁴ For our inquiry into collective emotions, it is important to stress that Muhammad's emotions follow the 'collectivity condition' in which, according to Tuomena, 'a shared intention is satisfied for one group member if and only if it is satisfied for all group members':⁸⁵ the compassionate Prophet refuses to enter paradise as long as even one *ummat* is denied entry.

The sermons' manner of narration in many ways fits this connection between emotion and salvation. We already mentioned the importance of the Prophet's pain, identification with which becomes a main goal of the audience. As this emotional closeness is linked to salvation,⁸⁶ mechanisms designed to create such closeness are of particular interest here. Among the various narrative dimensions which often occur together,⁸⁷ the particular perspective and mode of narration are of interest, including such questions as 'who sees?' and 'who speaks?' as well as what the degree of an 'intermediary' narrator's presence might be. All of these together are key to the creation of 'closeness' and 'distance'.⁸⁸ *Wa'z mahfils* often feature extended dramatic scenes in which the hero's perspective and words are taken over: for example, the child-prophet's pain concerning his father's absence often includes dialogues between the child and his mother. These scenes seem

⁸³ For a vivid description, see Canetti, *Crowds and Power*, p. 141.

⁸⁴ The closeness of both concepts is hinted at in Oosterheld and Pernau in this volume; cf. Stille, 'Conceptualizing Compassion'.

⁸⁵ Salmela, 'Shared Emotions', p. 40.

⁸⁶ For the background of this in the *milad*-tradition, see Katz, *Birth*, p. 125.

⁸⁷ Eder, 'Being Close'.

⁸⁸ While these are basic questions of narratology, these questions as well as the concept of focalisation concretely refer to Genette, *Narrative Discourse*.

to rely particularly on a unity of emotional effect, sometimes by adding aspects which might not be established by dogma but which fit the dramatic logic. Salvific closeness to the holy hero is thus achieved by modes of narration that tend towards dramatic presentation of the characters' 'own' words for 'their' emotions, a process which guides the recipients' emotional response. The close connection between the targeted emotional response and the content may be best epitomised by the fact that preachers often choose a particular hadith or Quranic quotation according to its potential for evoking emotional effect.⁸⁹

How does chanting relate to these narrative constellations and the linked techniques of dramatisation and directing their recipients? It does so in a very simple yet efficient way: it marks the highly emotional and salvation-promising moments, and thus adds and intensifies the strong impact these narrations have on the recipients. Chanting integrates the scene into a single unit and creates musical intertexts to other such scenes. In short, when listeners hear the melodies, they expect and prepare for emotional closeness to the hero and for merging collective emotion and collective salvation. However, while it is important to take into account this general pattern, it is not all that can be said about the emotional role of the melodies. Building on the general linkages and moods evoked by the chanting, the sermons open up possibilities to interrelate emotion, melody, and language in miniscule ways. Let us look at one example in which melody serves as a connector to political attitudes.

Figure of Speech as Emotional and Ideological Node

Affective stylistics has shown that even the reception of a single sentence can traverse an emotional process⁹⁰—as, for example, the 'surprise' created by Faiz in not resolving his opening line's proposition ('Do not ask, my Beloved, for that former kind of love') in his second line, but attenuating the tension concerning what kind of love he wants instead, by describing it at some length over several further lines. While there is no direct relationship between one emotion and one rhetorical figure, both are, as our analysis of the *ghazal* has shown, linked to each other: figures are 'automatised means of affect'.⁹¹

This next section contains a detailed discussion of a 2-minute snippet from a sermon by one particular *wa'z*-preacher in Bangladesh. Our purpose is to disentangle an emotionalising rhetorical figure which is greatly heightened by the fact that it is chanted. The combination of textual and melodic levels is what persuades the listeners of a conviction fundamental to both the personal and political aspirations of the preacher, namely, that there exists a stark contrast between the Bangladeshi judicial system and the justice and mercy of Allah. This is all the more interesting because the preacher (Delwar Hossain Sayeedi) is a politician and has organisational

⁸⁹ This stance, given in Ābidīn, *Baktrītār Klās*, was confirmed to me by practitioners.

⁹⁰ As demonstrated by Fish, 'Literature'.

⁹¹ Kramer, 'Affekt und Figur', p. 318.

means as well as a position reaching beyond the immediate performance space. While the mediatisation of *wa'z mahfils* on cassette, video CD, mobile storage and the internet is a common trend, the sermon in question is recorded in an outstanding professional manner, including different camera angles on the preacher, his entourage and the masses. Sayeedi has been a pioneer in disseminating sermons using media,⁹² and his conscious efforts to shape the whole genre of *wa'z mahfils* has met with quite some success. Also the direction of the audience at the *mahfil* exceeds the techniques employed in other *wa'z mahfils*: instigators help arouse and direct audience responses via gesturing and sloganeering from different corners of the huge assembly.

The sermon in question takes as its topic the profession of faith, and establishes a contrast between it and the present societal and political framework, often involving conscious work on language and signification. For example, a simple yet effective exploitation of polyvalence comprises the preacher's address to the audience at the beginning of the sermon (discussed below). The preacher asks: 'who is the owner (*malik*) of the country?'⁹³ In the religious sphere, *malik* unambiguously refers to Allah (as mentioned in the first Sura of the Quran, for instance), and the audience immediately responds: 'Allah'. The preacher then continues to establish this 'truth' as antagonistic to the conception—false, in his eyes—that the country belongs to the people (*janagan*).

Through this call and response, the preacher establishes an antithetical relation between faith and the world, a notion common to utopian thinking in many political Islamic movements, and one which runs like a thread through the sermon in question. Importantly, it relies on audience participation and performance. The preacher, for example, scolds the audience's response, calling for it to be performed more loudly, provocatively asking the audience if it is ashamed to say 'Allah' or if it does not love Him enough to do so.⁹⁴

On this basis, we can now inquire into a later passage in the sermon whose main topic is closeness to Allah. While it is common in *wa'z mahfils* to work this feeling into the sermons' narrative by emphasising parallels between the emotions of humans and holy figures, the preacher in the sermon here emphasises the divide between both spheres. He first does so by a *tarannum*-recitation of an Urdu verse, which describes Allah's compassion as beyond that of any human: 'He is always willing to give and becomes displeased (*bezār*) with whosoever does not ask Him'⁹⁵—while on earth (the preacher confirms in Bengali) exactly the opposite would be the case.⁹⁶

⁹² One can hear his sermons at tea stalls and on buses, with audience responses included in the recordings.

⁹³ Sayeedi, 'Kālemā Tāiyyebā', from minute 9:20.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.* A parallel practice can be observed in *mushā'iras*, where somebody—often the poet himself—exhorts the audience towards greater *dād denā*.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*

⁹⁶ An interesting correlation is created by the figure of the mother, which is modelled differently by different preachers and in different contexts.

Figure 1 depicts the melodic contours of the following passage of the sermon and a summary of the sermon text. The passage again summarises this expectation of mercy, the intervention of Allah even in hopeless situations and the intimate communication between Him and the believer. It can be divided into three parts. In the first third of this minute, deep feeling and trust in Allah are ‘described’ as a felicitous condition for successful communication with Him, a communication which is illustrated in the second third of the passage when the believer calls upon Him, Who answers: ‘I am there.’ The last third of this minute-long passage encompasses a Quranic recitation which again reiterates Allah’s mercy: ‘Yet whoso doeth evil or wrongeth his own soul, then seeketh pardon of Allah, will find Allah Forgiving, Merciful.’⁹⁷

Now we turn to some important musical aspects of the chanting of this passage. First, the melody divides the passage into three parts. Each of the three parts starts with a pause followed by the keynote in a high register (8). After briefly rising by a third, the melody descends to a keynote one octave lower (1). This basic structure of the chant builds up and releases tension, and is maintained throughout the sermon with precision. Second, the melody seems to imbue pitches with particular meanings, for example, the tension-filled high tenth indicates the servant’s realm, while the relaxing keynote is that of Allah. So the melody charges the human sphere with tension and the divine sphere with relief. The quoted Quranic verse contains a semantic triad (sin, seeking pardon, mercy), and this triad is marked melodically with a rise up to either the eighth or the fifth scale (‘octave’, ‘quint’). Looking at Figure 1, we see that the tripartite structure of the melody in this first minute corresponds to that triad.

It has to be emphasised that the lower keynote relates not only to Allah but also to the audience, which has been attuned to this keynote by jointly chanting the word ‘Allah’ at the preacher’s instruction. The musical mode (b-minor Lydian, or *kāfī*) holds together the whole sermon and provides grounding and orientation to the listeners. While it is the individual who is to imagine his personal encounter with God, attuning to the common keynote ensures that there is a ‘universality’, a commonness with fellow listeners. The audience, the preacher and the text of the sermon are bound together in each moment of passage through the melody as it comes from, and ends on, the keynote.

After translating the abovementioned Quranic verse into Bengali in a normal voice, the preacher again picks up his tune for what is to be his central message, that is, that if the believer repents and Allah accepts his repentance, he will be forgiven (Figure 2). Melodically, this sentence is the characteristic final phrase identifying the sermons of this preacher. That it is used here, as, so to speak, the sermon’s melody in a nutshell, mirrors the centrality and density of its wording—

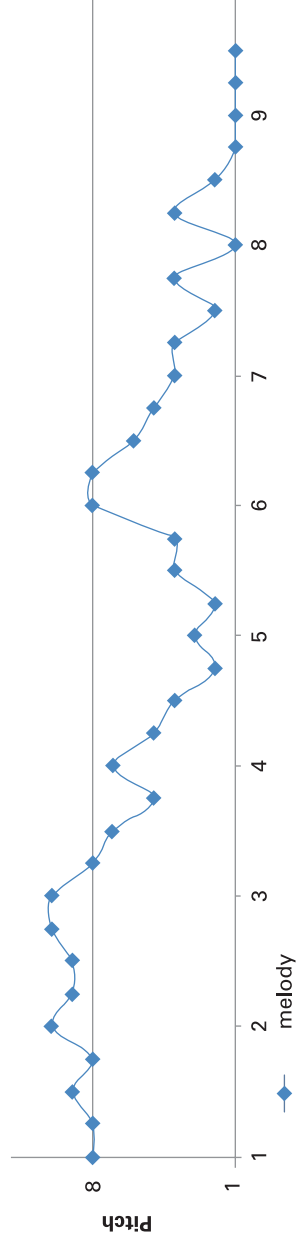
⁹⁷ Sayeedi, ‘Kālemā Tāiyyebā’; Q4:110. The entire passage analysed here starts at minute 47 of the video on Youtube.

Figure 1

SUMMARY OF TEXT

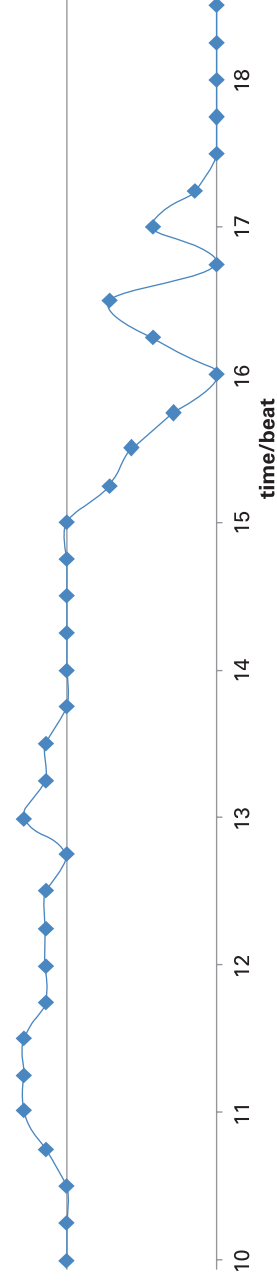
If interiorly the servant thinks that there is no one:

"I don't have a *malik*, *razzāq* or any one: only Allah!"



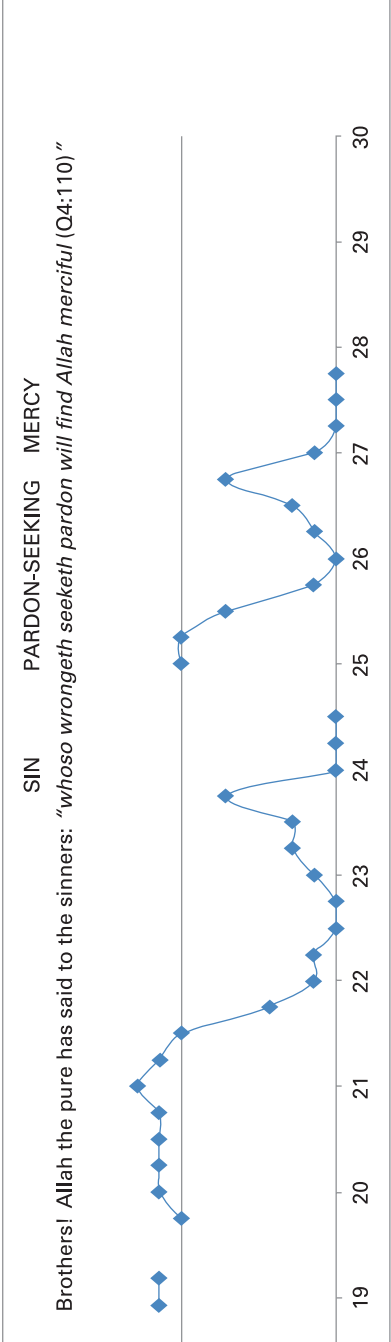
If the servant calls, from his innermost mind:

"Allah!" – then Allah the Lord answers: "Servant, I am here!"



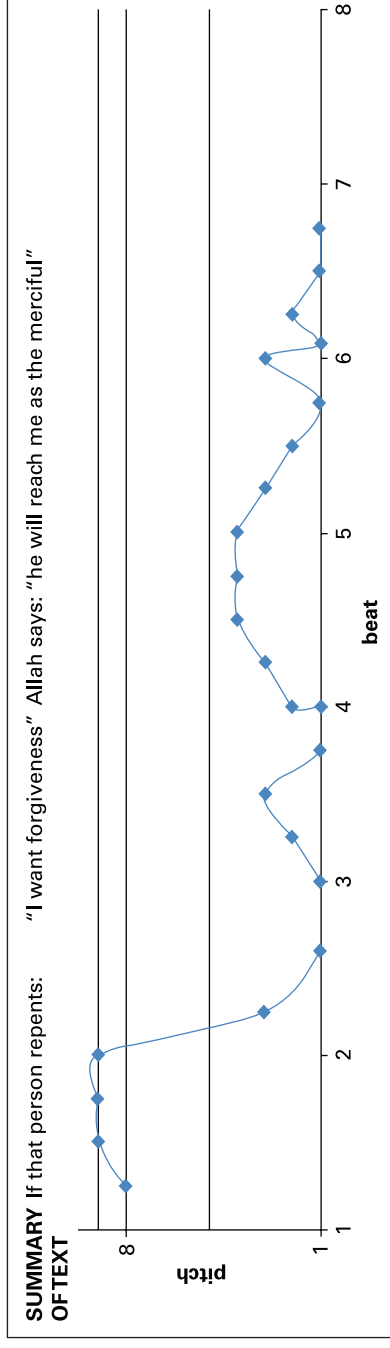
(Figure 1 continued)

(Figure 1 continued)



Source: Authors' own.

Figure 2
Statement and Melody Condensed



Source: Authors' own.

the sermon's key salvific promise, apt to obtain consensus among all listeners. As the melody is the trademark of the preacher, it also builds an intricate connection between this promise and his 'image'.

After quickly retelling this statement of salvation in colloquial language and an everyday voice, the preacher raises expectations of an opposition by saying that 'Allah's ways are different'.⁹⁸ This is a standard phrase, found frequently in the sermons in exactly this form, in Bengali as well as in Urdu.⁹⁹ For the audience's experience of the passage, it is important that this formula raises expectations of yet another opposition: 'different from what?' It is this implicit question that introduces an antithesis between the law of the country and Allah's mercy. We now analyse this antithesis closely.

The passage represented in Figure 1 and this important rhetorical figure (depicted in Figure 3) extend over the span of 1 minute. The two juxtaposed clauses (a) and (b) are separated by a very short interjection to the congregation after half a minute ('is that right or wrong?').¹⁰⁰ The first clause (a) of the antithesis describes the unforgiving way in which the state responds to crime. It is again split into two parts, each of which has the same content: man commits crime (A); man is punished by being thrown into jail and then released (B), but is not forgiven: his name remains recorded in the 'black book'¹⁰¹ of the police (C). In the first half of clause (a), there is a micro-repetition (i) emphasising the vicious circle of being released from jail several times, a repetition which is mirrored in the melody and corresponds to the cyclic structure of the clause on the macro-level. The beginning of the clause is marked by an initial address to the audience 'you will notice in the country [*deshe*]'¹⁰² which is chanted on the tension-filled tenth. This tension is released when the melody descends by an octave and arrives at the lower keynote in (C), thus marking the end of the first half of (a). The second part is a repetition of the first, starting on the higher keynote and ending with the typical final phrase (compared with Figure 2). We can already conclude here that both parts of (a) have tripartite structures, as did the Quranic recitation and the initial statement. However, while the rough scheme is adhered to in which a man and his crime occupy the higher parts of the melodic curve, the lower parts do not refer to Allah and his mercy but rather to human legal institutions and their unforgiving registration of crime (C). The employment of the characteristic phrase (compare Figure 2) at the end of (a) thus features the tension-resolving, descending structure ending on the lower keynote—but this melodic relaxation is not congruent with the wording. This creates a misfit, an oxymoronic relationship between the musical and the

⁹⁸ Sayeedi, 'Kālemā Tāiyyebā'.

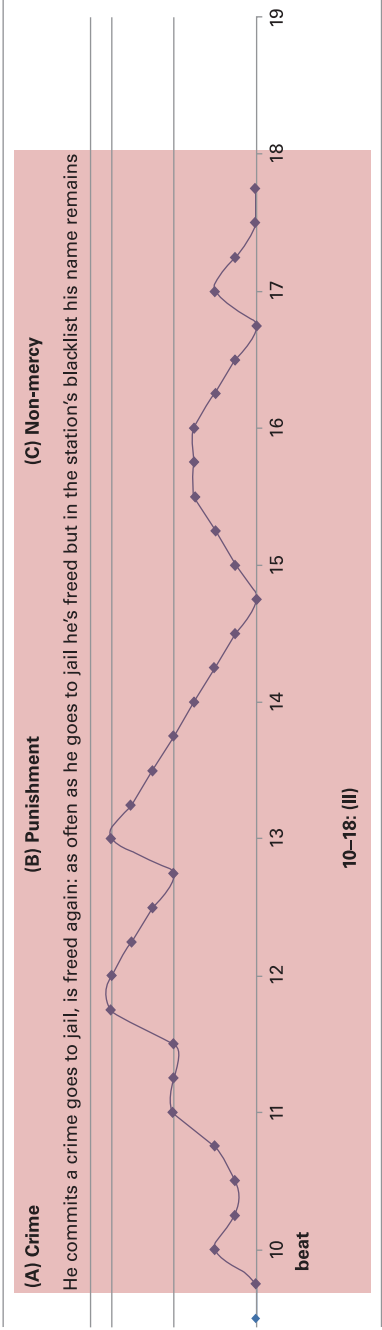
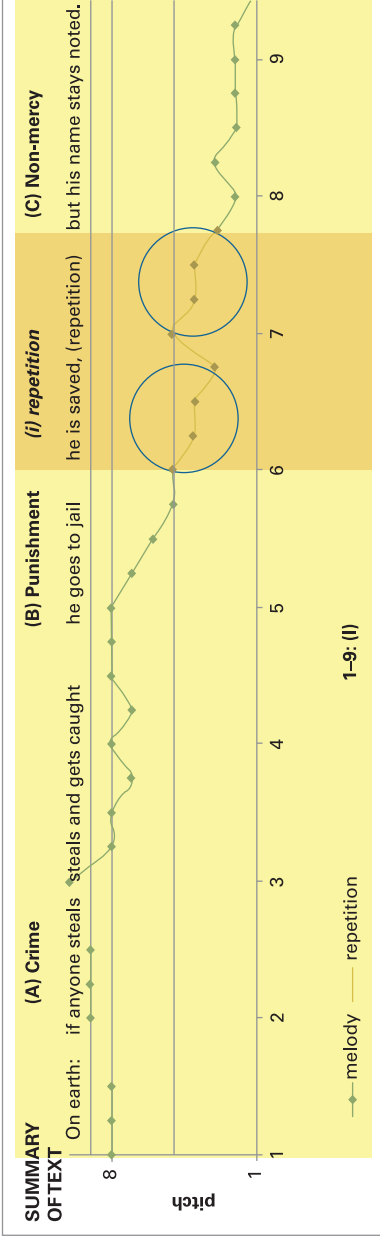
⁹⁹ Bengali: *Āllāh'r kārbār bhinna*, Urdu: *Allah ke mu'āmilāt aur hai*.

¹⁰⁰ Sayeedi, 'Kālemā Tāiyyebā'.

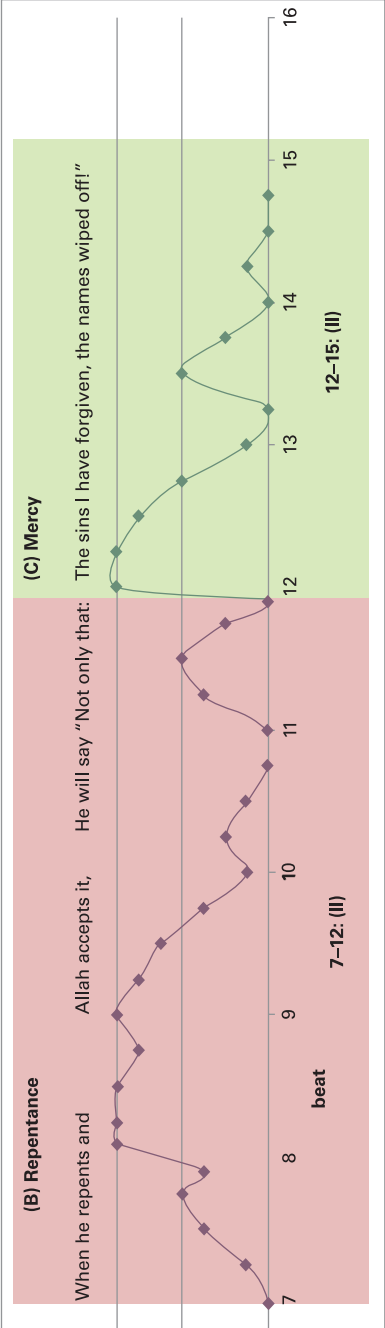
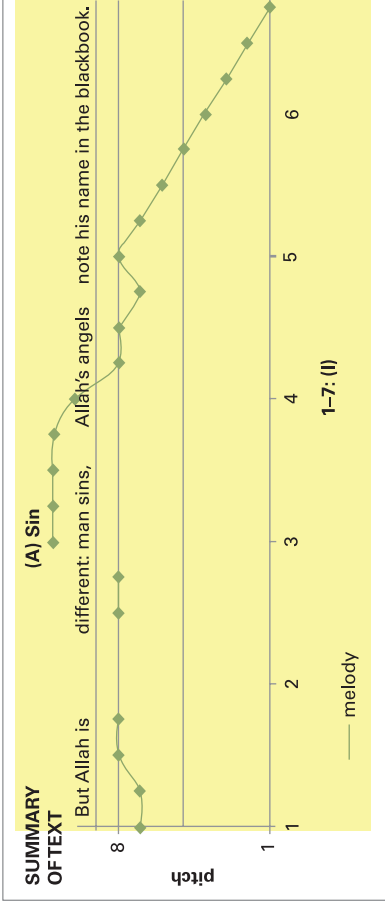
¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰² *Ibid.*

Figure 3
Antithesis between Merciless Mundane Justice and Merciful Justice of God
Clause (a)



Clause (b)



Source: Authors' own.

linguistic layers (and thus disharmony and tension). The aesthetic effect of this non-correspondence is that the process which was described neither seems sensible nor feels good. At the same time, the sheer fact that the melodic phrase associated with Allah is employed raises expectations that there might be hope. This expectation is fulfilled by the second clause of the antithesis (b), to which we turn now.

Following the short interruption of the chant for an address to the listeners in between the two clauses, the second clause (b) starts with a melodic parallel to the first clause (a), while the textual level marks the opposition of the second clause by the already-figured sentence ‘but Allah’s deeds are different’.¹⁰³ The preacher continues on the tenth for the misdeeds of Man (A), albeit with a terminological shift to the religious register: it is not ‘crime’ but ‘sin’ that is the subject here. A juxtaposition is thus created which places the terms ‘crime’ (*aparādh*) in (a) and ‘sin’ (*gunāh*) in (b) in a substitution relationship on a paradigmatic level. The micro-repetition of being thrown into jail and being freed (i) does not find an equivalent in (b), which is why the lower keynote is reached more quickly in (b) than in (a). While the first melodic phrase, also in (b), ends with the recording of misdeeds (A), on a syntagmatic level, this recording is a step in the linear progression to the next segment, (B), which, in turn, is not punishment, but rather seeking forgiveness or repentance.

In this second clause (b), the steps (A) and (B) result in (C). Instead of the repetition of the vicious circle depicted in relation to worldly justice (a), in the depiction of God’s dealings (b) we find a tripartite structure (A, B, C) leading progressively to mercy—thus in full coherence with the three steps of the Quranic verse quoted before. Melodically, this triadic step is emphasised by attributing a single unit to each step, again in accordance with the melodic structure of the Quranic recitation. As one might predict, the final cadence, when it closes (b), does not create an oxymoronic relationship but is in harmony with the prior statement and the expectation of Allah’s mercy. The relaxing effect achieved thereby is further increased by a suspense-creating delay (‘He will also say: “Not only have I accepted your repentance [*tawba*]”’),¹⁰⁴ which heightens the experience of relaxation during the final bestowal of mercy through His own speech act (‘[but] I have also forgiven the sins and wiped out the names [from the black book]’).¹⁰⁵

Viewing both clauses of the antithesis together, we can detect that this antithesis presents in a syntagmatic manner the paradigmatic substitutions of (A) crime/sin, (B) punishment/repentance and (C) non-forgiveness/mercy. How is this related to the emotional experience of the sermon? Building on Stanley Fish’s affective stylistics, Ottmar Fuchs highlights the importance of antithesis as a highly affective

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*

and experiential figure, foregrounding, and basing itself on, underlying semantic oppositions:

Differences create meaning, heightened distinctions create lively experiences of meaning. Antitheses, finally, are semantic antonyms combined in syntagma and thus highly increased contrasts which enable intensive experiences of meaning.¹⁰⁶

The basic poetic operation of the antithesis is the formal equivalence of its two parts highlighting and foregrounding the contrast on the verbal level. What is remarkable in the case discussed here is that the poetic operation extends to the melody and is in turn extended by it. The parallelism of clauses (a) and (b) is emphasised by the musical similarities between them, particularly their beginning and end, (A) and (C), which thus can be said to operate akin to anaphor and rhyme. If the antithesis is an ‘intensive experience of meaning’, the music-rhetorical antithesis is an even more intensive one. Among others, the chanting in this passage highlights the passage’s importance to the listeners; makes it more accessible via structural divisions; emphasises existing connotations linked to the bifurcation of worldly versus heavenly processes and between different actors (God and humans); and adds on to them, for example, by musically transcending the range between the lower and upper keynote when a human ‘oversteps the mark’, and by linking the lower keynote with God’s mercy. These musical associations greatly contribute to the condensation of meaning and experience, thus emotionalising this passage.

Building on these effects, the music-rhetorical figure makes possible shifts in the formal oppositions involved, leading to a re-positing of both religion and the world and their relationship to each other. The aspect of punishment is omitted in the case of religion; Allah’s justified anger¹⁰⁷ is only present by implication, while repentance is foregrounded. This is a bold religious interpretation which serves to heighten the contrast between the ideal (God) and the actual (world), and create a maximum distance between them, implying the need for radical change. In respect to the world, it is the ‘country [*desh*’] that serves as counterpart to Allah’s doings—a word which can refer to ‘this world’, but also concretely to ‘Bangladesh’, thus taking the same line as the initial question of ‘*desher malik*’¹⁰⁸ (see above).¹⁰⁹ This reference directs the emotional and change-invoking power of the antithesis to the specific frame of national politics. The specific directedness is further strengthened by the fact that even the ‘other-worldly’ (b) clause incorporates references not only to Allah but also to the world: as the police write down the

¹⁰⁶ Fuchs, *Die Funktion*, p. 142.

¹⁰⁷ Cf. Pernau, ‘Love and Compassion for the Community’, in this volume.

¹⁰⁸ Sayeedi, ‘Kālemā Tāiyyebā’.

¹⁰⁹ The rhetorical play with contrasts between the religious ideal and politics is of course a very wide phenomenon by no means restricted to the example here. It seems that it is rather a widely available and thus already common sense enthymeme.

crimes in (a), so do the angels in (b) note the sins in a ‘blacklist [*kālo khātā*]’.¹¹⁰ This polyvalent expression at once links with images of the black book of God in which good and evil deeds are recorded¹¹¹ and also constitutes yet another link to the experience of the Bangladeshi judicial system. In this way, the *wa’z mahfil* does not here remain what Sayeedi classifies as ‘religious service [*dvīni khedmāt*]’ by which it is, in his opinion, impossible to change state and society,¹¹² but involves the foundations of the actual judicial framework which he set out to change.

The justice system relates to yet another, even more specific, layer of the antithesis. The preacher’s career was accompanied by accusations of committing war crimes during the Bangladeshi liberation war of 1971, crimes for which he was found guilty several years after the sermon discussed here.¹¹³ The absurdity and negative connotations, built up in the sermon, of worldly justice and lack of forgiveness (as opposed to God’s mercy) can thus be seen as ‘working’ on the preacher’s embattled image. While the speech act of calling upon God in order to obtain His mercy is shown to be successful, the inclusion of the antithesis allows the sermon to work against the felicitous conditions for speech acts in the worldly justice system (such as ‘I convict you’) by making the listeners feel that such an approach is just not right. We have shown how this is achieved by building up a closely knit bundle of connotations relating to the preacher’s image, his utopian ideology, and the joint experience of heightened differences presented by linguistic and musical means¹¹⁴—a complex coding of what the listeners perceive as an immediate and joint experience of a stream of words and sounds.

Conclusion

Contemporary *mushā’iras* reflect a history of smaller audiences opening up to larger publics. Poetic recitation moved from the elite and princely *mahfil*¹¹⁵ to the huge public *mushā’ira*, a scaling up with great impact on the kind of community prefigured and addressed. Pakistani national identity is anchored dually to Urdu and Islam and, while the latter is celebrated for its fundamental egalitarianism, the former, evoking an elite cultural tradition, has been popularised in service to the modern nation state. The modern *nazm* genre has grown in popularity and been deployed for public/political expression. While the notion of Urdu’s glorious past is still valued and identified with in many ways, its performance has necessarily altered to serve a larger public to whom a traditional, elite education is increasingly alien. In order to create an emotional community through recitation, the background

¹¹⁰ Sayeedi, ‘Kālemā Tāiyyebā’.

¹¹¹ For this image in a poem by Mir Taqi Mir, see Schimmel, ‘Shafā’a’.

¹¹² Sayeedi, *Āmi Kena Jāmāyāte Islāmī Kari*, p. 170.

¹¹³ Cf. *International Crimes Tribunal-I*, ‘Judgement Sayeedi’.

¹¹⁴ A programmatic statement on ethos as connotation can be found in Barthes, *The Semiotic Challenge*, p. 74.

¹¹⁵ Brown, ‘Music’, pp. 63, 74.

of stories and allusions, from which a traditionally educated audience would have drawn, has now been foregrounded. The narrator has become more directive, the *‘āshiq* less an individual and far more a member of a group of citizens. The theme of *‘ishq* remains but, while the ideal audience remains an individual (or individuals) who identify with a striving *‘āshiq*, there is now a more overt external identification with a community that needs to be protected or nurtured through collective action. A change in the role of the *ghazal*’s *nāsīh* (counsellor) has facilitated this new direction, leading the *nazm*’s narrator to approximate that of the preacher in *wa‘z mahfils*.¹¹⁶

Discussion of *wa‘z mahfils* and *mushā‘iras* in a comparative framework also highlighted the link between the *mushā‘ira*’s rhetoricisation and the overall rhetorical potential of poetry and narrative. Poetry, as exemplified by the classical *ghazal*, relies on background narrative but aims at a deepened appreciation of one particular emotional state at one particular point in that background narrative. Its emotional appeal is therefore rather ‘static’. With the rhetoricisation of the *nazm* as an aspiration to the future, we can discern a tendency towards narrativisation: the ‘now’ is no longer static, but is connected to events in the past and future. *Wa‘z mahfils* are a narrative genre, with even direct appeals to the audience overtaken by narrative accounts. However, the above analysis has also highlighted how the crucial dramatic scenes play for the evocation of emotions. These scenes arrest and heighten single emotions, in comparable fashion to the workings of the ‘classical’ lyric. It seems, then, that the publics addressed by both genres are best served by a combination of both elements, narrative dynamics and the stasis of poetry.

Both publics are furthermore addressed in similar setups of performance space, sequence and timing, which have important repercussions for the analysis of collective emotions. Public performance seems to ask for a reception process considerably different from that of the novel—often the model for literary theory. Whereas the novel ‘asks’—quite literally in the case of the first Hindi novel introduced in South Asia¹¹⁷—its readers for a prolonged suspension of judgement in a reception characterised by a high amount of indeterminacy, both *mushā‘ira* and *wa‘z mahfil* only partly rely on similar processes. Individual acts of imagination remain important but are accompanied by the heightened possibilities of a collective, communal reception. A joint rhythm allows for the synchronisation of utterances of reception. These express, as well as produce, a joint experience. While it might be difficult, from the viewpoint of speech act theory, to capture the function of emotional utterances by an individual in bringing about the respective

¹¹⁶ A proximity which might be reflected on the textual level by the meaning of *nasīhat*, which can mean ‘exhortation’ in Urdu and is also employed as a conjunct term (*wa‘z-nasīhat*) in and beyond the religious realm in Bengali.

¹¹⁷ Cf. the introduction in Srīnivāsādāsa, *Parīkshā Guru*. Many thanks to Hans Harder for pointing out this illuminating paratext.

emotion,¹¹⁸ the public and collective utterance of consent is much more apt to bring about joint emotions and group affiliation.

Sound, which has been integral to poetics in South Asia and soaked by *rasa* theory, is crucial in evoking collective emotions. Melody and sound texture bind with conventions of a given genre. In the *mushā'ira*, it can be represented by the melodic recitation of *tarannum* and the requirements of meter; in *wa'z mahfils* by the inclusion of chanted passages which link simultaneously to Quranic recitation and to Bengali storytelling techniques. The linkage between these melodies and the respective genres contributes to the creation of an atmosphere of heightened emotionality. Chanting connects the audience to prior reception experiences and their accompanying heightened emotions, which are often experiences of suffering along with a story's central figures. Normal social restraints against emotional expression are thereby abandoned in favour of a 'willing suspension of emotional disbelief'.¹¹⁹

As epitomised by the attunement of the audience to common key notes in *wa'z mahfils*, the analysis of chanting in *wa'z mahfils* has emphasised the importance of sound for evoking collective emotions in the religious sphere. The chanting is linked to, and emphasises, the emotional scenes of (com)passion, which carry the greatest emotional appeal and draw the listeners into the narration of the sermons. Possibly it is the joint goal of salvation, linked to collective pain, that accounts for the continued relevance of a connection sketched out by Abdul Halim Sharar at the beginning of the twentieth century. He saw the chants of religious oratory as a driving force to introduce 'the power to arouse human emotions' to Urdu literature, and linked these chants, in turn, to the musical rhetoric of the Greeks, who 'discovered which sounds and which intonations aroused joy, sorrow, pity or anger'.¹²⁰

However, chanting can also be dynamically employed for persuasive means. The detailed music-rhetorical analysis of one rhetorical figure has opened up ways to disentangle embodying, emotionalising and action-inspiring levels on the level of single sentences.¹²¹ The musical performance was shown to aid the already highly rhetorical construction of an antithetical relationship between the 'religious ideal' and the worldly justice system—a figure of thought and practice key to the revolutionary political agenda of the *Jamā'at-e Islāmī*. As the changing address in the *mushā'ira*, also figures of speech—the shared ground of the poetic and the rhetorical—might thus be charged with concerns of a politicised public.

¹¹⁸ As is claimed in Reddy, *Navigation of Feeling*.

¹¹⁹ The insertion of 'emotional' into the Coleridge's phrase aims to expand his focus on cognitive estrangement.

¹²⁰ Sharar et al., *Lucknow*, p. 216; Sharār, *Guzashta Lakhna'ū*, p. 358. This argument seems to fit well to what Pernau describes about the journals of the nineteenth century in this volume.

¹²¹ We thereby offered an analytical approach to what is described by Hirschkind, *Ethical Soundscape*, p. 82.

This politicisation is, however, but one aspect of the interconnection between performance genres and the public sphere. Neither does the overtly persuasive genre of *wa'z mahfil* nor the increasingly exhortatory performance of poetry in *mushā'ira* contexts guarantee that the impression they make endures.¹²² Just as the secular option irreversibly influences religious experience, so does the awareness of the fictional status influence the perception of narrative and poetry. The recipients, most notably through being spectators of television, are more and more accustomed to perceiving performance as fictional. While this does, as we have argued, in no way decrease, and might even increase, the possibility of evoking heightened emotions, the question of their status remains to be discussed. This article has emphasised on how the performance of what might be called 'religious' or 'aesthetic' emotions become integrated in collective reception. The question of how they are related to other emotions by the individual remains an open question.

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¹²² As Ibn al-Jawzī observed in the twelfth century, sermons might be 'like whips, and whips do not hurt after a while', Al-Jawzī, *Sayd al-Khātīr*, p. 37.

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