

Introduction

Contextualizing *Decoding DĀ'ISH*

Since its emergence in 2006, the phenomenon of the 'Islamic State' has managed to assert itself as one of the world's most prominent militant jihadist groups of modern times by embodying the threat of relatively straightforward but highly shocking attacks. News about violent attacks, which were often communicated through heavy usage of psychological warfare with high-quality production of audio-visual publicity materials, has become palimpsestic, consisting of a series of translucent events overriding themselves. To date, there has been little agreement on the enigma of DĀ'ISH, which has managed to attract a significant number of individuals from the Arab-Islamic world and outside it to join it. However, trying to unravel DĀ'ISH and similar jihadist organizations through conventional narrative history and military tactics has proven relatively futile.

The phenomenon of DĀ'ISH is a growing field of study in which a variety of disciplines participate. Political scientists, media analysts, historians, religious scholars, Arabists, and experts of ideologies have delved into different aspects of this organization. The inter-disciplinary fields engaged in understanding DĀ'ISH are testimony to the multi-faceted dimensions that feed on religious, cultural, and political elements in the organization's day-to-day operations. In an attempt to reconstruct life under DĀ'ISH-controlled regions, research thus far has focused overwhelmingly on the experiences of eye-witnesses that have managed to escape from DĀ'ISH territory,¹ and on administrative documentation that has found its way out of the jihadist compound.² Other scholars have investigated DĀ'ISH vis-à-vis its connection to Islam³ and its presence online.⁴ While these dimensions are undoubtedly valuable attempts to under-

1 For further reading on the subject, see also Donatella Rovera, "Escape from Hell: Torture and Sexual Slavery in Islamic State Captivity in Iraq," Amnesty International, 2014, accessed June 20, 2018, <https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/mde140212014en.pdf>.

2 For further reading on the subject, see also Rukmini Callimachi, "The ISIS Files," *The New York Times*, April 8, 2018, accessed August 20, 2018, <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2018/04/04/world/middleeast/isis-documents-mosul-iraq.html>.

3 See also Hassan Muhsin Ramadān, *Tashrīḥ al-fikr al-salafī al-mutaṭarrif* (Damascus: Dār al-ḥasād, 2009); Ibrahim Faw'ad, *Dā'ish: min al-najd ilā al-baghdādī: nustāljiyā al-khilāfa* (Beirut: Awal Centre for Studies and Documentation, 2015); Vincent al-Ghurayib, *Dawlat al-khilāfa al-islāmiyya: al-tanzīr al-salafī al-jihādī* (Beirut: Dār al-walā', 2016).

4 For an analysis on how DĀ'ISH uses the digital world, see also Abdel Bari Atwan, *Islamic State: The Digital Caliphate* (London: Saqi Books, 2015); Adam Hoffman, and Yoram Schweitzer, "Cyber Jihad in the Service of the Islamic State (ISIS)," *Strategic Assessment* 18, no. 1 (April 2015); Charlie Winter, *The Virtual 'Caliphate': Understanding Islamic State's Propaganda Strategy* (London: Quilliam Foundation, 2015); Christina Schori Liang, "Cyber Jihad: Understanding and Countering Islamic State Propaganda," Geneva Centre for Security Policy (GSCP), Policy Paper 2 (2015); Daniel Milton, "Communication Breakdown: Unraveling the Islamic State's Media Efforts," Combating Terrorism Center, U.S. Military

stand the extent of brutality with which DĀ'ISH militants operate, analyses of militant jihadist movements cannot be solely governed by the paradigm of terrorism. This study proposes to shift focus on the language because Classical Arabic is exploited as a powerful medium through which DĀ'ISH transmits its ideology transnationally to other prospective recruits.⁵ Additionally, poetry serves jihadist groups as a cultural tool which is utilized to inculcate the jihadist worldview among an Arabic-speaking audience. From a discursive point of view, the analysis of language and poetry plays an essential role in the maintenance of and communication in the jihadist groups because it takes into account culturally dependent and resonant symbolism that is continuously appropriated by jihadist groups.

Aims and Scope of the Study: The Disciplinary Context

The primary purpose of this study is to develop an understanding of jihadist discourse. More specifically, this book investigates discursive tools instrumentalized by DĀ'ISH to wield power over its primary Arabic-speaking audience by generating compliance. I argue that we cannot understand the insistent voice of DĀ'ISH unless we delve deep into the ancient past and reread the jihadist group in light of the tribal cultures that for over a millennium have expressed themselves in poetry and have attached great value to their cultural traits and traditions, including their tribal values and the Bedouin ethos that still permeate the jihadist milieu today. Thus the analysis of DĀ'ISH must take into consideration its appropriation of the Arabo-Islamic tradition, its ancient modes of communication, and political mobilization. More specifically, this study addresses the following questions:

1. How do discursive elements of the symbolic world seek to engender commitment in the target recipients in the form of domination?

Since this is a study about discourse, it is not the course of events that stands at the centre of this study; instead, it is the language that reflects events and, at times, shapes and nurtures them. The recognition that discourse operates as a disciplinary device does not imply that other forms of coercive control are not necessary. The blatant punitive

Academy, West Point, October 2016, accessed June 30, 2018, https://ctc.usma.edu/app/uploads/2016/10/ISMedia_Online.pdf; Daveed Gartenstein-Ross, Nathaniel Barr and Bridget Moreng, "The Islamic State's Global Propaganda Strategy," *International Centre for Counter-Terrorism (ICCT)*, The Hague, Research Paper, March 2016, accessed June 30, 2018, <https://www.icct.nl/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/ICCT-Gartenstein-Ross-IS-Global-Propaganda-Strategy-March2016.pdf>; Douglas Wilbur, "Propaganda's Place in Strategic Communication: The Case of ISIL's Dabiq Magazine," *International Journal of Strategic Communication* 11, no. 3 (2017): 209–23.

- 5 The exploitation of specific discursive elements connected to the Arabic language plays a pivotal role in the jihadist propaganda due to the overwhelming number of recruits joining DĀ'ISH from Arabic-speaking countries. See also, "Foreign Fighters: An Updated Assessment of the Flow of Foreign Fighters into Syria and Iraq," *The Soufan Group*, December 2015, accessed May 5, 2018, www.soufangroup.com/foreign-fighters/.

inducements, beheadings, and burning of soldiers alive are, no doubt, considerable. Incarceration and corporal punishments, however, are never the exclusive forms of control upon which jihadist organizations rely.⁶ Symbolic displays of power expressed discursively not only operate in tandem with overt coercive controls, but they are also themselves a subsystem of coercive control. The group's control of power is conceptualized vis-à-vis its contestation over the symbolic world, the management, and appropriation of meanings and events. DĀ'ISH controls and manipulates the symbolic world in the same manner that it constructs institutions of enforcement and punishment.

In the analysis of DĀ'ISH discourse, it is impossible not to experience a combination of what social scientists following Max Weber conceive as a loyalty-producing organization through traditional authority (domination) and its anxiety-inducing simulacrum. The absolute control over the symbolic world enables DĀ'ISH to appeal to potential recruits inside and outside of Iraq, justify the killing of civilians and fellow Muslims in insurgent attacks, legitimate organizations that engage in violence, and counter the claims of authorities in Iraq and around the Muslim world. Thus, specifying the nature of and rationale behind symbolic discursive displays in jihadist organizations such as DĀ'ISH can clarify more general concepts such as obedience, complicity, power abuse, and membership.

Crucial to this study is how discursive mechanisms work to exemplify and produce political power. This study is interested in how DĀ'ISH mobilizes its citizens and members to demonstrate and embody its power. It engages in discussing discursive strategies as an occasion for enforcing obedience, but also as the very mechanism of enforcement. In a more critical approach to power, we are especially interested in power abuse or domination, and how the jihadist ideology is used to legitimate such hegemony. More specifically, this research investigates how elements that form part of the collective heritage in the Arab world are appropriated through discursive means to produce and legitimate political power, thus helping to ensure the group's own survival and obedience from its supporters.

In a time when multiple jihadist organizations are striving to acquire political legitimacy, the cadence of the classical Arabic ode, which is characterized by syntactic parallelisms, rhymes, allusions and maxims, all couched in balanced structures, provides a useful and inexpensive tool to communicate messages and power relations among jihadist subscribers. Poetry and other forms of discourse play an essential role in enabling DĀ'ISH to wield control over the worldview of their subscribers, mainly because these elements serve as an emotional expression founded upon a unique orchestral coordination between the speaker and audience.

To bridge the gap between discourse and power abuse, this study avails itself of modern theories borrowed from the field of 'Critical Discourse Analysis' (CDA). This growing field of research proposes a systematic approach to analyze the interdepend-

6 Lisa Wedeen, *Ambiguities of Domination: Politics, Rhetoric, and Symbols in Contemporary Syria* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999), 27.

ence of ideology and communicative practices. It also explains how language is strategically deployed to legitimate violent actions and resist a demonized 'other.' The study is thereby concerned with the use of language, symbolism, and poetry as a communicative or symbolic form of 'social manipulation.' The concept of power abuse is connected to 'social manipulation' which implies the exercise of a form of illegitimate influence by means of discourse. Social manipulation is defined in terms of abuse of power, namely social domination between parties and its reproduction in everyday practices, including discourse.⁷ Manipulating how recipients understand particular events discursively is crucial, especially in the case of the brutal and violent acts committed by DĀ'ISH. The manipulative jihadist language that is embellished in highly emotional literary devices and associations through underlying effects can achieve shifts in a dominant logic. In a broader, semiotic sense, this work also argues that manipulation as an illegitimate influence is also exercised in the symbolic world by creating a flag, currency, and reconstructing the world map.

The reasons for classifying language-based and symbolic strategies as 'manipulative' are two-fold. Firstly, these strategies are intentional and covert. The jihadist discourse is premeditated, and it is constructed deliberately to thwart reality.⁸ Secondly, these strategies benefit the interests of DĀ'ISH, and they imply an asymmetrical relation between DĀ'ISH and its recipients.⁹ By combining theories of domination with theories of literary criticism and CDA, this work discusses how content and form, together with residual and archaic references to other inter-textual poetical output can help to spread the jihadist message in this time and age.

2. What are the hallmarks of DĀ'ISH discourse, and what function does poetry play in the jihadist milieu? More specifically, what are the main literary themes, motifs, and devices used in these poems, and how do these devices contribute towards building up a jihadist ethos?

The study aims to unravel some of the mysteries concerning the debate on Jihadism through an examination of its discursive strategies by giving due importance to the semantic field, imagery, recurring motifs, morphological patterning, parallel structures, intertextualities, and other elements which shape this discourse in particular. These language-based aspects are analyzed in light of the culture and tradition that nurtured them. Recurring lexical items, metaphors, and field-specific lexicon, which promote resilience, steadfastness, belligerence, and the element of never-ending combat and struggle, gained strength from the traditional virtues of honour, dignity, courage, perse-

7 See also Teun Van Dijk, "Discourse and Manipulation," in *Discourse and Society* 17, no. 3 (2006): 359–83.

8 See also Frans Van Eemeren, "Foreword: Preview by Review," in *Manipulation and Ideologies in the Twentieth Century: Discourse, Language and Mind*, eds. Louis Saussure, and Peter Schulz, vol. 17 (Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 2005), xi.

9 Louis de Saussure, and Peter Schulz, eds., "Introduction," in *Manipulation and Ideologies in the Twentieth Century: Discourse, Language and Mind*, vol. 17 (Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 2005), 6.

verance in the face of evil most of which are enshrined in the pre-Islamic Bedouin ethos and the Islamic code of Arab societies. Phraseology derived from the Qur'an and classical Arabic poetry creates a specific aura of authenticity as a result of the fact that it is not usually deployed in day-to-day parlance but is used in a 'sacred' space which has been nurtured, cherished, and built up through time by multiple generations. The highly emotional rhetoric gleaned from the poetic tradition, and Islamic discourse enables DĀ'ISH to inject a spirit of struggle, resistance, and resilience by means of a hard-hitting language and an ethos of war.

This work locates modern jihadist poetry in the long-standing Arab poetic tradition spanning over a millennium by indicating possible influences on DĀ'ISH poetry and its position in the broader literary framework of modern Arabic poetry. Due to the form of jihadist poetry, this study investigates the superficial link between jihadist poetry and the Arabic poetic tradition. The jihadist poem is composed following the classical ode known as *qaṣīda* that has held a revered position in the Arabic culture for centuries. The dominance of its poetic form has inspired poets stretching from the pre-Islamic era to as far as the twentieth century, after which significant shifts in poetic sensibility began to emerge. From the twentieth century onwards, the classical ode remained in power but was now challenged with new poetic forms and techniques. During the modern period, the fundamental elements of the classical *qaṣīda* have been retained. Still, this model has undergone some changes that are also reflected in DĀ'ISH poetry. Additionally, this book discusses whether such poetry has unique characteristics when compared to other poems of Classical Age and Modern Times.

This study sheds light on discourse as a site of symbolic action, that is, the decisive and distinctive manner in which it acts in the world. Form and content are discussed concurrently because of the interplay of form and content in shaping that action. Even though the form and content are inseparable, they are still clearly distinguishable, and both work in different ways to promote specific goals. The analysis of poetry is carried out by resorting to the contribution of literary scholarship by both classical literary critics and modern Arabists. Traditional scholarship of Arabic literary criticism plays a crucial role in understanding the poetic voice within any jihadist group mainly because it focuses on the poetic discourse as a finely interconnected whole with its literary and discursive mechanisms that all work together to create an encompassing narrative for DĀ'ISH and those subscribed to its ideology. In this manner, literary devices are not only prized for their ornamental function, but they also play a pivotal role in substantiating an argument and, ultimately, manipulating the populace.

This book examines the functions of jihadist poetry as the primary medium of communication in the jihadist milieu. The features of poetry are to be understood in the context of the Arabic poetic tradition that laid particular importance to this form of discourse as attested by the centrality of poets and poetry in the pre-Islamic and Islamic societies. For this reason, the functions of modern jihadist poetry are linked to the functions of classical Arabic poetry that have already been discussed extensively elsewhere

by prominent scholars in the field of Arabic studies, including Beatrice Gruendler, Suzanne Pinckney Stetkevych, and Wen-Chin Ouyang.¹⁰

Additionally, the book discusses DĀ'ISH poetry in terms of its mnemonic techniques that are attributed to orally based thought. Oral communication, or the process of verbally transmitting information and ideas from one individual or group to another, has held an essential spot in the cultural space of the Arabic-Islamic tradition for socio-political reasons. Although one cannot infer that the jihadist milieu is a case of a 'primary oral' culture, the function and form of poetic discourse, including its incessant repetitions, its aesthetic appeal, its simplicity of verses, and the centrality of the communal experience hint towards mnemonic techniques adduced to orality. In turn, these techniques facilitate memorization, consolidation of the in-group bond, and subtle transmission of the group's message. This work culls theories from Walter Ong's work entitled *Orality and Literacy* to understand the power of specific techniques attributed to orality in the poetry of DĀ'ISH. Ong's work remains one of the more recent monographs that discusses the Oral Literary theory, which can be traced mainly to the work of two scholars, Milman Parry (1902–1935) and Albert Lord (1912–1991). By referring to the 'Oral Literary Theory,' the discussion focuses on the mnemonic imperative of oral poetry that is central to the effectiveness of ideological transmission in DĀ'ISH poetry. By adopting this systematic theoretical framework, this work presents the organization's world through its own eyes and voice, thus providing a greater understanding of the manipulative strategies used to spread the group's worldview, its political culture, self-images, guiding myths, and the making of a jihadist identity. The main focus of this book culminates in the analysis of how DĀ'ISH poetry is instrumentalized to legitimate, authenticate, and justify violence.

3. How is the past manipulated to reflect a modern worldview?

The dialectal relationship between tradition and modernity has a functional role to play in the overall discursive strategies devised by DĀ'ISH. Discursively, manipulation involves the usual forms and formats of ideological discourse. Manipulation is usually based on trust, which the manipulator often gains by engaging in argumentation. This work deliberates that discursive logics of argumentation exploited by DĀ'ISH are not to be understood in terms of the group's appeal to logic or rationale but to other forms of appeal that are more current in the specific Arabo-Islamic milieu including the appeal to tradition (*argumentum ad antiquitatem*), the appeal to authority (*argumentum ad vere-*

10 See also Adonis, *An Introduction to Arab Poetics*, trans. Catherine Cobham (Cairo: American University of Cairo, 2000); Beatrice Gruendler, Verena Klemm, and Barbara Winckler, "Arabische Literatur," in *Islam: Einheit und Vielfalt einer Weltreligion*, ed. Rainer Brunner (Stuttgart: Verlag W. Kohlhammer, 2016), 360; Beatrice Gruendler, *Medieval Arabic Praise Poetry: Ibn Al-Rūmī and the Patrons Redemption* (London: Routledge, 2010), 3–76; Suzanne Pinckney Stetkevych, *The Poetics of Islamic Legitimacy: Myth, Gender, and Ceremony in the Classical Arabic Ode* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2002), 180–282; Wen-Chin Ouyang, *Literary Criticism in Medieval Arabic-Islamic Culture: The Making of a Tradition* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1997), 55–88.

cundiam), the appeal to consequences (*argumentum ad consequentiam*), and the appeal to emotion (*argumentum ad passiones*).

Appeals made to tradition and authority are perhaps the two most recurring types of logics of argumentation in DĀ'ISH discourse.¹¹ The group's instrumentalization of the Arabic-Islamic tradition should not be taken at face value but should be considered as a strategic means to reach an ideological end. From an argumentative viewpoint, the appeal to tradition or antiquity, whereby a thesis in an argument is deemed correct on the basis that it is correlated with past and present traditions, is a type of logical fallacy. One major issue concerning this logical fallacy is connected to the ambiguous definition of the term 'tradition' because its signification varies among different periods, cultures, religions, and geographical locations. Assuming that DĀ'ISH links itself to the Arabic-Islamic tradition, the concept of tradition includes a long-standing history spanning over several centuries transnationally. Admittedly, this variegated span over time and geographical location carry different messages and ideologies through which jihadist organizations like DĀ'ISH sift to justify their unique worldview.

By framing modern-day warfare within an Islamic tradition, figurative language does not merely serve as an ornamental device but becomes an expression of argumentation within itself. This logic of argumentation communicates the subtle message that the unfolding political events in the region are pre-destined, and DĀ'ISH is only fulfilling religiously inspired apocalyptic events. The role played by tradition in DĀ'ISH discourse is three-fold. First, tradition and its wealth of associations serve as a powerful force of argumentation based on comparisons between modernity and the glorious Islamic past. Second, the process of sifting through tradition is instrumentalized to create a new ideology. The selective reconstruction of the past is strategically mobilized to manipulate the populace discursively and symbolically. Third, tradition normalizes a modern jihadist worldview, through which ideas and actions come to be regarded as 'normal' and morally justified in the jihadist milieu.

Different facets of tradition that surface in DĀ'ISH discourse – whether in the form of classical language, classical ode, ancient wisdom, the pre-Islamic nomenclature system, imagery culled from religious texts, mythological Muslim warriors – are attractive and appealing because they arouse emotions and provoke passion especially for a society that is deeply connected to its history, traditions, and faith. DĀ'ISH plays upon the sensitivity and emotions of a cultured milieu in which the merest reference to the Qur'an strikes up extraordinary reverberations. Poetry with overtones of Islamic terms serves as a powerful instrument for honing this reverberatory faculty and, thus, for attuning and orienting the sense to the divinely ordered world. The supremacy of the Qur'an, religious metaphors, allusions, formulae, and Islamic values appeal to the Islamic ethos. In this case, the argument relies on one's respect for what authority has said. The appeal to authority papers over gaps in logic and evokes deep cultural ties,

11 Theories on tradition are based on the seminal work of Edward Shils entitled *Tradition*, which was the first extensive study on the multifaceted understanding of tradition. See also Edward Albert Shils, *Tradition* (London: Faber and Faber, 1981).

facilitating the manipulation of the collective memory by means of religious immunity. In devising religious associations strategically, DĀ'ISH aspires to gain a glow of authority, and generate compliance from its audience.

The appeal to authority is also an illegitimate use of force because of its apparent attempt to intimidate the primary Arab audience by daring them to challenge what is culturally believed to be unchallengeable. In this sense, there is interpenetration and almost identification of religion and DĀ'ISH; disagreeing with DĀ'ISH becomes equated with opposing Islam. This is a clear example of how faith, as an integral part of the Islamic tradition, is weaponized as a group identity meant to galvanize support for the jihadist cause. Islamic discourse is exploited to characterize enemies, to imply modes of action against them, and to define intergroup, intra-group, and out-group relations. This work suggests that once the jihadist message becomes encoded in a culturally resonant form of discourse and built on fallacious types of logic, the recipients may be unable to understand the real intentions or the full consequences of the beliefs or actions advocated by DĀ'ISH, making them “*victims* of manipulation.”¹²

Status Quaestionis

Until recently, there has been no thorough analysis of the poetry and discursive strategies of jihadist groups like DĀ'ISH. Recent developments in the Arab world have heightened the need for a serious examination of militant jihadist propaganda, which is being deployed across the Middle Eastern region and beyond with unprecedented stealth and efficacy. In the academic field, the past decade has witnessed a renewed interest in the study of modern Jihadism and jihadist literature, primarily because of the acknowledged political significance of militant jihadist organizations and the far-reaching effects these groups exert on global politics. However, the importance of jihadist poetry continues to be primarily downplayed or even neglected as a valid subject for systematic research both in Western scholarship and in the Arab world for various political and religious reasons.¹³ Except for the scholarly work mentioned in this section, there is still a general lack of meticulous study that focuses on the language-based strategies which are exploited for ideological transmission, especially in the case of contemporary jihadist movements.

Several attempts have been made to study the relationship between language and ideologies that dominate politics in the Arab world. In a study entitled *Islamist Rhetoric: Language and Culture in Contemporary Egypt*, Jacob Hoigilt examines Islamist discourse published in the form of theological books of three prominent Islamist figures

¹² Teun Van Dijk, “Discourse and Manipulation,” *Discourse and Society* 17, no. 3 (2006), 361.

¹³ David Rapoport, a renowned scholar in the field of terrorism, had made a similar claim more than three decades ago, “scholars rarely read the literature written by terrorists.” David C. Rapoport, ed., “The International World as Some Terrorists Have Seen It: A Look at a Century of Memoirs,” in *Inside Terrorist Organizations* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988), 32.

in Egypt in light of the Arabic text linguistics.¹⁴ In contrast to Hoigilt's study, this research does not focus on the analysis of theological books; it concentrates instead on poetry as a more accessible and practical means of transmitting a specific worldview on the battlefield. The instrumentalization of the Arabic language in politics is the central point of discussion in Ofra Bengio's monograph called *Saddam's Word: Political Discourse in Iraq*, which investigates the Ba'athist discourse in Iraq under Saddam Hussein's rule. Bengio's work analyses political terms, concepts, and idioms as disseminated through the official Iraqi mouthpieces as expressions that have both reflected and shaped Iraq's political culture and events. This seminal work illustrates how language and politics are interdependent and that regimes or specific political cultures are built on public discourse.¹⁵

The concept of using language and symbolism to enforce domination in the Arab world is also discussed in Lisa Wedeen's work *Ambiguities of Domination: Politics, Rhetoric, and Symbols in Contemporary Syria*. This work treats rhetoric and symbols as central elements of politics. The study analyses the symbolic world, including the orchestrated spectacles and strategized language that emerged during the thirty-year rule of Syria's ex-President Hāfīz al-Asad's regime.¹⁶ Additionally, the official discourse of the Egyptian ex-president Gamal 'Abd al-Nasir and the Iraqi ex-President Saddam Hussein is thoroughly examined for its emotional and manipulative effect in the work of Kristina Stock entitled *Sprache als ein Instrument der Macht: Strategien der Arabischen Politischen Rhetorik im 20. Jahrhundert*.¹⁷ In light of these works, the aim behind this study is to contribute to this growing area of research by exploring the centrality of discursive strategies in the jihadist political discourse.

More recent discussions and analyses about the symbolic world of modern jihadist organizations are characterized by different perspectives and theories, including the literary, cultural, musical, religious, and historical aspects. These areas of research are by no means distinct or categorized. Quite often, these studies entail a combination of multiple aspects and theories. Perhaps one of the first scholars to have highlighted the importance of militant jihadist chants and poetry in the jihadist groups was Tilman Seidensticker, who drew attention to the presence of both poetry and chants in jihadist circles. The scholar concludes the study by analyzing a praise poem dedicated to Osama bin Laden.¹⁸ In another work, Seidensticker claims that chants "represent a genre of

14 See also Jacob Hoigilt, *Islamist Rhetoric: Language and Culture in Contemporary Egypt* (London: Routledge, 2011).

15 See also Ofra Bengio, *Saddam's Word: Political Discourse in Iraq* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998).

16 Wedeen, *Ambiguities of Domination*.

17 Kristina Stock, *Sprache als ein Instrument der Macht: Strategien der Arabischen Politischen Rhetorik im 20. Jahrhundert* (Wiesbaden: Reichert Verlag, 1999).

18 Tilman Seidensticker, "Lieder und Gedichte als Mittel zur Mobilisierung von Religion bei Jihadisten," in *Religionsproduktivität in Europa: Markierungen im religiösen Feld*, eds. Jamal Malik, and Juergen Manemann (Muenster: Aschendorff, 2009), 145–54.

religiously imbued music that apparently plays an enormous role in Jihadist circles.”¹⁹ Another study that deals with primary jihadist sources is conducted by Ruediger Lohlker, which also touches upon the topic of jihadist chants, albeit very briefly.²⁰ The study of Jihadism is discussed in more detail in a book series edited by Rüdiger Lohlker entitled *Studying Jihadism*. To date, this series comprises three volumes entitled *New Approaches to the Analysis of Jihadism: Online and Offline*, *Jihadism: Online Discourses and Representations*, and *World Wide Warriors: How Jihadis Operate Online*. The second volume is especially noteworthy because it investigates the symbolic world of militant jihadist organizations, devoting a book chapter to the poetry of al-Qa‘ida’s chief theologian.²¹

Other studies that have focused on the cultural products and practices of the jihadist culture include a volume edited by Thomas Hegghammer entitled *Jihadi Culture: The Art and Social Practices of Militant Islamists*, which focuses on poetry, jihadi chants, and non-military practices in jihadist circles among others.²² From a musicological perspective, Jonathan Pieslak discusses the role of music in the Iraq war, comparing jihadi chants to the music employed by US soldiers.²³ In more recent publications, Jonathan Pieslak and Nelly Lahoud focus on the musical element of DĀ‘ISH chants, by providing a historical overview of jihadist chants and several common themes within the vast array of chants.²⁴ Similarly, Henrik Gråtrud’s article entitled “Islamic State Nasheeds as Messaging Tools” bridges the relationship between DĀ‘ISH chants and the literary aspect related to DĀ‘ISH, outlining several recurring themes and characteristics of chants.²⁵ Likewise, Robyn Creswell and Bernard Haykel provide an insight into DĀ‘ISH and al-Qa‘ida poetry by discussing aspects of innovation and traditionalism,

19 Tilman Seidensticker, “Jihad Hymns (*nashīds*) as a Means of Self-Motivation in the Hamburg Group,” in *9/11 Handbook*, eds. Hans G. Kippenberg, and Tilman Seidensticker (London: Equinox Publishing, 2006), 73.

20 See also Ruediger Lohlker, *Dschihadismus–Materialien* (Wien: Facultas Verlags- und Buchhandel, 2009), 133–41.

21 Ruediger Lohlker, ed. *New Approaches to the Analysis of Jihadism: Online and Offline*, vol. 1 (Vienna: V and R Unipress GmbH, 2011); *Jihadism: Online Discourses and Representations*, vol. 2 (Vienna: V and R Unipress GmbH, 2013); *World Wide Warriors: How Jihadis Operate Online*, vol. 3 (Vienna: V and R Unipress GmbH, 2020).

22 See also Thomas Hegghammer, ed., *Jihadi Culture: The Art and Social Practices of Militant Islamists* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017).

23 Jonathan Pieslak, *Sound Targets: American Soldiers and Music in the Iraq War* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2009), 58–77.

24 See also Jonathan Pieslak, “A Musicological Perspective on Jihadi Anashid,” in *Jihadi Culture: The Art and Social Practices of Militant Islamists*, 63–81; Nelly Lahoud, and Jonathan Pieslak, “Music of the Islamic State,” *Survival: Global Politics and Strategy* 60, no.1 (2018): 153–68; Nelly Lahoud, “A Cappella Songs (anashid) in Jihadi Culture,” in *Jihadi Culture: The Art and Social Practices of Militant Islamists*, 42–62.

25 Henrik Gråtrud, “Islamic State Nasheeds as Messaging Tools,” *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism* 39, no. 12 (2016): 1050–70.