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THESIS

**ADVANCE OF THE BLACK FLAGS: SYMBOLISM,
SOCIAL IDENTITY, AND PSYCHOLOGICAL
OPERATIONS IN VIOLENT CONFLICT**

by

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December 2015

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PSYCHOLOGICAL OPERATIONS IN VIOLENT CONFLICT**

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ABSTRACT

The United States is in an ideological war with violent extremists in the realm of mass communication, but the nature of this conflict is not well understood. This thesis reviewed literature concerning communication principles and the psychology of symbolism, then used qualitative analysis to investigate strategic communication samples to understand how media was used to construct group identity, influence attitudes, and challenge adversaries. Themes critical to narrative construction were identified, as were communication techniques that place emphasis on key ideas in music and film. The roles of symbolism, rituals, and music in human behavior were further researched. This research was then applied to the Islamic State's use of media to influence attitudes and inspire behavior. The ultimate recommendation suggests that the United States approach this conflict as a true war by asserting a communication strategy designed to disrupt violent, exclusionary ideologies.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

CVE	counter violent extremism
DOT	Digital Outreach Team
IO	information operations
IS	Islamic State
NSF	National Socialist Front
MO-OSS	Morale Operations Branch of the Office of Strategic Services
PSYOP	psychological operations
R&B	rhythm and blues
SIT	social identity theory
USMC	United States Marine Corps

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The United States is involved in an ambiguous and amorphous conflict. Violent extremist groups direct honor challenges at the United States, exhibiting a particularly sophisticated command of psychological warfare tools. These extremists utilize symbolism and rituals to announce their adherence to an exclusive, violent ideology. Their distribution of video executions is a new iteration of ritualistic sacrifice and cleansing, and the United States is consistently identified as their enemy.

Conducting both military and religious rituals under the black *shahada* flag, the Islamic State in particular constructs their identity in direct opposition to the foundational ideologies of the United States and its allies. Far from being simple recruitment commercials, these videos directly challenge the United States in an attempt to compromise its values and reputation. Images inspire ideologies, and ideas inspire action. This use of media to influence attitudes and behavior is a form of psychological warfare directed at the United States and its allies.¹

The United States is habitually reluctant to attempt to influence the other cultures' attitudes, often deferring to conventional, kinetic military solutions to such complex problems.² However, the United States has successfully defeated such ideologies in the past, challenging violent adversaries by asserting its own identity in ways that disrupt the adversary's reputation and ability to influence attitudes.³ This has included the use of psychological operations to disrupt conditions that allow violent ideologies to flourish.⁴ Drawing on America's historical ability to engage opposing ideologies, success in this

¹ Jerrold Post, "Psychological Operations and Counterterrorism," *Joint Force Quarterly* 37 (2005): 105.

² Michael J. Waller, *Fighting the War of Ideas Like a Real War: Messages to Defeat the Terrorists* (Washington, DC: The Institute of World Politics Press, 2007), 13.

³ Waller, *Fighting the War of Ideas*, 14, 22.

⁴ Joint Chiefs of Staff, *Doctrine for Joint Psychological Operations* (Joint Publication 3-53) (Washington, DC: Joint Chiefs of Staff, 2003), I-1, <https://www.hsdl.org/?view&did=472329>.

particular conflict means approaching it as a true war of ideas. Such an approach would acknowledge the need for ideological assertions to accompany kinetic force.⁵

Research shows that symbolism, rituals, and music are universal tools of social construction and persuasion. Humans are uniquely affected by imagery, and rituals and symbolism use imagery to connect simple physical forms with more complex ideas and ideologies.⁶ Video and film are powerful media that broadcast images instantly, influencing humans' perceptions of events and relationships. Music, in particular, is shown to be a powerful, universal social phenomenon that constructs and reinforces group identities.⁷ These media are used by all groups to great effect when constructing their identity, and violent extremist groups utilize media, music, and culture to display symbolic rituals that advance the groups' narratives and attack the United States' reputation and values.

A qualitative analysis shows that groups use mass media to construct their identities, reinforce their ideologies, and challenge adversaries. The use of image, story, and music allows films and videos to be particularly influential in establishing social identities. This thesis analyzes a series of video and music samples for evidence of identity construction elements. The results show that narratives are constructed and reinforced through culturally significant images, rituals, and symbols.

In countering flourishing violent ideologies, the United States has historically demonstrated proficient ability to operate in the same realms as adversaries who use identity-building tools to spread their ideologies. Efforts to counter the ideological threat posed by a violent hybrid group worldview will require the United States to operate

⁵ Waller, *Fighting the War of Ideas Like a Real War*, 4–5.

⁶ Carol K. Winkler and Cori E. Dauber, *Visual Propaganda and Extremism in the Online Environment* (Carlisle, PA: Strategic Studies Institute and U.S. Army War College Press, 2014), 6, <http://www.dtic.mil/cgi-bin/GetTRDoc?AD=ADA607970>; Leslie A. White, "The Symbol: The Origin and Basis of Human Behavior," *Philosophy of Science* 7, no. 4 (October 1940): 451–452, http://www.jstor.org/stable/184543?seq=1#page_scan_tab_contents.

⁷ Ian Cross, "Music, Cognition, Culture, and Evolution," *Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences* 930 (2001), 28–42, http://www.researchgate.net/profile/Ian_Cross/publication/227547578_Music_Cognition_Culture_and_Evolution/links/5450c6ce0cf24e8f737532e7.pdf, 3

strategically in the realm of information, placing itself in the same battle-space as the violent ideology.⁸

⁸ Kevin A. Cabanas, *Organizing SOCOM for Cross Functional and Geographic Area Operations in the Global War on Terrorism* (Newport, RI: Naval War College, 2005), 7, <https://www.hsdl.org/?view&did=475043>.

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I. INTRODUCTION

The United States is engaged in a conflict that is not well understood: violent extremists, displaying the black flags of war, use Internet-based communication platforms to influence attitudes about their ideology and to inspire action.¹ The use of the Islamic statement of faith—the *shahada*—on a black flag specifically indicates that these paramilitary groups identify themselves as holy warriors.² In broadcasting their use of symbolic violence and rituals in the realm of ideas, these groups combine religious claims with territorial aspirations and military might to construct powerful identities.³ Efforts to counter the ideological threat posed by a violent hybrid paramilitary will require the United States to operate strategically in the same battle-space as the violent ideology.⁴

A. BACKGROUND

Symbolism is a critical component of group identity and communication.⁵ Symbols are found at all levels of human interaction, and groups use them to perpetuate their identities and relationships.⁶ Human perceptions and emotions are particularly affected by visual images; symbolism provides humans with a shared communication system that links visual images with deeper ideas.⁷ Rituals, then, function as symbols'

¹ Carol K. Winkler and Cori E. Dauber, *Visual Propaganda and Extremism in the Online Environment* (Carlisle, PA: Strategic Studies Institute and U.S. Army War College Press, 2014), 6, <http://www.dtic.mil/cgi-bin/GetTRDoc?AD=ADA607970>.

² Ali Soufan, *The Black Banners: The Inside Story of 9/11 and the War against al-Qaeda* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2011), 10.

³ Winkler and Dauber, *Visual Propaganda and Extremism*, 137.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Joseph R. Gusfield and Jerzy Michalowicz, "Secular Symbolism: Studies of Ritual, Ceremony, and the Symbolic Order in Modern Life," *Annual Review of Sociology* 10 (August 1984): 423. doi 10.1146/annurev.so.10.080184.002221.

⁶ Linda Klebe Trevino, Robert H. Lengel, and Richard L. Daft, "Media Symbolism, Media Richness, and Media Choice in Organizations: A Symbolic Interactionist Perspective," *Communication Research* 14, no. 5 (October 1987): 556, doi 10.1177/009365087014005006.

⁷ Winkler and Dauber, *Visual Propaganda and Extremism*, 10; Leslie A. White, "The Symbol: The Origin and Basis of Human Behavior," *Philosophy of Science* 7, no. 4 (October 1940): 451–452, http://www.jstor.org/stable/184543?seq=1#page_scan_tab_contents.

actions, connecting physical activities with symbolic meaning.⁸ Group narratives and identities are constructed through the use of symbols, rituals, images, and music.⁹

Violence is often the result of an escalation of ideological conflict.¹⁰ By harnessing the power of imagery and symbolism to challenge the United States, Islamist extremists have developed an effective insurgency on the battlefield of ideas.¹¹ The Internet is a rich medium conducive to the use of visual storytelling devices and symbolism, and groups of all types are able to leverage this characteristic to advance their own narratives.¹² Violent groups intentionally leverage this quality to build a cohesive identity and communicate hostility toward the United States and its citizens.¹³ The use of symbolic rituals is evident throughout their strategic communication samples. As groups build their identities, they perform social actions using social media and mass media.¹⁴ Videos portraying hybrid groups' symbolic acts of violence use ritualistic murder to influence attitudes about the groups' reputations.¹⁵ By asserting their identities as regional and religious authorities with military might, hybrid groups are able to affect the actions and attitudes of governments, local populations, and those who affiliate with the groups' identities. This allows the ideology to flourish by building the groups' reputations.¹⁶

⁸ Gusfield and Michalowicz, "Secular Symbolism," 417.

⁹ Peter L. Berger and Thomas Luckmann, *The Social Construction of Reality: A Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge* (New York: Anchor Books, 1966), 96.

¹⁰ Richard B. Felson, "Impression Management and the Escalation of Aggression and Violence," *Social Psychology Quarterly* 45, no. 4 (December 1982): 246.

¹¹ Winkler and Dauber, *Visual Propaganda and Extremism*, 6.

¹² Trevino, Lengel, and Daft, "Media Symbolism"; Postmes and Brunsting, "Collective Action," 294.

¹³ Winkler and Dauber, *Visual Propaganda and Extremism*, 137.

¹⁴ Tom Postmes and Suzanne Brunsting, "Collective Action in the Age of the Internet: Mass Communication and Online Mobilization," *Social Science Computer Review* (August 2002): 295, doi: 10.1177/08939302020003006.

¹⁵ Pete Lentini and Muhammad Bakashmar, "Jihadist Beheading: A Convergence of Technology, Theology, and Teleology?" *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 30, no. 4 (2007): 320, doi 10.1080/10576100701200140.

¹⁶ D. Todd Reed and Adrian A. Donahoe, "The Tao of Special Forces: An Analysis of Counterinsurgency Doctrine" (master's thesis, Naval Postgraduate School, 2004), 25.

This conflict is an ideological war that will require intentional U.S. intervention to influence attitudes.¹⁷ The United States can draw on historically effective communication methods to disrupt ideologies that threaten American values during times of war.¹⁸ The United States has already exhibited the ability to operate proficiently in the same realms as adversaries who use identity-building tools to spread their ideologies. It is unlikely, however, that the United States has fully understood the scope of the threat posed by violent groups using communication channels to fuel violence as they construct their narratives. Americans exhibit a pattern of reluctance to influence the attitudes of others, often deferring to kinetic military solutions to such complex problems.¹⁹

B. PURPOSE OF THE STUDY AND SIGNIFICANCE TO THE FIELD

This thesis explores how symbolism and strategic communications are used to conduct psychological warfare against an adversary, focusing on the emerging threat to the United States from a large-scale Islamist insurgency. These violent groups intend to harm U.S. citizens based on a belief that their hybrid religious-military ideology is superior to the U.S. tenets of democracy and liberalism. Because this conflict involves influence and information, U.S. strategic decisions should be informed by an analysis of how violent groups broadcast their ideologies.

Ultimately, this research seeks to answer the following questions: In what way does symbolism contribute to warfare, terrorism, and group conflict? Can a strategy be developed to effectively counter adversarial narratives with an opposing ideology? To do so, this research analyzes the use of visual imagery, rituals, music, and storytelling techniques to advance groups' narratives, and their ideas about the world around them. The findings reveal common uses of strategic communication to advance narrative themes, and the use of ritual to symbolically perpetuate group conflict—specifically, the

¹⁷ Michael J. Waller, *Fighting the War of Ideas Like a Real War: Messages to Defeat the Terrorists* (Washington, DC: The Institute of World Politics Press, 2007), 16.

¹⁸ Clayton D. Laurie, *The Propaganda Warriors: America's Crusade against Nazi Germany* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1996), I; Laurie, *The Propaganda Warriors*, 204.

¹⁹ Waller, *Fighting the War of Ideas Like a Real War*, 13.

sophisticated use of mass media storytelling techniques contribute significantly to a group's ability to develop their narrative.

As this thesis aims to identify the nature of the emerging U.S. threat, the findings are significant for U.S. counterterrorism strategy development. The threat from a violent ideology may result in widespread, worldwide violence, both from sub-state paramilitary powers and remote lone actors who self-identify with the ideology. American military personnel, homeland security practitioners, and first responders depend on informed strategy to effectively carry out their missions, and a strategy to craft an appropriate response depends on the ability to accurately identify the nature of the threat. Military and security resources may be conserved if violent ideologies can be disrupted in the same realm in which they flourish. This also has implications for efforts to counter violent extremism (CVE).

Understanding symbolic action between groups in conflict should also be significant to U.S. law enforcement officers and emergency responders. The findings regarding symbolism and identity should help inform decisions on appearance for those engaged in debates over the perceived militarization of law enforcement and firefighters. Public information professionals should also find significance in the findings addressing the intentional use of imagery to construct a narrative.

C. THESIS OVERVIEW

In this thesis, literature is reviewed that explains the power of images on humans' understanding of symbols. The nature of socially constructed reality is examined through theories explaining social identity and symbolic interaction. The hybrid nature of the emerging threat to the United States is reviewed, as well as the country's historical use of psychological operations (PSYOP) to disrupt adversarial ideologies.

A latent thematic analysis is established as an appropriate methodology to analyze strategic communications. Samples of strategic communications intentionally produced by groups known to commit violence are explored. The thematic analysis applies a rigorous framework to the sample data in order to expose themes and techniques used by

groups to influence attitudes. Islamic State video productions are analyzed for themes of violence and identity construction using the thematic analysis.

Finally, research explores the tools used to conduct a group's narrative. Music is shown to be a tool of identity construction, and strategic communication is shown to use ritual and symbolism to establish group identity. These principles are then applied specifically to the communications released by the Islamic State. The conflict is identified as a war of ideas, and research is conducted to describe methods for disrupting such a conflict.

D. LIMITATIONS AND ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

This study is limited to the scope of a master's thesis. Examples of strategic communication used to advance a group's narrative are nearly infinite, so the sample data is necessarily limited in order to perform a thorough qualitative analysis on each sample. The selections were made based upon their usefulness to this study. Possibilities for more extensive future research beyond the scope of this thesis are recommended in the conclusion.

The research and analysis for this thesis were conducted after consultation with the Naval Postgraduate School's Institutional Review Board matrix. As a research- and analysis-based thesis, no consent by institutions or individuals was necessary, and no ethical violations were encountered during the process.

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II. LITERATURE REVIEW

At issue for this literature review is the United States' use of information and communication to counter terrorist ideologies overseas. Principles of communication, perception, and understanding are examined to build a foundation of human interaction and identity. Principles of psychology and marketing are both briefly explained, including symbolic interactionism theory, social identity theory, and impression management theory, which are viewed in the context of social identity, conflict escalation, and violence. The “war of ideas” is examined, and messaging principles are applied to ideological warfare.

A. INFORMATION EXCHANGE AND COMMUNICATION

There is plentiful literature analyzing basic communication principles. The United States Marine Corps (USMC), for example, has consolidated some important communication elements in developing its doctrine. In describing information exchange and processing in its *Command and Control* doctrine, the USMC asserts that information exists in a four-tiered hierarchy consisting of raw data, processed data, knowledge, and understanding.²⁰ While the delineation between each of these categories is not always clearly defined, a clear hierarchy exists, as information must be processed in order to be truly understood. Communication is most effective when the channels are minimized, decreasing misunderstandings created by noise and distortion, and maximizing signal strength and positive feedback. This is described by the USMC as “implicit communication”—communication without the need for the explicit transmission of information.²¹ While this is considered the most efficient style of communicating ideas, it also depends on the communicating parties sharing a common perspective or preexisting similarities in thought processes to maximize understanding.²²

²⁰ U.S. Marines Corps, *Command and Control* (MCDP 6) (Washington, DC: Department of the Navy, 1996), 66–69.

²¹ U.S. Marine Corps, *Command and Control* (MCDP 6), 76.

²² *Ibid.*

The USMC importantly asserts that people both understand concepts best when they are presented as images, and are inspired most by images.²³ While not all images have persuasive power, images do resonate with people in a way that verbal arguments or written words do not.²⁴ Research indicates that visual images lend credibility to arguments, and allow viewers to process complex details much faster than they do verbal information.²⁵ Visual images are also shown to stimulate emotional responses; this emotional response becomes particularly pronounced with images depicting violence, mutilated bodies, or war casualties.²⁶

Images also bear the power to heighten their observers' message recall.²⁷ Viewers tend to suspend a certain amount of logic when viewing images, and accept what they believe they are seeing at face value.²⁸ This means that images bear a unique power in the human mind, which is predisposed to view information with more immediacy when images are used to present the information. In the marketing field, certain communication principles are leveraged to exploit people's inclinations to remember and associate images with ideas. The principle of "branding" refers to people's tendency to associate specific identities with logos and images.²⁹ Branding, when used correctly, creates immediate associations in consumers' minds between words, images, and ideas.³⁰ This idea has been used to great success by violent extremists such as al-Qaeda.³¹

B. SYMBOLISM AND PSYCHOLOGY

Symbolism is a primary channel used to carry messages in communication. Whether in the form of letters constructed into words, colors crafted into art, sounds

²³ U.S. Marine Corps, *Command and Control* (MCDP 6), 72.

²⁴ Winkler and Dauber, *Visual Propaganda and Extremism*.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 10.

²⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 10

²⁹ Al Ries and Laura Ries, *The 22 Immutable Laws of Branding* (New York: Harper Collins, 1998), 30–34.

³⁰ Ries and Ries, *The 22 Immutable Laws of Branding*, 30–34.

³¹ Winkler and Dauber, *Visual Propaganda and Extremism*, 137.

combined into music, or all senses combined in concert, symbols are the tools we use in various ways to create a language for exchanging ideas. In its various forms, symbolism allows for both overt and covert meanings to be revealed in communication. A fact may be stated, but the way in which it is stated often carries a meaning equal to or greater than the fact itself. Symbolism reduces big or complex ideas into simpler terms that allow people to communicate more efficiently, without struggling to explain, define, and redefine terms.

Sociologists such as Ann Swidler of Stanford assert that cultural symbols are tools that allow for both a shared outlook and shared modes of behavior to occur within cultures.³² The assertion among scholars like Swidler is that cultural symbols provide a tool kit consisting of stories, rituals, and world-views used by groups to solve different kinds of complex problems.³³ This concept of symbolism broadens the definition of symbolism from simple images into markers of more complex ideas. While culture is asserted to be driven by values, the cultural symbols are carriers of the ideologies, allowing groups to reinforce their values and develop strategies for problem solving.

In fact, all real cultures are assumed to contain “diverse, often conflicting symbols, rituals, stories, and guides to action.”³⁴ Swidler argues that culture can be an intentional tool of skilled users.³⁵ A culture’s symbols are real elements of communication, useful to analyze and influence a group’s values. Culture’s influence on social action is driven by underlying ideologies—“explicit, articulated, highly-organized meaning systems—both political and religious.”³⁶ Ideologies “establish new styles or strategies of action.”³⁷ Symbols are viewed as critical elements of culture, along with

³² Ann Swidler, “Culture in Action: Symbols and Strategies,” *American Sociological Review* 51, no. 2 (April, 1986): 273–286, <http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0003-1224%28198604%2951%3A2%3C273%3ACI-ASAS%3E2.0.CO%3B2-B>.

³³ Swidler, “Culture in Action,” 273.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 277.

³⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 278.

³⁷ *Ibid.*

familiarized habits, doctrine, and ritual.³⁸ Sociologists of this school of thought assume that there is a “continuum” of culture, “from *ideology* to *tradition* to *common sense*.”³⁹ Ideology is reflected and can be influenced by traditions and symbols.

1. Symbolism and Jungian Psychology

Psychologist Carl Jung describes a universal system of understanding both the world around us and the individual’s journey through the world in archetypal images.⁴⁰ Jung defines these archetypes as “forms or images of a collective nature that occur practically all over the earth as constituents of myths”⁴¹ These archetypal images are found in patterns of the mind that are passed along through heredity, tradition, and migration.⁴² This description is important, as it attributes the universal nature of this symbolic world to both social and biological factors. His assertion that symbolism is pervasive and innate in the human unconscious proves that symbolism is important to understanding and accessing individual’s social behavior.

Joseph Campbell analyzes symbolism in terms of culture and social psychology. In *The Hero with A Thousand Faces*, Campbell argues that cultural stories and characters symbolize deeper truths about individual psychology. Symbolism here refers not only to the visual icons that represent ideas, but to the fundamental ideas found in stories, characters, and images. Campbell asserts that symbolic characters and icons represent universal truths about mankind. His work provides a synthesis of stories common to cultures throughout history that were otherwise unconnected. These stories were passed along through cultural rituals, religions, myths, rites of passage, visual art, and music—artforms that provide a cohesive group narrative. In this way, groups’ artforms and traditions perpetuate their ideologies while providing a frame of reference for values.

³⁸ Swidler, “Culture in Action,” 278.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 279.

⁴⁰ Carl Gustav Jung, *Psychology and Religion: West and East (The Collected Works of C. G. Jung)*, vol. 11, ed. Sir Herbert Read, Michael Fordham, and Gerhard Adler (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1975), 50, par. 88.

⁴¹ Jung, *Psychology and Religion*, 50.

⁴² *Ibid.*

Campbell argues that Nietzsche, Freud, and Jung, among other notable psychologists, have congruent views of symbolism. What Jung calls “the archetypal image” Freud describes as symbolism that is “characteristic of unconscious ideation...found in folklore...popular myths, legends, linguistic idioms, proverbial wisdom and current jokes.”⁴³ While Jung and Freud developed very different schools of thought on psychology, both recognized the existence of deep-seated patterns of symbolism. Campbell’s work synthesizes these psychologists’ findings in the collective understandings of symbolism. Campbell also provides support for a key element of symbolism: its unique and powerful ability to portray simple characters that represent deeper ideas.

2. Symbolic Interactionism Theory

Symbolic interactionism theory models human interaction in a world of classifications in which terms and markers “carry meaning consisting of shared behavioral expectations.”⁴⁴ Symbols are the markers used to designate components of social structure, and people act within this structure according to assumed and expected roles.⁴⁵ This assumption creates expectations of both one’s self and others based on these symbolic roles.⁴⁶ As these roles are primarily symbolic in relation to others, one’s own identity is internally constructed with multiple social identities, each with various degrees of potency.⁴⁷ The strength of each symbolic identity is dependent upon the social construct in which the individual finds himself at any given moment.

Herbert Blumer, considered one of the framework’s pioneers, views symbolic interactionism as “the essential process through which all social phenomena (including

⁴³ Joseph Campbell, *The Hero with a Thousand Faces* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2004), 17.

⁴⁴ Sheldon Stryker, “Identity Salience and Role Performance: The Relevance of Symbolic Interaction Theory for Family Research,” *Journal of Marriage and Family* 30, no. 4 (1968): 559, doi 10.2307/349494.

⁴⁵ Stryker, “Identity Salience and Role Performance,” 559.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Stryker, “Identity Salience and Role Performance,” 559.

structures) are created, maintained, and changed.”⁴⁸ Blumer’s premise is that humans “act toward things based on the meaning those things have to the human.”⁴⁹ He further clarifies that those meanings themselves are derived from social processes, and that they rely on each individual’s interpretive process.⁵⁰

Blumer argues that social scientists who concern themselves with attitudes and behaviors or a “stimulus/response” behavioral model overlook the critical context of socially constructed meanings found in situations, objects, and people. Key to this view of human action are the second and third premises—that meanings of objects are socially constructed and require an interpretive process.⁵¹ This stands in contrast to other schools of thought, which argue that an object—say, a church sanctuary—is intrinsically a house of worship. Blumer’s framework suggests the nature of a church sanctuary is defined by social processes and reinforced by individuals’ and groups’ interpretations. This holds true for objects, such as a chair, people, structures, and social situations. Blumer summarizes symbolic interactionism as “see[ing] meanings as social products...creations that are formed in and through the defining activities of people as they interact.”⁵²

3. Social Identity Theory

Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann discuss the significance of social knowledge in providing a context for human perception and understanding.⁵³ They determine that religion and language fundamentally contribute to sociology itself.⁵⁴ Further, they analyze the interrelations of symbolic universes and institutional processes and find that

⁴⁸ Peter J. Martin and Alex Dennis, “The Opposition of Structure and Agency,” in *Human Agents and Social Structures* (Manchester, England: Manchester University Press, 2010).

⁴⁹ George Herbert Blumer, *Symbolic Interactionism: Perspective and Method* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986), 2.

⁵⁰ Blumer, *Symbolic Interactionism*, 2.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 4.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 5.

⁵³ Berger and Luckmann, *The Social Construction of Reality*, 195.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

the institutions' symbolic languages are, themselves, essential constructors of social reality.⁵⁵

As individuals identify as members of groups, they adopt a perceived stable identity consistent with the group's understanding of reality by "internalizing" that reality as the only correct view of the world.⁵⁶ This happens through a process called socialization, when the individual's identity (and thus the group's identity) is often established as a "cosmic reality," providing security in holding correct beliefs and offering protection from the perceived subjectivity of society.⁵⁷

The group's reality is understood within the "symbolic universe" of that group.⁵⁸ Through the use of symbolism, the reality of the universe is defined and reinforced for the group's members.⁵⁹ These symbols include language, stories, rituals, traditions, and a coherent framework for understanding death.⁶⁰ These symbolic universes provide structures for understanding an individual's story in a grander context; to the individual, this context is very real, and the reality is a framework for his identity.⁶¹

In a socially constructed and mediated environment, the identity of the group also relies on the ability to identify "others."⁶² This critical element of identity positions the group's beliefs in contrast with other groups who are believed to hold to deviant versions of reality. This coincides with the in-group and out-group dynamics found in social identity theory (SIT).⁶³

⁵⁵ Berger and Luckmann, *The Social Construction of Reality*, 186.

⁵⁶ Berger and Luckmann, 134–135.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 100.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 99.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 97.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 66–72, 101.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 99, 101.

⁶² *Ibid.*, 137.

⁶³ David Brannan, Kristin Darken, and Anders Strindberg, *A Practitioner's Way Forward* (Salinas, CA: Agile Press, 2014), 69.

Social identity theory suggests that conflict between groups grows out of efforts to establish social status through honor challenges.⁶⁴ A strong group identity also identifies the “others,” and conflict occurs when resources are constrained and a “limited good” may only be claimed by one group or the other.⁶⁵ Public exchanges offer groups the socially mediated environment necessary to challenge each other and respond.⁶⁶ Honor challenges may be positive when they promote an inclusive relationship, like improving the status or cohesion of the in-group.⁶⁷ They may be negative when they reinforce an exclusionary relationship, such as degrading the honor of out-groups or deviants.⁶⁸

Using SIT as a framework, Brannan, Darken, and Strindberg describe terrorist acts as proclamations intended to publicly damage the social status of the target group.⁶⁹ Terrorists tend to identify highly symbolic targets to embarrass their enemy, thus directing violent honor challenges at their adversaries.⁷⁰ As Brian Caddick asserts, the environment of globalization brings groups into closer interdependence, increasing the opportunities for communication and influence.⁷¹ The opportunities for conflict, then, are also increased in this new socially mediated environment. Terrorism continues to be highly symbolic communication intended to challenge the honor and social position of the adversary.

4. Impression Management Theory, Escalation, and Violence

Research conducted on social conditions leading to violence indicates that violent actions are the result of hostile social relationships escalating to a level at which physical aggression turns to violence. Impression management theory explains social interactions

⁶⁴ Brannan, Darken, and Strindberg, *A Practitioner's Way Forward*, 83.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 81.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 83.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 85.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 86.

⁷¹ Brian Caddick, “Perceived Illegitimacy and Intergroup Relations,” In *Social Identity and Intergroup Relations*, ed. Henri Tajfel (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 150.

and behaviors in terms of individuals' perceived identities and thought processes t; "Impression management consists of any behavior by a person that has the purpose of controlling or manipulating the attributions and impressions formed of that person by others."⁷²

An individual's sense of identity serves to define his perceived position in a relationship; when he perceives himself a victim of an intentional attack, aggression of some type is more likely to follow.⁷³ Aggressive communication, such as insulting an opponent, is known by social psychologists as "altercasting"—the attempt by one person to shape the other's situational identity in a conflict.⁷⁴ This type of verbal conflict typically develops as one party views himself the victim of a perceived violation of social rules or expectations. Escalation to violence increases when such a conflict occurs with observers nearby, as the perceived victim's identity is on display in a socially mediated situation.⁷⁵

Social psychologists identify that the presence of observers—or a social dimension—increases a conflict's social stakes, thus increasing the likelihood of violence. The key social element at stake is the "identity cost of backing down."⁷⁶ Whether instigated by the bystanders or not, the simple fact that they are present increases the stakes for the individuals in conflict. When confronted by a perceived violation of social rules, the initial physical attack fulfills a sense of punishment for the perceived wrongdoing.⁷⁷ Even in individuals, the social identity of the parties involved is fundamental to understanding the nature of the physical engagement.

The social mediation of violent actions allows perceived justice to justify violent actions.⁷⁸ When cast into negative identities, individuals retaliate—"particularly when

⁷² James T. Tedeschi, *Impression Management Theory and Social Psychological Research* (New York: Academic Press, 1981), 3.

⁷³ Felson, "Impression Management," 245.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 253.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 245.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 246.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 251.

these identities are important to them.”⁷⁹ One finding indicates that when either party is required to give an account of their actions, the likelihood of violence immediately decreases by nearly three times.⁸⁰ Overall, the research indicates that violence is rarely random, as it typically exists within a social context. While observers may increase the stakes, the effects of mediation by third parties have a pacifying effect on the individuals in conflict.⁸¹ This intervention by a third party is likely to successfully disrupt the conditions leading from ideological conflict to physical violence.

C. THE WAR OF IDEAS AND THE VIRTUAL STATE

Violent terrorist incidents are acts of communication. As such, they should be viewed as ideological exchanges between groups. Ideological exchanges, however, are not limited to violence; groups and cultures communicate with each other through other means. Viewing terrorism as one piece of an ongoing narrative is critical to understanding the actual contexts in which terrorist acts occur. By engaging with the world in a meaningful narrative, the United States may be able to enhance national security.

In a 2003 study, the Advisory Group on Public Diplomacy for the Arab and Muslim World asserts that the U.S. national security threat from the Arab and Muslim world emanates from “political instability, economic deprivation, and extremism.”⁸² The Advisory Group analyzes that the United States does indeed lack an appropriate strategic direction to inform, engage, and influence people around the world to promote the national interest.⁸³ In the face of unprecedented animosity, the United States has not

⁷⁹ Felson, “Impression Management,” 251.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 250.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 253.

⁸² Edward P. Djerejian, *Changing Minds, Winning Peace: A New Strategic Direction for U.S. Public Diplomacy in the Arab and Muslim World* (Washington, DC: The Advisory Group on Public Diplomacy for the Arab and Muslim World, 2003), 13, <http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/24882.pdf>.

⁸³ Djerejian, *Changing Minds*, 13.

excelled in the conflict of ideas.⁸⁴ In fact, the study identifies “shocking” levels of hostility toward America.⁸⁵

The Group further argues that public diplomacy enhances national security, but the United States has deprived itself of a presence to define or defend itself within the Arab world.⁸⁶ The report describes animosity between America and the Arab and Muslim world as a cycle perpetuating itself through mutual misunderstandings.⁸⁷ A more recent study conducted by the Program on International Policy Attitudes at the University of Maryland finds that a majority of Muslims indeed believe the United States seeks to “weaken and divide the Muslim world.”⁸⁸ This study also finds the overall view of the United States is “quite negative with little sign of improvement.”⁸⁹ Continued U.S. absence from the narrative is destructive, and the proposed solution is a “consistent, strategic, well-managed, and properly funded approach to public diplomacy.”⁹⁰

Philip Seib, in his paper *Public Diplomacy, New Media, and Counterterrorism*, asserts that the world has shifted from authority-driven to “experience-driven.”⁹¹ He argues that bureaucratic resistance to technological change, as well as “remarkably unsophisticated views of most online efforts,” have contributed to the United States’ failure to adapt to a world in which authority matters less than personal experience.⁹² Seib points out the “embarrassing” fact that “al-Qaeda is better at communicating its message on the Internet than America.”⁹³ Newer iterations of Islamist terrorism,

⁸⁴ Djerejian, *Changing Minds*, 15.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 15.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 16.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 17.

⁸⁸ Steven Kull et al., *Public Opinion in the Islamic World on Terrorism, al Qaeda, and U.S. Policies*, College Park, MD: World Public Opinion at University of Maryland, 2009), 11, http://www.worldpublicopinion.org/pipa/pdf/feb09/STARTII_Feb09_rpt.pdf.

⁸⁹ Kull et al., *Public Opinion*, 15.

⁹⁰ Djerejian, *Changing Minds, Winning Peace*, 18.

⁹¹ Philip Seib, *Public Diplomacy, New Media, and Counterterrorism* (Los Angeles: USC Center on Public Diplomacy at the Annenberg School, 2011), 7, http://stage.uscpublicdiplomacy.org/sites/uscpublicdiplomacy.org/files/legacy/publications/perspectives/CPDPerspectives_P2_2011.pdf.

⁹² Seib, *Public Diplomacy*, 12.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, 11.

particularly Da'esh—also known as “ISIS,” “ISIL,” or the “Islamic State” (IS)—have since taken online communication to new realms of professionalism and effectiveness. In combining a potent communications presence with aggressive military capabilities, the Islamic State represents a more evolved type of hybrid threat to the United States.

This evolving hybrid threat has intensified the challenge of developing international goodwill. Widespread instability in the Middle East, combined with massive developments in communications technologies, has led to the proliferation of the “virtual state.” As described by Seib, a virtual state may exist as either “non-state actors such as terrorist organizations that use media-reliant networks to establish themselves as quasi-states” or “de facto nations whose borders and legitimacy are defined not by conventional maps and international law, but rather by new realities shaped by global communications platforms.”⁹⁴ In this sense, virtual state terrorist networks themselves are ideological groups proliferating in a media-fueled environment. These extremists control the narrative and important attitudes about the United States and the West. Countering the ideology in the realm of communications, then, is an important application of resources to advance national security. Attitudes toward the United States are identified by researchers as real homeland security concerns.⁹⁵ Counterterrorism planners have recognized that media platforms must be used to reach target audiences.⁹⁶ A U.S. counter-narrative strategy could undermine or defuse the inflammatory narrative bombarding the Muslim world.

Since authenticity is a crucial element in the consideration of a message, the messenger’s identity is critical.⁹⁷ Governments are shown to have an automatic credibility gap that is naturally amplified with opposition groups.⁹⁸ This makes messages identified with government agendas counterproductive. In this way, the U.S. State

⁹⁴ Seib, *Public Diplomacy*, 18

⁹⁵ Djerejian, *Changing Minds, Winning Peace*, 11.

⁹⁶ Seib, *Public Diplomacy, New Media, and Counterterrorism*, 11.

⁹⁷ Rachel Briggs and Sebastien Feve, “Review of Programs to Counter Narratives of Violent Extremism: What Works and What are the Implications for Government?,” Institute for Strategic Dialogue, 2013, 24, <http://www.strategicdialogue.org/CounterNarrativesFN2011.pdf>.

⁹⁸ Briggs and Feve, “Review of Programs,” 24.

Department's Digital Outreach Team's (DOT) counter-narrative campaign has been attributed to increasing hostility toward the United States.⁹⁹ Based on the available research analyzing challenges in this area, any meaningful strategic approach to countering the extremist narrative must be committed to the potential leverage of engaging the virtual state in the realm of ideology. The extremists' narratives themselves must be understood to apply proper counter pressure, and any efforts crafted to counter violent extremists' messaging should be authentic and believable.

D. MUSIC AND CULTURE

Music, like most other artforms, is paradoxical in many ways. It is both art and science. It can reflect mood, or it can affect mood. Music can be in the foreground—the subject of deliberate observation and engagement by a listener—or it can be used to create an atmosphere in the background. It can affect moods and feelings in ways that are both obvious and subconscious. As both art and science, music contains unique characteristics that affect feelings and emotions. Music's ability to influence human feeling is evident in its universal existence as an ethnocentric cultural presence. Literature dealing with music and its relationship to culture is plentiful; it has been studied by historians and anthropologists, musical technicians, and genre enthusiasts alike. This thesis examines sources specifically dealing with music's unique ability to advance cultural narratives and reflect cultural priorities.

John Rundell asserts that music exists not only in terms of its physical components—rhythm, melody, harmony, lyrics—but also in its own “musico-reflective space.”¹⁰⁰ This space includes the technical aspects of music, described as performance, reception, listening, and interpretation, but also thinking, feeling, and particular moods.¹⁰¹ He describes music's unique ability to leverage “mood-value,” that particular

⁹⁹ Briggs and Feve, “Review of Programs,” 24.

¹⁰⁰ John Rundell, “Music as a Space of Possibilities,” in *Philosophical and Cultural Theories of Music*, ed. Eduardo de la Fuente and Peter Murphy (Leiden, The Netherlands: Koninklijke Brill NV, 2010), 130.

¹⁰¹ Rundell, “Music as a Space of Possibilities,” 130.

intangible quality that allows music to influence feelings and action.¹⁰² While any of these reactions may be considered second-order effects, music's evocative quality is one of its primary components. Rundell offers that creativity, performance, and reception are reflexive qualities that not only define music, but allow it to transcend its component parts to create something much greater.¹⁰³ The human capacity to manipulate and appreciate rhythm and melody "changes the field in which we place ourselves."¹⁰⁴

In this way, Rundell he points out that music, like art in general, indicates that humans have a unique capacity for both "abstraction" and "distanciation."¹⁰⁵ In other words, humans are able to transcend present, immediate stimuli, and be somewhat transported by those environmental qualities of rhythm and melody that make music unique. Paradoxically, music can reinforce the listener's immediate environment and sensations as well. These qualities contribute to mankind's unique relationship to music as a medium of story and feeling, explanation and emotion. Music simplifies ideas and articulates them carefully. This paradoxical nature, at once mathematical and emotional, articulate and simple, intensely personal and completely social, is what allows music to be such an important cultural influence.

Rundell also points out that music is a medium capable of combining voices, both literally and metaphorically. Heavily cultural musical genres such as jazz and opera use various instrumentations and vocalizations to create and resolve dramatic tensions.¹⁰⁶ By using these specific voices, ideas are dealt with on deeper levels than simple narratives. Tension and resolution leads to a deeper understanding of often complex relationships in what Rundell calls "anthropological interpretation."¹⁰⁷

As a technical field, music lends itself to analysis in many ways. Music's components may be systematically examined and clearly defined. Rhythm, for instance,

¹⁰² Rundell, "Music as a Space of Possibilities," 130.

¹⁰³ Ibid.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., 132.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., 144 .

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

may be analyzed for time signature, tempo, on-beats and off-beats, accentuation and articulation, among other composition tools. While these elements may be individually assessed, they come together to comprise a style or genre. As further components are introduced, such as melody and harmony, the resulting music is increasingly complex. In explaining technical analysis of musical components, Ian Cross, a music faculty member at the University of Cambridge, argues that music is universal and yet resists attempts at categorization.¹⁰⁸ Cross analyzes attempts to understand music within a framework of natural sciences. He asserts that the consensus among the humanities is that music is cultural rather than natural.¹⁰⁹ He points to the discipline of cognitive anthropology to provide an appropriate framework for analysis and categorization.¹¹⁰

While music is typically highly organized, it relies on social structures to provide context and meaning.¹¹¹ These factors, and countless others, provide an important context to music's ability to effectively reflect cultural priorities. Cross points out that even the definition of music itself is somewhat subjective, as sound, rhythm, melody, and even body movement contribute to its definition. For the purpose of the thesis, it will suffice to side with John Blacking, who argues that "every known human society has what trained musicologists would recognize as 'music.'"¹¹² In spite of some ethnographers' arguments that music is an evolutionary holdover, and thus useless to modern man, Cross reaches the conclusion that music's central position in human culture and communication makes it a critical ethnocentric cultural element.¹¹³ It is the very ambiguity of music—that which resists definition and often categorization—that makes music what it is.¹¹⁴

¹⁰⁸ Ian Cross, "Music, Cognition, Culture, and Evolution," *Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences* 930 (2001), 28–42, http://www.researchgate.net/profile/Ian_Cross/publication/227547578_Music_Cognition_Culture_and_Evolution/links/5450c6ce0cf24e8f737532e7.pdf.

¹⁰⁹ Cross, "Music, Cognition, Culture, and Evolution," 1.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 2.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, 8.

¹¹² John Blacking, *Music, Culture and Experience Music, Culture, and Experience: Selected Papers of John Blacking*, ed. Philip Bohlman and Bruno Nettl (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995), 244.

¹¹³ Cross, "Music, Cognition, Culture, and Evolution," 6.

¹¹⁴ Cross, "Music, Cognition, Culture, and Evolution," 9.

It is this innate, universal presence of musicality that is of concern to this thesis. In seeking cultural markers for group priorities and beliefs, music provides a unique combination of art and language that may be useful for qualitative analysis. Music has also been widely used to influence beliefs and perceptions, most notably in religious contexts. While various schools of thought seem to exist on the nature of music's role in either the individual or society, that music holds such a universal position is not in question. Music's ubiquitous quality may be leveraged to great advantage to both advance ideologies and counter prevailing narratives.

E. U.S. USE OF CULTURAL PSYOP IN WORLD WAR II

A significant U.S. use of cultural PSYOPS occurred during World War II. After identifying the Nazis' operational use of information, the United States made several attempts to counter this intentional use of ideology. The Germans had employed and publicly acknowledged a "fifth column" strategy.¹¹⁵ This allusion to sympathizers working from within enemy territory to establish conditions suitable for victory traces its origins to the Spanish Civil War, and was employed by the Nazis with great success.¹¹⁶ Hitler publicly decreed that propaganda would be used "to break down the enemy psychologically before the armies begin to function at all."¹¹⁷ The Ickes Study determined that the U.S. public was affected by the Nazi "propaganda machine" due in large part to the absence of a cohesive morale service.¹¹⁸

In response to this publicized propaganda campaign, some existing U.S. agencies were tasked with counter-propaganda missions, and other agencies were created. The U.S. Office of the Coordinator of Information, the U.S. Office of Strategic Information, the U.S. Office of War Information, the U.S. Army, and Morale Operations Branch of the Office of Strategic Services (MO-OSS) all had missions in the realm of propaganda and information warfare. While up to seven federal agencies were engaged in the propaganda

¹¹⁵ Clayton, *Propaganda Warriors*, 8.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 9.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 57.

war against Germany, no official U.S. policy was ever developed to govern this type of engagement.¹¹⁹

The MO-OSS was considered among the most successful of these operations ; this branch engaged in irregular warfare through the use of deception and subversion.¹²⁰ The Moral Operations (MO) used targeted information to affect Nazi and Nazi sympathizer opinions and attitudes using such media as leaflets, newspapers, and radio broadcasts. While other U.S. information and morale offices were overtly American, the MO's unique feature was that all of their materials purported to originate from enemy sources.¹²¹ In developing messages supposed to have been sent from non-U.S. sources, it was necessary for the media bearing the message to appear authentic. The MO designed their messages to appear to originate from clandestine groups using crude designs with cheap paper and ink. Their leaflets and radio broadcasts contained culturally relevant language and customs, building credibility for their ultimately subversive messages, such as false orders from *Wehrmacht* officers or false reports of Nazi defeats in remote villages.¹²² The MO even duplicated Nazi propaganda but created opposing messaging, causing confusion among soldiers, sympathizers, and officers alike.¹²³

The MO also developed more sophisticated methods for information warfare. These tactics also relied on creating credibility with attention to the details of the total message, such as cultural markers. In particular, the project called *Soldatensender Calais* created an entire radio station production using writers, actors, and musicians.¹²⁴ This campaign blended nostalgic German storytelling and news with music to establish credibility with the audience and lay the groundwork for its anti-Nazi propaganda.¹²⁵

¹¹⁹ Clayton, *Propaganda Warriors*, 27.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*, 192.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*, 194.

¹²² *Ibid.*

¹²³ *Ibid.*, 198.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*, 204.

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*

The Muzac Project also used entertainers and musicians for black ops, this time on an even larger scale. The project opened its own music department in New York City using Hollywood writers, an eight-piece orchestra, and the J. Walter Thompson advertising agency to write and record 312 German and American songs containing “black ops” lyrics.¹²⁶ Using a similar format to news, commentaries, and entertainment, the black ops music was rotated through the otherwise straightforward entertainment lineup.

Such programs’ effectiveness is impossible to quantify, but evidence collected from interviews after the war indicate that subversive programming did indeed either influence or reinforce anti-Nazi ideologies in critical areas.¹²⁷ In producing black ops music, the MO successfully used cultural elements to engage the enemy’s ideology in order to disrupt conditions leading to violence. This disruption occurs when the enemy’s will to fight is undermined, creating an asymmetry that may be exploited as a combat advantage.

The body of literature overall demonstrates that communication relies on a consistent set of elements that transfer ideas. At the same time, these elements have the potential to interfere or confuse those intended ideas. While arguably elementary, basic communication ideas apply to verbal speech, the written word, and how people understand the world around them. These principles also apply to information technologies, which span from telephones to web-based social media platforms, and everything in between.

Literature further demonstrates that humans are uniquely affected by images. While written and spoken words are suitable for explaining and exploring ideas, people are still most inspired visually. Images give the viewer a sense of immediacy and proximity, and can profoundly affect perception of an object, a person, or a situation. Marketing professionals leverage the human tendency to draw rapid, usually unconscious associations between representative images and larger ideas. This commercial use of

¹²⁶ Clayton, *Propaganda Warriors*, 204.

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*, 207.

symbolism influences both intent and behavior, and also allows researchers to analyze effectiveness. Modern social media also plays to the human predisposition for categorization and simplification through imagery in ways that are certain to profoundly shape our culture, the effects of which are beyond the scope of this thesis.

Psychologists view symbolism in different ways. Jung asserted that symbolism is a product of the collective unconscious, and Campbell further advances the idea that specific symbols and characters have universal meanings. Blumer, however, asserts that symbolism is socially constructed, indicating that behaviors are then influenced by the person or group's social context. Although their theories on the nature of symbolism itself vary, psychologists seem to agree about the power and significance of symbolism itself. This supports the premise of this thesis—that symbolism is a universal method of making sense of the world around us, and it can be subjected to qualitative analysis for legitimate cultural markers. Whether universally innate or socially constructed, symbolism remains useful as both an object for analysis and a potential tool for influencing behavior.

Social identity theory not only provides a framework for understanding group behavior, but also supports some of the key tenets of symbolic interactionism. SIT claims that the perception of identity itself is a product of social construction. Similar to symbolic interactionism SIT acknowledges that beliefs, intents, and behaviors are all products of this socially constructed reality. Within this framework, a group's intents, priorities, and behaviors may be analyzed. Groups in conflict exhibit the interconnected markers of limited good, patron/client relationships, the honor/shame paradigm, and the challenge/response cycle. The group's reality is understood by its members to be true reality, and threats to the group's honor are threats to their reality.

Impression management theory further advances the claim that social constructs affect perception and behavior; the theory argues that individuals specifically act toward others based on a latent desire to control their perceived identity within the relationship.¹²⁸ In this model, interpersonal conflicts have been shown to escalate to

¹²⁸ Felson, "Impression," 245.

physical violence as the perceived threat to one's identity increases. The presence of observers—either supporting violent escalation or urging a peaceful resolution—is shown to directly affect the actions of the parties involved in the conflict. This socially mediated environment is typical of human social structures, as claimed in SIT, and symbolic interactionism is consistent with impression management theory's findings that these social structures define the landscape of interaction. People think and act within this socially constructed environment. In this environment, ideas and perceptions are the source of conflict and the cause of escalation to violence.

The nature of the violent extremist threat to the United States is currently the matter of some debate, but researchers have provided evidence that the conflict is primarily a war of ideas. The limited good in the conflict between Islamist extremists and the United States is primarily two opposing ideologies, and extremists are adept at leveraging public opinion in their favor in such an environment. The United States suffers from not only a poor image overseas, but also from a lack of effective information exchange in the ideological landscape. Dissatisfaction with U.S. policy is being fueled by a lack of clear strategy in the effort to defend the country from violent extremists; left unchecked, these conditions allow radicalism to thrive and violent ideologies to flourish. U.S. forces must engage on this ideological battleground using cultural markers and communication to disrupt the conditions that allow a violent enemy to develop.

The literature indicates that music is a universal social phenomenon. Music is a social art, combining elements of storytelling and feelings to reflect abstract thought, create atmosphere, and influence moods. Music has the paradoxical power to both unite and divide. As a cultural ritual, music can bridge cultural gaps as well as reinforce them. Social researchers believe that music is a central influence on humans' understanding of their culture. According to the literature, socially constructed groups have used music as a powerful source of group cohesion and identity. In this way, music can provide insight to a group's idea of itself and can also be an important cultural marker for analysts.

The United States has used cultural influences, and particularly music, to disrupt ideological conditions that allow enemies to thrive throughout history. The literature shows that the efforts in World War II, ranging from overt propaganda to covert black

ops, did have some success in affecting enemies' intent and undermining support for competing ideologies. In the same way that Green Berets insert themselves into cultures to align with local populations, the strategic use of cultural symbols—such as music—has effectively created conditions that secure the United States from hostile ideologies.

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III. METHODOLOGY

A. THEMATIC ANALYSIS

Thematic analysis is a widely used “qualitative analytical method for identifying, analyzing and reporting patterns (or themes) within data.”¹²⁹ Braun and Clarke’s article on the subject touts a wide variety of applications, and they assert that thematic analysis is compatible with both essentialist and constructionist paradigms.¹³⁰ As this thesis approaches the data corpus from a social constructionist framework, this flexibility is essential to the analytical method. Braun and Clarke find that thematic analysis also potentially provides a “rich and detailed, yet complex account of data” that is useful for identifying themes within specific data items.¹³¹ This differs from similar analytical methods, such as grounded theory, thematic decomposition analysis, or discourse analysis.¹³² In contrast to these approaches, thematic analysis identifies not only patterns across data sets, but also provides a method for identifying and coding qualities within individual data items—this thesis seeks to do both from a social constructionist framework.

Braun and Clarke further explain that a theme captures a patterned response or meaning within a data set.¹³³ Themes are identified by relevance to the subject, not by frequency or quantity. Although recurrence and prevalence do help to identify themes, a theme’s salience is in its relation to the overall research question.¹³⁴ The authors assert that “researcher judgment is necessary to determine what a theme is.”¹³⁵ They differentiate between the “semantic” approach—in which explicit indicators are analyzed—and the “latent” approach—in which the underlying ideologies or

¹²⁹ Virginia Braun and Victoria Clarke, “Using Thematic Analysis in Psychology,” *Qualitative Research in Psychology* 3, no. 2 (2006): 6, doi 10.1191/1478088706qp063oa.

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*, 5.

¹³¹ *Ibid.*

¹³² *Ibid.*, 6.

¹³³ *Ibid.*, 10.

¹³⁴ Braun and Clarke, “Using Thematic Analysis in Psychology,” 10.

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*

conceptualizations are identified.¹³⁶ As this thesis analyzes the use of symbolism to advance ideologies, the latent approach is most appropriate.

Themes for this thesis were identified based on observations of the data using the social identity theory framework. A latent thematic analysis seeks themes and patterns using the theoretical (or deductive) social constructionist framework—in this case specifically, through the use of social identity theory and symbolic interactionism. Special care was taken to include contextual items that may otherwise be lost in the process of strict data analysis.

B. DATA CODING

Analyzing strategic communication for this thesis required a careful assessment of media samples attributed to ideologically motivated groups known to have significant cultures of influence. These samples include film, videos, and music, and were obtained via open-source channels on the Internet. Each of the sample media is understood to be the authentic work of the attributed authors as representations of their respective group's ideology, priorities, and motivations. These media samples are the raw data set.

Upon viewing the sample films and videos and listening to the music samples, a set of codes was developed and organized into a codebook in order to analyze the raw data. The codes were developed while observing the raw data, as well as other samples of similar media. The codes represent observable qualities of strategic information including symbols, language, music, and production tradecraft.

As this thesis approaches symbolism and cultural influence from a social constructivist framework, social identity markers—such as honor challenges, patronage lines, and references to limited good—were the first elements to be assigned codes. Once these lettered codes were developed, more specific cultural markers were identified and assigned codes. These markers include such specific items as flags, culturally relevant clothing, uniforms, and specific religious or historical references.

¹³⁶ Braun and Clarke, “Using Thematic Analysis in Psychology,,” 13.

Finally, elements that may be considered “tradecraft” of strategic communication were identified and coded. These elements are more specific to the art and science of filmmaking, so are more technical in nature. This includes production elements like the use of timing, camera angles, camera movements, special effects, and computer-generated graphics. Audio—including music, speech, and ambient sound—are included in this category as well.

This method of coding data was necessarily iterative. As patterns began to emerge, it often became necessary to either add new codes or develop more specific codes for clarification. Previously viewed material was revisited as the new codes were identified. This flexibility in the system allowed the various medias’ content to be analyzed in the most accurate terms possible. The system was developed to allow the combination of all relevant codes as necessary for each segment of a film, video, or piece of music. This attempted to provide the most accurate assessment of each data piece.

One limitation of applying a rigorous analytical system to a qualitative analysis of film and music is that a great deal of communication is often contextual. Deconstructing communication runs the risk of separating important contextual elements that imply deeper messages or meanings. The system of coding developed for this thesis allowed the analyst to incorporate many of those contextual elements by using the SIT framework in concert with specific symbolism and production tradecraft elements. This coding system lends itself to an accurate reading of motives and intent within a social context.

Another similar, yet distinct, limitation is that communication often has different meanings to different audiences. This thesis analyzed the data from an American perspective with an arguably limited frame of reference for understanding certain cultural references that may be obvious to an insider. For this reason, any cultural or linguistic assistance used to understand the cultural elements found within the data is specifically addressed in Chapters IV and V.

The tradecraft of strategic communication ultimately combines overt messaging with the arts and sciences of the media. While these artistic methods may be analyzed to a certain degree, the power of visual and audio storytelling lies in the combination of

message and method. The analysis—and subsequent deployment of strategic communication to influence attitudes—both rely on a thorough understanding of communication and production methods. This codebook attempts to develop a useful tool to merge these elements for the analyst.

1. Description of Codes and Analytical System

The first set of codes represents SIT markers. These codes indicate specific or implied references to markers such as in-group and out-group conflicts, the challenge/response cycle, limited good, or a resource-constrained environment. The SIT codes section further breaks these down into specific groupings, for which certain SIT references were assigned specific codes. For example, a Nazi reference to a perceived Jewish conspiracy would be coded with multiple SIT markers, and a distinct code for perception of a “Jewish conspiracy” was added for specificity.

SOCIAL IDENTITY THEORY CODES

IN-GROUP	SIT-IG
OUT-GROUP	SIT-OG
HONOR CHALLENGE	SIT-HC
POSITIVE HONOR CHALLENGE	SIT-PHC
NEGATIVE HONOR CHALLENGE	SIT-NHC
RESPONSE	SIT-RESP
LIMITED GOOD	SIT-LTD
CONSTRAINED RESOURCES	SIT-RES
PATRON	SIT-PAT
CLIENT	SIT-CLI
THREAT	SIT-THR
Culture	THR-C
Heritage	THR-H

Golden Age	THR-GA	
Future	THR-F	
DEHUMANIZATION OF OUTGROUP		SIT-DEHUM
NIHILIZATION OF OUTGROUP		SIT-NIH
LOYALTY		LOY
BETRAYAL		BET
CONSPIRACY		CONS
Jewish		CONS-J
American		CONS-US
Crusaders		CONS-CRUS

Next, codes for specific cultural markers and symbols were developed. These include culturally specific settings, attire, rituals, and symbols. This section also addresses flags and uniforms and their use as both in-group and out-group markers in various ways. References to location, territory, and military power are also included in this section; these are particularly salient when used in conjunction with SIT markers. Codes for the group's relationship to God, faith, religion, heaven, hell, and eschatology are in this section as well.

This system allows cultural codes to be combined with the appropriate SIT codes to analyze the symbols' strategic use for advancing narrative and reinforcing group values.

CULTURAL	CLT
Dress	CLT-ATTIRE
Rituals	CLT-RIT
Symbols	CLT-SYM
FLAGS/BANNERS	FLG

Mounted	FLG-MTD
Carried	FLG-CRD
Graphic	FLG-GRPH
National	FLG-NAT
Sub-National/Ideological	FLG-IDEO
ISIS (Shahada)	FLG-ISIS
NAZI (Swastika)	FLG-SWSTK
Religious	FLG-REL
Other Symbolic Pageantry	FLG-PAG

UNIFORMS

UNI

European Military	UNI-MIL
Dress (Formal)	UNI-MIL-D
Dress (Functional)	UNI-MIL-F
Staff	UNI-STF
Battle	UNI-BATT
Helmet	UNI-BATT-HEL
Religious Attire	UNI-REL
ISIS	UNI-ISIS
Black	UNI-ISIS-B
Camo	UNI-ISIS-B
Mask	MASK

SETTING

SET

Civilization	SET-CIV
Wilderness	SET-WILD

War-affected

SET-WAR

Culture-specific structures

SET-CULT

RELIGIOUS THEMES

REL

God

REL-GOD

Ally

REL-GOD

Divine Mandate

REL-GOD-MAND

Blessing

REL-GOD-BLESS

Curse

REL-GOD-CURSE

Heaven

REL-HVN

Hell

REL-HLL

Sin

REL-SIN

Sacrifice

REL-SACR

The final coding areas deal with production elements of the sample data—also referred to here as “tradecraft.” The research of Wei Huang, Judith S. Olson, and Gary M. Olson provides evidence that viewers are affected by techniques that position the camera in specific orientations to the subjects on screen.¹³⁷ Camera position, they determined, implies a certain psychological position that is then typically assumed by the viewer.¹³⁸ This “psychological position” is shown to affect the perception of the on-screen subject’s social standing—namely their dominance or submissiveness.¹³⁹ Their results indicate that the distance from the camera even affects the viewers’ willingness to negotiate with the

¹³⁷ Wei Huang, Judith S. Olson, and Gary M. Olson, “Camera Angle Affects Dominance in Video-Mediated Communication,” *CHI '02 Extended Abstracts on Human Factors in Computing Systems* (Mineapolis, MN, 2002), 1, doi 10.1145/506443.506562.

¹³⁸ Huang, Olson, and Olson, “Camera Angle Affects Dominance,” 1.

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*, 2.

subject on screen.¹⁴⁰ These effects often go unnoticed by viewers, but the combination of production details can directly influence viewers' attitudes.

Accompanying audio in the form of music, added sound effects, dialogue, and ambient sound is an important production component in the sample data. Stefan Strotgen's research on the combination of music, dialogue, sound effects, and imagery on film finds that audio directly affects viewers' understandings of what they observe on camera.¹⁴¹ Audio components emphasize the filmmaker's key assertions, which combine with "carefully planned cinematography" to help the "commentator" tell the story and influence attitudes.¹⁴²

The research indicates that intentional production techniques affect viewers' perceptions of the events they are viewing, and that music, dialogue, and sound effects are also equally critical storytelling devices. For the purpose of this analysis, camera angles, lighting, special effects, and other uses of imagery were analyzed as visual storytelling devices that imply narrative elements or advance strategic ideas about the subjects of the films. Audio elements are also analyzed as critical narrative-constructing components being asserted by the filmmakers. As the use of violence is displayed in some samples, this coding section also includes analytical codes for the use violence, homicide, and the victims' reactions.

PRODUCTION STYLE PROD

Complexity COMPL

Tempo Change TMP

Abrupt TMP-ABR

Gradual TMP-GRAD

Emphasis TMP-EMPH

¹⁴⁰ Huang, Olson, and Olson, "Camera Angle Affects Dominance," 1.

¹⁴¹ Stefan Strotgen, "'I Compose the Party Rally...': The Role of Music in Leni Riefenstahl's *Triumph of the Will*," *Music & Politics* II, no. 1 (Winter 2008), doi 10.3998/mp.9460447.0002.101.

¹⁴² Strotgen, "'I Compose the Party Rally,'" 4.

	SPEED	TMP-SPD
	Action	SPD-ACTION
	Anxiety	SPD-ANX
	Urgency	SPD-URG
	Fog of War	SPD-FOG
	SLOW-MOTION	TMP-SLOMO
	Expression	SLO-EXP
	Reaction	SLO-REACT
	Detail	SLO-DET
	Suffering	SLO-SUFF
	Helplessness	SLO-HELPL
	Suspense	TMP-SUSP
	Computer-based graphics	GRAPHICS
AUDIO		A
Music		A-MUS
March		A-MUS-MARCH
Nasheed		A-MUS-NASHEED
Ethnic		A-MUS-ETHNIC
Ambient		A-MUSIC-AMB
Live Audio		A-LIVE
Speech		A-SPCH
Intent		A-SPCH-INT
SIT Markers		A-SIT
Victim		A-VICT

Perpetrator	A-TERR
Ambient	A-AMB
Sounds	A-SFX
Support	A-SUPP
Individual	A-SUPP-IND
Mass	A-SUPP-MASS
Chanting	CHANT
Cheering	CHEER
Singing	SING
Silence	SILENT
Distress	A-DIST
Anticipation	A-ANT
Suffering	A-SUFF
Active Dying	A-DYING

VIOLENCE

VIOL

Threatened	VIOL-THRT
Implicit	VIOL-IMPL
Explicit	VIOL-EXPL
Knife	VIOL-K
Stab	VIOL-ST
Slice	VIOL- SL
Decapitate	VIOL-DECAP
Firearm	VIOL-GUN

Water

VIOL-WATER

Explosion

VIOL-EXP

Upon establishing the basic codebook, the raw data was viewed and the codes were applied as coded elements were observed. Bearing in mind that frequency and recurrence are not necessarily assumed indicators of priority when performing a qualitative analysis, the samples were analyzed to seek major themes and patterns within the appropriate context for each sample.

2. Code Charts

The codes developed here were used as analytical tools to assess the construction of each communication sample. Due to the volume of codes generated by each sample, a chart was developed that allowed the researcher to report the themes found in each sample. The chart helped to capture the major themes in real time while analyzing the samples. For the chart to be used most efficiently, the most common main codes were converted back to plain text. A section for miscellaneous notes is included on the code chart. The coding charts for each sample are available in Appendix A; the chart in Table 1 provides one example.

Table 1. Coding Chart Example

SOCIAL IDENTITY	IN GROUP	VIOLENCE	PRODUCTION	RELIGION	AUDIO	HUMANITY	MILITARY	SETTING
In Group	Power	Implied	Complex	Divine Blessing	Music Central	Expression	Dress Uniform	Civilization
Out Group	Authority	Explicit	Tempo Change	Divine Mandate	Music Background	Reaction	Working Uniform	Wilderness
Positive Honor Challenge	Victory	Battle	Slow Motion	Divine Curse	Lyrics	Anticipation	Weapon	War Affected
Negative Honor Challenge	Territory	One-on-One	Speed Motion	Savior	March	Fear	Heavy Weapon	Indoors
Response	Wealth	Ritual	Combination Motion	Salvation	Nasheed Arabic	Confidence	Vehicle	Outdoors
Limited Good	Prowess Military	Stabbing	Reverse Motion	Heaven	Nasheed English	Disdain	Aircraft	Stylized
Patron	Prowess Physical	Gunshot	Repeat Motion	Hell	Narration	Helplessness	Battle	Cultural Structures
Client	Social Status	Explosion	Camera Address	Sacrifice	Sound Effects	Suffering	Display	Limited Good
Constrained Resources	Superiority	Beheading	B-Roll	Jihad	Ambient Sound	Dying	Action	Pre-Planned
Threat to Culture	Flag	Drowning	Fast Edits	Reward	Emphasis Audio	Close Up		
Threat to Heritage	Attire	Falling	Lingering Edits	Apostasy	Public Speech	Slow Motion		
Existential Threat	In-Group Logo	Active Dying	Close Up	Sin	Dialogue			
Golden Age	Mask	Observer	Long Shot	Righteousness	Camera Address			
Glorious Future	Head Covering	Child as Perpetrator	Low Camera/ High Subject	Exclusivity		NOTES:		
Nihilization	Architecture	Child as Victim	Graphics					
Dehumanization	Identity Shift							
Conspiracy	Identity Marker							

3. Selection of Samples

The data samples were selected based upon meeting the following criteria:

- They were intentionally produced mass communications
- Their authorship credibly was attributed to the claimed group
- They featured ideologically motivated groups committing, advocating, or implying violence
- They used mass communication to influence attitudes, behavior, or intent

Based on these criteria, the samples described in Section C were selected for analysis. The samples were selected as representative examples of strategically produced communication designed to influence belief and intent, instill fear, or threaten violence, as well as efforts to counter any of these effects. The sample data then represents groups perpetuating violent ideologies in the context of a challenge/response cycle. The United States' attempts to respond are included as sample data where appropriate. The use of these samples does not imply the author's support for any ideologies advocating dehumanization, indiscriminate violence, genocide, or ritual murder.

C. INTRODUCTION TO RAW DATA SAMPLES

(1) Nazi Party Films

The Nazi leadership during World War II became legendary in their adept use of propaganda to influence attitudes, intent, and ultimately, behavior. Nazi-produced propaganda covered every available medium of the day, and was carefully orchestrated by skilled professionals. Under the watchful eye of Goebbels, Leni Riefenstahl deployed an arsenal of filmmaking techniques to produce state-sponsored ideological propaganda films. For this analysis, the Nazi film *Triumph of the Will* was selected as a data sample.

(2) United States—World War II Counter-Propoganda

U.S. engagement in World War II propaganda represented a significant attempt to counter the Nazi campaign. Film, radio, and print media were all specifically utilized. This U.S. counter-propaganda is included in the analysis as an example of overt,

professional efforts to both undermine an ideology and build public support for military operations overseas. For this analysis, the Frank Capra film “Prelude to War—Why We Fight” was selected as a sample of U.S.-sponsored strategic communication.

(3) Neo-Nazi Music-based Productions

Skinhead and White Power ideologies exemplify the use of music and culture to spread ideologies. Although the various iterations of the movement lack cohesion due to much fragmentation, their examples of ideological strategic communication are useful for analysis. The samples represent artists who leverage salient social markers in their music, lyrics, and imagery. As a representative sample of Neo-Nazi and White Power music videos, Saga’s “Ode to a Dying People” was selected for analysis.

(4) West Coast/Gangsta Rap

Rap is perhaps the most relevant current American manifestation of ethnic music being used to define and reinforce cultural behaviors and expectations. The particular genre referred to here as “gangsta rap” is replete with explicit social references and violent imagery. The use of raw and inflammatory language in particular serves as a type of “social creativity”—the SIT term for taking ownership of otherwise negative ideas and reversing them as a method to reclaim social capital.¹⁵¹ The representative sample of West Coast rap is Snoop Dogg’s “Who Am I? (What’s My Name?).”

(5) The Islamic State

The Islamic State (IS) has elevated the use of conflict-centered visual propaganda to unprecedented levels. While most renowned in the West for their use of media to broadcast their acts of targeted violence, researchers point out that their violent use of media represents only a small fraction of their total visual media output.¹⁵² Aaron Zelin analyzed IS media output for one week in April 2015 and observed that IS—as their narrative—portrayed themselves as triumphant loyalists succeeding in defeating the

¹⁵¹ Brannan, Darken, and Strindberg, *A Practitioner’s Way Forward*, 74.

¹⁵² Aaron Y. Zelin, “Picture or It Didn’t Happen: A Snapshot of the Islamic State’s Official Media Output,” *Perspectives on Terrorism* 9, no. 4 (August 2015): 85, <http://www.terrorismanalysts.com/pt/index.php/pot/article/view/445/html>.

unbelievers.¹⁵³ Zelin notes IS' decentralized media distribution structure that produces so much weekly content that researchers struggle to keep up with their total output.

While IS is notorious for their gruesome use of violence on camera, the proportion of graphic, violent content is a relatively small when compared to their total output of traditional propaganda. Zelin found that IS posted an average of 18 media releases per day during his weeklong study; 88 percent of the releases were visual and nearly 50 percent were projections of military prowess.¹⁵⁴ Zelin assesses that their media output overall emphasizes the greatness of the Islamic caliphate and its vision.¹⁵⁵ This is accomplished by including idyllic scenes of nature as well as documentary-style visions of civic life within the caliphate. Some of these videos are included in the raw data set. Although the total IS media output is shown to largely consist of these traditional forms of propaganda, the particular concern to this thesis is their graphic use of violence and homicide in highly produced strategic communication videos. For this reason, the emphasis here is on the use of mass communication to instill fear by broadcasting violence and murder.

¹⁵³ Zelin, "Picture or It Didn't Happen," 85.

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 89.

¹⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 93.

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IV. THEMATIC ANALYSIS RESULTS

A. *TRIUMPH OF THE WILL*

Triumph of the Will is among the most notable films containing images and sounds of Nazi activities. Its creator, Leni Riefenstahl, constantly disputed arguments that her film was a work of propaganda.¹⁵⁶ Riefenstahl held that she represented real events “without alteration,” proclaiming her work a documentary.¹⁵⁷ She did, however, reveal in a 1935 interview that her goal was “to allow the image to express itself more strongly than it did in reality.”¹⁵⁸ This debate supports the assertion of this thesis that all types of strategic communication are used to influence impressions and attitudes, regardless of “genre.” By the director’s admission, imagery strategically influenced attitudes by amplifying the effects of the rally and the Fuhrer himself.

Stefan Strotgen offers that myth and ideology are translated to a community through ritual, and that *Triumph of the Will* is a notorious example of broadcasting group ideology through imagery and music.¹⁵⁹ These elements construct the group narrative, and thus the group identity as well. While the use of imagery and cinematography is significant, music is also an important element in this production.¹⁶⁰ Riefenstahl herself explained that she used imagery to emphasize music, and vice versa, to achieve a desired effect on the viewer.¹⁶¹

This film was selected for analysis due to its notable use of establishing a group narrative using cultural symbols. Using the codebook to analyze the film, the following elements and themes were discovered.¹⁶²

¹⁵⁶ Strotgen, “I Compose the Party Rally,” 1.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid., 2.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid., 3.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid.

¹⁶¹ Ibid., 4.

¹⁶² “Triumph des Willens (1935)—Triumph of the Will,” YouTube video, posted by “Nuclear Vault,” September 22, 2011, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GHS2coAzLJ8>.

(1) Film Production and Style

The opening scene is a first-person view of soaring through clouds. A Ford Tri-Motor airplane begins to descend over the city of Nuremburg. The first flags are seen in the town below, and the swastika becomes visible on the plane's rudder. Upon landing, Hitler emerges from the aircraft to a waiting crowd. The crowd on the ground cheers, and offers the "Roman salute," now exclusively recognized as the Nazi salute. The crowd—consisting of civilians and Nazi "Brown Shirts" alike—bear Nazi flags and appear eager and cheerful. Hitler emerges from the aircraft and is greeted by the waiting crowd before beginning his motorcade into the city.

This opening scene is representative of much of the film. Combining powerful symbolism, detailed imagery, live audio, and music, the story of the rally and the Nazi Party unfolds. The aircraft in the clouds is accompanied by soaring strings, adding a feeling of life and lightness to the images. Looking down on the distinctly Nuremburg's distinctly German architecture establishes the cultural setting. Upon emerging from the aircraft, the cheers of the crowd reach a fevered pitch, and are instantly accompanied by a trumpet fanfare announcing the Fuhrer's arrival. The symbolism here lies in the combination of images and sound, and their message is unmistakable: the leader has descended from above, and now walks among his loyal followers. The narrative has begun, and it has been built without spoken words.

A notable characteristic of this film is the lack of verbal narration—the story is told in images and sounds. The first spoken words are not heard in the film until after the 15:00 minute mark, and no narration or dialogue is ever present. The only spoken words are those of Nazi Party leaders addressing the crowds through structured speeches that delineate the group's ideologies. A thematic analysis, then, relies on the use of symbolism and film production.

(2) Theme: Film as Documentary

The film defines itself immediately to the viewer as a “documentary...by order of the Fuhrer.”¹⁶³ The on-screen text further describes the nature of the rally being documented as a “military display” in Nuremburg at the request of Adolf Hitler.

The film exhibits a documentary structure through a number of details. The film follows a natural timeframe that is clearly delineated, marked by Hitler’s arrival into town. The weeklong rally is established as something of a destination, as massive temporary camps are shown and the daily activities of camp life are detailed.

(3) Theme: Nazi Power

From the first appearance of the swastika on the rudder of Hitler’s aircraft, the film uses logos and icons to symbolize the Nazi Party’s identity. The most recognizable is the familiar red, white, and black national flag of the Nazi Party, featuring the swastika in the center. This is by far the most commonly used flag in the film. It is occasionally seen in conjunction with the German Merchant flag and the German Marine Jack. Flags are constantly present throughout the film. They often fly over buildings or in the immediate vicinity of the Fuhrer, but they are also displayed in massive quantities by soldiers, sailors, and workers of the Nazi Party.

Likewise, “standards” are carried throughout the film, displaying eagles and swastikas. Banners fly from buildings and adorn arenas, all featuring the swastika. Uniformed men are always present, uniformed youth are featured in one segment, and uniformed women are seen toward the end. Even the “workers” are in uniforms, giving them the appearance of soldiers wielding shovels. All images of the Nazi Party, they combine elements of the German culture with a military projection of power. Hitler himself calls the rally an impressive display of political power.¹⁶⁴ Themes of loyalty and work are also found throughout the film. As they relate closely to the military structure and ethic of the Nazi Party, they may be seen as sub-themes within this theme.

¹⁶³ “Triumph des Willens (1935)—Triumph of the Will.”

¹⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 1:34:03.

Assertions of Nazi power are underscored by the strategic use of music to emphasize visual elements. Nazi officials are introduced to the screen accompanied by the brash fanfares of Nazi trumpets. Driving drumbeats accompany soldiers parading through the streets of Nuremburg. Marching bands and drum corps, in SS helmets and jack-boots, accompany SS and SA troops as they parade through town. Even uniformed youth participate with a drum corps of their own. The music emphasizes the intended effects of the visual displays of Nazi power.

Strotgen notes the strong military character of the music in this film.¹⁶⁵ The use of marches—originally used to coordinate the lockstep of a marching military group—and soldier songs strategically lended a “warrior” character to the film while still appealing to a broad German audience.¹⁶⁶ According to Strotgen, marches also originated to muster strength and courage for battle.¹⁶⁷ This decidedly military soundtrack supports the theme of Nazi military power found throughout the film.

(4) Theme: Nazi Culture as German Culture

In the film, Hitler declares that the best of the German people have taken up leadership in the Nazi Party. He triumphantly declares to the masses that “all Germans should become National Socialists.”¹⁶⁸ The German culture was clearly important to the Nazi Party, and this is evident throughout this film. The use of imagery and music enhance Hitler’s assertions about their place in German history.

The opening title introduces Germany’s “rebirth” 19 months prior, and frames the entire rally as Germany’s newest iteration of a long-held identity. The opening scenes feature aerial footage of Nuremburg, and Hitler travels past local iconic fountains and statues as his motorcade proceeds to his destination. Along the way, and for the duration of the rally, local townspeople and villagers are shoulder-to-shoulder with Nazi soldiers.

¹⁶⁵ Strotgen, “I Compose the Party Rally,” 7.

¹⁶⁶ Ibid.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid.

¹⁶⁸ “Triumph des Willens (1935)—Triumph of the Will,” 1:35:00.

At one point, civilians dressed in traditional German garments parade through the town to offer Hitler pastoral baskets filled with gifts.

German culture is further connected to the Nazi ideology through the use of cultural music. Much of the soundtrack was composed by Herbert Windt, who was also responsible for selecting the music by other composers that appeared in the film.¹⁶⁹ Windt was known to be an admirer of Strauss and Wagner.¹⁷⁰ His involvement in the soundtrack contributes to its distinctly German processions, hymns, fanfares, and marches.

(5) Theme: Divine Mandate

The film's opening sequence reveals Hitler descending from the clouds to emerge among the people. Images of church towers are scattered throughout the film, and the venue in which Hitler delivers his final speech appears as a cathedral. At this point, he describes the rally as a spiritual meeting and declares that "the Party is unchangeable in its doctrine...it will be like a religious order."¹⁷¹ The recessional of this final gathering is sung in the voices of the masses, hymnal in structure, and reflective in mood.

(6) Social Identity Markers

Triumph of the Will exhibits significant social identity markers. German might and reputation are a significant limited good that has been challenged, and the development of the Nazi identity is a response to that threat. The constant reinforcement of the Nazi identity through imagery serves as a positive honor challenge as the group continues to define its identity. In this sense, every display of Nazi identity using flags, uniforms, and vehicles can be seen as a positive honor challenge to build the reputation and social power of the Party.

In turn, these displays are also negative honor challenges to outsiders, who are only vaguely alluded to in this particular film. Interestingly, the Nazi Party does not use

¹⁶⁹ Strotgen, "I Compose the Party Rally," 5.

¹⁷⁰ Ibid.

¹⁷¹ "Triumph des Willens (1935)—Triumph of the Will," 1:34:12.

this film to specify an out-group or adversary, but makes references to “dark shadows” across the movement and weeding out “weaker elements.” However, the implications of the massive military display leave little doubt that Nazi Germany has intentions of carrying out violence at the time of production—a negative honor challenge to any out-group.

Evidence of the Nazi Party’s “golden age/glorious future” myth is also present in this film. Connecting to religious themes and drawing correlations to German heritage, a picture is painted of a once-great culture that has suffered at the hands of outsiders. In the control of the Nazi Party, the future is portrayed as bright and unending. The mythology narrative present in this film is that the proper order of things will be restored only by the select in-group struggling through a dark time.

(7) Key Production Contributions

Produced in 1935, the film is a relatively straightforward example of black-and-white film-making of that era. The use of wide angles and long shots conveys a grand scope of the event and the setting. The close-ups used throughout add the more personal element of emotion—in this film, excitement or anticipation—and important details to advance the story. A notable filming technique is present at a number of points in the film: tlow-angled camera shots. This technique places the camera below the subject, looking up. According to a study by Wei Huang, Judith S. Olson, and Gary M. Olson, camera angles can be effectively used to convey specific impressions on the viewer.¹⁷² Viewers’ perceptions of on-screen characters’ power and dominance is directly affected by the perspective of the camera.¹⁷³ Characters perceived to be taller—an effect created by placing the camera low to increase the “apparent height” of the character—are perceived to be more dominant than those who appear shorter.¹⁷⁴ The researchers also found that angles and zoom effects influence viewers similarly.¹⁷⁵

¹⁷² Huang, Olson, and Olson, “Camera Angle Affects Dominance,” 2.

¹⁷³ *Ibid.*, 3.

¹⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

As discussed, the production is notable for its lack of narration or dialogue, allowing the images and music to tell the story in large sections. Using highly structured political speech as the only spoken words in the film particularly emphasizes the speeches' content. In this way, the Nazi doctrine is given particular emphasis within a context of strong identity markers.

(8) Conclusion—Triumph of the Will

This film is an example of an organized group committing resources to assert their ideology and identity using mass media. The debate over its genre is less significant than the fact that the production is overtly attributed to the group's leadership. The film exhibits explicit assertions about the group's history, intent, and identity. The filmmakers use imagery and music to enhance their story and emphasize key elements; as such, the movie is a significant work strategically produced to help construct the Nazi Party's identity.

B. *WHY WE FIGHT—PRELUDE TO WAR*

Why We Fight is a film series produced by the U.S. government during World War II. Its intent was to motivate soldiers mobilizing to fight in the war overseas. Director Frank Capra analyzed *Triumph of the Will* in order to dismantle the competing ideology through film.¹⁷⁶ He set out to counter the imagery of Hitler as a messiah figure and the “group” psychology present in the film.¹⁷⁷ As Peter C. Rollins asserts, although Capra was new to “documentaries,” he was selected because he was a skilled filmmaker and visual storyteller.¹⁷⁸ Capra knew the power of “manipulating images and sound” and used these skills to craft the series that inspired and oriented American troops.¹⁷⁹ Rollins

¹⁷⁶ Peter C. Rollins, “Frank Capra’s *Why we Fight* Film Series and our American Dream,” *Journal of American Culture* 19, no. 4 (1996): 82, <http://search.proquest.com/docview/200577108?pq-origsite=gscholar>.

¹⁷⁷ Rollins, “Frank Capra’s *Why we Fight* Film Series,” 82.

¹⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 83.

¹⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

assesses that the series continues to inspire as “statements of America’s mission in a violent world.”¹⁸⁰

This film was selected for analysis due to its origin as a U.S. government strategic communication produced in conjunction with an established mass media professional of the era. It is also acknowledged as a response to *Triumph of the Will*, and is worth analyzing within the challenge/response cycle. Using the codebook to analyze the film, the following elements and themes emerged.¹⁸¹

(1) Film Production and Style

The film is attributed to the Office of War Information and U.S. Army. It is explicitly a product of the U.S. government, intended to influence attitudes about America’s involvement in World War II. It is produced, edited, and directed in a style typical of informational films of the era. In black-and-white, the events are described by a narrator. Structurally, this particular film in the series (*Prelude to War*) offers a description of world events leading up to U.S. involvement in the war.

(2) Theme: Film as an Educational Tool

This film is unashamedly a work of strategic communication. It is an acknowledged product of the U.S. government, and is instructional in nature. The narrator begins with the rhetorical question, “Why are we Americans on the march?” The film, then, sets out to answer that question, explaining years of hostilities and policy decisions that led to America’s involvement in the war.

Prelude to War describes events and attitudes using a narrator, and uses visual imagery and music to support and emphasize its claims. The sense of immediacy is enhanced by descriptions of wartime casualties and violence. Maps are used not only to describe events, but also to vividly speculate the possibility of world domination by fascists, Nazis, and imperialists if left unchecked. Some instructional graphs are included,

¹⁸⁰ Rollins, “Frank Capra’s Why we Fight Film Series,” 81.

¹⁸¹ “Why We Fight: Prelude to War (Frank Capra),” YouTube video, posted by “Nuclear Vault,” July 26, 2010, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Mm3GsSWKyso>.

as well, for visual effect. Using an educational style, the film attempts to portray a straightforward, educational vision of America's role in World War II.

(3) Theme: Two Worlds

The film argues that the world war is a conflict between the "free world" and the "slave world." It supports this assertion throughout by arguing that the dictatorships in Italy, Japan, and Germany are systems populated by masses who have willingly relegated their individual liberty to place tyrants in power. This sets the "two world" theme in motion, and it is emphasized visually throughout the film. The visual image of two globes, one light and one dark, is used throughout the work as distinctions are drawn between America's world of liberty and the Axis world of tyranny. The Axis world—the "slave world"—is described as a world in which dictators demand total control over thought and deed.

(4) Theme: Fallacy of Isolationism

The film references U.S. visions of isolationism, referring to U.S. resistance to defending "mud huts" and sand overseas. One montage combines man-on-the-street style interviews to portray overall confusion among the American public over involvement in "foreign entanglements." Capra also lists a number of failed American attempts to secure peace in the world, and argues that even those resulted in aggression in other corners of the globe.

(5) Theme: Divine Mandate

The film identifies a religious lineage early on, invoking Moses, Christ, Mohammed, and Confucius as the founders of the American ideology. Sacred texts are shown, and lineage is described as a "struggle...of men of vision" culminating in the Declaration of Independence. The threat to America's religious identity is exposed at other points in the film, and the filmmakers argue that the Axis dictators require the removal of religion entirely.

The narrator describes that "John Q. went to any church he wanted" in America, clearly implying that the threat to American religion was imminent or had already

occurred. One montage features religious icons and sanctuaries being destroyed by Nazis and fascists, and is juxtaposed against the soundtrack of a choir quietly singing, “O Come All Ye Faithful.” The theme of religious superiority is exhibited throughout, using music, images, and verbal narration.

(6) Social Identity Markers

American might and reputation are a significant limited good that has been challenged, and the mobilization of American industry is a response to that threat. The U.S. identity is defined as peaceful and private, but powerful when provoked to action. The film also argues that the Axis powers’ ideology is irreconcilable with the American way of life. The dominant ideology is the zero-sum limited good; both ideologies may not peacefully coexist.

Displays of American identity are also negative honor challenges to groups identified as outsiders. The out-groups are clearly delineated in this film—the dictatorships in Japan, Germany, and Italy. Their dictators are portrayed as brainwashing their populations, encouraging the masses to “stop thinking” and simply follow along.

Evidence of the Nazi Party’s golden age/glorious future myth is also present in this film. Connecting to religious themes and drawing correlations to a variety of religious heritage lines, a picture is painted of a great culture that is being threatened by violent outsiders. The ideology itself is clearly defined as the enemy, with the people falling victim to a flawed way of thinking.

(7) Key Production Contributions

The filmmakers heavily use graphics, such as maps and charts, and re-enactments of events for visual effect. Real-life footage is also used, and is often intermixed with studio-produced action. The film begins with a disclaimer advising the viewer that some of the footage is real, while some is reenacted, but film does not distinguish which footage is which.

Uniforms and images of flags are used throughout to symbolize the group being portrayed or discussed. The narrator offers that symbolism is important in the use of

uniforms and logos, and describes the uniform characteristics of the Italian “brown-shirts” and Nazi “black-shirts.” The symbols of fascism, the Japanese dragon, and the Nazi swastika, are all carefully connected to their nations.

The accompanying music ranges in tempo and instrumentation. During heavily positive arguments about America and its lifestyle, distinctly patriotic, recognizable music is used. Musical embellishments are frequently employed to emphasize points of support for arguments. These musical accents accompany images such as newspaper headlines, graphs, and charts. Images of enemy soldiers are frequently accompanied by pounding drums. Minor chords and melodies imply dread, foreboding, or sorrow.

This film also incorporates ridicule toward the enemy. Fascist populations are said to have given up their individual liberties to allow others to think for them. Most notably, the Italian conquest of Ethiopia is heavily ridiculed; images showing local villagers tending to livestock are set against the argument that the nation only had one functioning aircraft when Italy invaded. The villagers’ bare feet are featured in this section of the film.

As a film specifically produced to inspire patriotism and action, *Prelude to War* is crafted to appeal to a sense of pride in the American spirit. Images are used to create an immediate connection with the material being discussed. The film’s intent was to justify fighting for the nation; its direction, editing, and production incorporate intentional use of imagery and music to influence the viewer.

(8) Conclusion—Prelude to War

The film is an instructional work created to orient Americans to the history of World War II and influence their support of wartime activities. Through scripted narration and an educational style, the challenge/response cycle, limited good, and in-group and out-group delineations are all asserted. Each of these arguments is emphasized with sound effects, music, and imagery, both staged and acquired. The film provides an example of the U.S. government’s historic efforts to influence attitudes about a competing ideology and secure support for World War II by strategically deploying professional mass media.

C. “WHO AM I?”—SNOOP DOGG MUSIC VIDEO

Released in 1993, “Who Am I?” appeared on Snoop Dogg’s album “Doggystyle.”¹⁸² Snoop Dogg had come to prominence on Dr. Dre’s album “The Chronic,” and this album represented his first solo effort. This album was produced by Dr. Dre, and was certified “gold.”¹⁸³

This video was selected for analysis due to both its popularity and its explicit use of vocabulary, imagery, cultural references, and music to establish identity characteristics and construct a narrative. Using the codebook to analyze the content, the following elements and themes are found in the video.

(1) Production and Style

This music video for “Whom Am I?” is representative of music videos in its era. While the song received airplay in its straightforward edited version, the music video is longer and slightly more complex. The video begins with a storyline that appears to be a short scene from a film, adding dialogue and a more distinct context to the video.

(2) Theme: Individual Identity

The video and music track feature rap music’s characteristic self-awareness. Presented in first person, the song asserts that Snoop Dogg is an individual artist worthy of notice. In the context of his first solo album, this assertion is notable as he attempts to forge a distinct identity from his previous album’s successful partnership. The song employs repetition—the background vocalists sing “Snoop Dogg” over and over. This is in response to his repeated question, introducing the chorus: “What’s my name?”

(3) Theme: Group Identity

In addition to asserting his own identity, Snoop Dogg features lyrics and imagery reaffirming his allegiances to both his group and the individual who launched his successful career. Dr. Dre is featured performing vocals on the track, and the “Dogg

¹⁸² *Wikipedia*, s.v. “What’s My Name? (Snoop Dogg song),” last modified November 17, 2015, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/What's_My_Name%3F_%28Snoop_Doggy_Dogg_song%29.

¹⁸³ *Wikipedia*, s.v. “What’s My Name? (Snoop Dogg song).”

Pound” is visually present in much of the video. Snoop alludes to both of these throughout the vocals on the track. The visual imagery of the “Dogg Pound” and Dr. Dre on camera informs the group’s culture, from the style of dress to details such as physical posture and demeanor. The style of dress is contrasted against the uniforms of the bumbling dog-catchers, tripping over themselves as they pursue the group through the streets and lots in Long Beach, California.

(4) Theme: Prestige

Snoop Dogg and his group are portrayed as powerful and capable in an underclass neighborhood. Posing in front of an exotic car builds an image of wealth, and dogs wreaking havoc in the neighborhood symbolize the ability to act without impunity. The crowd dancing at the rapper’s feet signifies his prestige in the neighborhood.

(5) Theme: Region and Territory

The action in the video occurs in the rapper’s neighborhood. Snoop Dogg raps, “Long Beach is the spot where I serve my ‘caine.” Gangsta rap is particularly territorial, and the images in the video are all filmed against the backdrop of Long Beach, California. This territorial theme is supported by images of the rapper standing atop the iconic VIP Records, store located in the heart of his neighborhood, with a crowd of fans below. Snoop Dogg continually reasserts his allegiance to his neighborhood throughout the video.

(6) Theme: Physical Prowess

The video shows the musicians and actors “morphing” into dogs, and much of the action is carried out by these proxy creatures. The dogs are used to imply violence, power, and life on “the streets.” This is both a play on Snoop’s adopted stage name, and an apparent nod to George Clinton’s “Atomic Dog,” from which this song borrows heavily. The dog pack consists of powerful breeds with cropped ears, and they are shown carrying out violence at various points in the video. This metaphor imparts the dangerous and animalistic characteristics upon the rapper and his in-group; the rapper identifies his willingness to commit violence and defend himself. He implies the potential to kill police

officers, and makes sings about killing “blood clots,” probably a reference to a rival gang. Boasts of sexual prowess and conquests are also found in the song.

(7) Theme: Currency

Drugs and money are referenced as items of prestige and wealth. References are made to the power afforded by stealing and selling drugs, and the rapper boasts about the size of his bank account.

(8) Social Identity Markers

In the video, Snoop Dogg points out important social identity markers. The rapper identifies his in-group early in the song, and continues to reiterate their group identity throughout the video. The members of the Dogg Pound and Dr. Dre accompany him for the duration of the song as his in-group. In the opening line, Snoop sings about being from the “depths of the ‘sea,’” but this may be a play on words; the letter “C” is typically a coded reference to the Crips within West Coast rap, and this implies a positive honor challenge by publicly identifying with the gang.

Out-groups are identified as the police, rival gang members, and potential victims of implied violence. The dogcatchers are the only characters in uniforms, and their pursuit of the dogs represents the police chasing gangsters through the neighborhood. At one point, a dog bites the dogcatcher, further supporting the assertion that the group will commit violence if necessary.

The limited goods at stake are respect and power, both closely interconnected in American underclass neighborhoods. Dealing drugs and rapping are the avenues through which the rapper has achieved social status among the groups in the area. The police and rival gangs threaten to interfere with the channels for maintaining the group’s livelihood, and are identified as adversaries.

Connection to physical territory is reinforced from the opening lines through the end of the song. The particular Long Beach neighborhood addressed, the “block,” is defined through the use of VIP records, a notable landmark in the area. Territorial claims

are critical in Southern California street gang culture, and these can be seen throughout this video.

(9) Key Production Components

Being a music video, the combination of imagery and music is assumed to be highly important. The video production occurs after the music has been recorded, and music videos have been traditionally used to boost music sales by gaining viewers' attention. The video supports the assertions of the music using imagery, professional production, and editing to build the narrative.

This video features imagery designed to support the artist's claims, so it features a distinctly Southern California setting. The filmmakers employ intentional elements used to influence the viewers' perception of the artist and his group. The scenes featuring Snoop Dogg and his cohort are filmed in Long Beach using bridges, vacant lots, neighborhoods, and landmarks to stake their claim to the region. The artists are posed in front of exotic cars and graffiti-covered walls at various points, and the low-angled camera looks upward at the rapper on the roof of VIP Records, the words "Long Beach" underneath his feet.

The music driving the video is characteristic of early-90s gangsta rap, pioneered by the Snoop Dogg and Dr. Dre duo. The introduction samples the dissonant funk guitar from The Counts' "Pack of Lies."¹⁸⁴ The heavy, minor key bass line drives the rhythm, paying homage to 1970s-era funk by closely resembling Funkadelic's "(Not Just) Knee Deep."¹⁸⁵ Backup vocalists convert George Clinton's recognizable "Atomic Dog" melody into "Snoop Dogg."¹⁸⁶ The style is slickly produced, and noticeably more sophisticated than the preceding era's iteration of rap.

(10) Conclusion—"Who Am I?"

¹⁸⁴ "The Counts—Pack of Lies 1971," YouTube video, 2:13, posted by "SleazyEmotions," May 22, 2010, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ChCIEZz2uTw>.

¹⁸⁵ "Funkadelic—(Not Just) Kneep Deep," YouTube video, posted by "Slayd5000," January 10, 2011, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=av2vgiYAIXY>.

¹⁸⁶ "George Clinton—Atomic Dog," YouTube video, posted by "TheOldSchoolMusic," July 6, 2008, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pZ5H9Av6x9M>.

Distinct from the previous video samples, which are overtly strategic in nature and produced to influence, this sample was produced as professional entertainment. But rap music's highly social nature provides an explicit sample of music that simultaneously reflects and builds a culture. The artists use elements that are recognizable to their audience in order to make claims about themselves and their identity. The cultural markers become the vocabulary of identity construction, and repetition is employed to ensure the message is received. At the same time, new elements, such as language, style, and imagery, are introduced by the artists and become incorporated into the culture. Identity is further constructed as the narrative is built.

D. "ODE TO A DYING PEOPLE"—SAGA

"Ode to a Dying People" is a music video attributed to the National Socialist Front (NSF) and recording artist Saga.¹⁸⁷ The NSF was a Swedish Neo-Nazi political party, and the vocalist Saga contributed to their body of music. The music and accompanying images promote an explicit and unmistakable white power ideology.

This video was selected for analysis for its explicit use of lyrics and images to assert a white supremacist ideology. In conducting a thematic analysis, the following elements and themes were exposed.

(1) Production and Style

This music video is an example of lyric-driven, explicit doctrine combined with catchy and haunting music to create repetition. Repetition is useful in pop music to simplify ideas and create a memorable combination of lyrics and music. Melodies have a way of connecting with human memory, and the combination of simple melodies with ideologically significant lyrics causes memorable ideas to find a distinct place in the listener's memory. The music in this video is a studio production, but the images are less complex than other music videos. The singer is shown in the context of a small-scale, live show while juxtaposed against "B-roll" (pre-existing or borrowed) images of chaos and unrest.

¹⁸⁷ "Saga—Ode to a Dying People," YouTube video, posted by "You gotta seek the day," December 11, 2009, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z38Cl2jvHi0>.

This video inverts the approach taken by Riefenstahl's *Triumph of the Will*; the images tell most of the story, and are then emphasized by the music. The focal point of this video is the doctrine expressed through lyrics. The images are included to amplify the lyrical arguments.

(2) Theme: Existential Threat

This video describes an existing threat that may lead to the end of the white race. The white race is only symbolized through images of the singer, except in one scene that shows images of statues and ruins. The specific threat to the white race is never identified lyrically, but the context helps to tell the story. The images show chaos and unrest unfolding at the hands of mobs, with the clear implication that other races threaten the existence of whites. The singer makes her argument by repeating, "If this is the way it ends; if this is the way my race ends...I can't bear to witness." As the song's refrain, variations of this phrase appear twelve times throughout the piece, making it the video's most emphatic argument.

(3) Theme: Immediate Threat

The threat directed at the white race is characterized as being imminent. Lyrically, the threat is described as having already taken a potentially fatal toll on the future of the white race, exemplified with lines like, "It has all come down to this; the reaper embraces me with his kiss." "B-roll" footage of violence and unrest emphasizes that the threat is already in full effect.

(4) Theme: Appeal to Action

The song culminates with Saga pleading for action. The line, "Don't let it end this way" begs the listener to influence a chain of events to save the white race. After building the argument that the threat may already have struck the death blow, this video offers the listener an opportunity to identify himself with the threatened group and take action on its behalf. The imagery of the singer flanked by national-socialist logos before a group of listeners frames the song as an admonition to action. While melancholic and

bleak, this piece is not designed as introspection. The images and call to arms reinforce that action is advocated as a solution to the impending threat.

(5) Theme: Lost Golden Age

In the most heavily produced section of the video, the lyrics drop away for an instrumental bridge. During this break, images of Greek ruins and statues are cut in with a view of Saga in a European countryside ruin reminiscent of a miniaturized Stonehenge. The implication supports earlier assertions by the singer that “the heroes of our race are already gone.” The white race is not only portrayed to be in grave danger, but the argument is made that the golden age may be unrecoverable. The NSF’s counterbalance to the golden age—the “glorious future” theme—is found in a separate Saga song, “The Road to Valhalla.”¹⁸⁸

(6) Theme: Heritage

The combination of religious, pagan, historical, and philosophical imagery ties the ideology to each particular identity, attempting to credibly reinforce the group’s identity. While closely tied to the golden age theme, there is also a distinct theme of ideology as the product of a long line of historically significant ideologies.

(7) Social Identity Markers

The in-group in this video is the white supremacist adherents to a Neo-Nazi ideology. The white power movement has flourished as an ideology while lacking a cohesive organizational structure. In this sense, organizations like the NSF have been able to advance the ideology through the use of mass media while also remaining relatively decentralized as an ideological movement. The in-group then extends beyond the organization to include other adherents who identify with the group’s doctrine.

The out-group in this case is not specified verbally, but images of non-white violence and unrest identify the out-group as the threat to the white race. Another possible out-group may be seen as whites who do not share the group’s disdain for non-

¹⁸⁸ “Saga—The Road to Valhalla,” YouTube video, posted by “Saga,” December 6, 2007, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8OhaGk_Zfsg.

whites. These individuals or groups would find the subject matter controversial at least, and would not identify with the violent ideology of the in-group in this case.

The limited good in the conflict is the honor of the white race. The case is never explicitly made in this video that the white race is superior to others, but the images and historical context of the national-socialist ideologies are clearly observed throughout the video. The threat to the honor—and very existence—of the white race is argued throughout the piece.

In delineating the in-group and out-group, both positive and negative honor challenges are directed at the same time. The negative honor challenge is primarily the accusation that out-groups threaten the honor of the white race, but members of the white race who have “wasted years” are also implicated in this. The positive honor challenge is expressed in the last lines of the song, imploring in-group members to act in the group’s interest.

(8) Key Production Components

This video is driven by the song lyrics. Saga is seen singing live in a setting that resembles an evangelical tent revival or worship service. Monotheistic religious references are absent from this piece, but the images and music create an atmosphere reminiscent of modern religious gatherings. This contributes to the scope of the argument that the future of an entire race is in jeopardy.

The video features Saga as the blonde-haired spokeswoman for the white race. Low-angled camera shots hearken back to Nazi use of perspective to elevate the on-screen subject to a position of authority. Combining images of the singer with historically and philosophically significant images ties the ideology together in a way that is unique to visual imagery. The song then repeats its argument over and over again, using simple language, while the images embellish the story.

(9) Conclusion—“Ode to a Dying People”

This video exemplifies the use of music to explicitly pass doctrine from the group to its members and affiliates. Saga is portrayed as a modern-day prophet, positioning

current events in a historically significant context and calling for action to return the people to their perceived rightful position. This positioning of the group within the context of historical events builds the group's identity and constructs the narrative as understood by its members. In this particular example, the lyrics explicitly carry the doctrinal beliefs, and the music builds the atmosphere. Imagery enhances the argument and develops associations in a historical framework while building the group identity. In this way, mass media is used to strategically advance group priorities and narratives.

E. ISLAMIC STATE EXECUTION VIDEOS

The Islamic State is a Sunni extremist terrorist group characterized by an exclusionary worldview, which calls for violence against Shiites, non-Muslims, and unsupportive Sunnis.¹⁸⁹ The group is also commonly known as "ISIS," "ISIL," and "Da'esh," each of which implies regional limitations that are absent with the more inclusive "Islamic State" title. The very renaming of the group asserts its identity as the definitive Islamic authority, challenging the legitimacy of other groups such as al-Qaeda. For the purposes of this thesis, the name "Islamic State" (IS) has been selected for consistency with the group's own assertion of its identity.¹⁹⁰

The IS developed from al-Qaeda in Iraq ("AQI"), and fought in the twin battles for Fallujah in 2004.¹⁹¹ They have used the Syrian conflict to develop combat prowess and credibility among Islamist extremists.¹⁹² In June 2014, they violently advanced into Iraq and gained control of the Sunni region. Taking control of Mosul, and Tikrit, and regaining Fallujah, they made their way toward Baghdad.¹⁹³ Their stated objective in this

¹⁸⁹ Christopher M. Blanchard, Carla E. Humud, and Mary Beth D Nikitin, *Armed Conflict in Syria: Overview and U.S. Response* (CRS Report No. RL33487) (Washington, DC: Congressional Research Service, 2014), 10, <https://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/mideast/RL33487.pdf>.

¹⁹⁰ Chelsea J. Carter, "Iraq Developments: ISIS Establishes 'Caliphate,' Changes Name," CNN, June 30, 2014, <http://www.cnn.com/2014/06/29/world/meast/iraq-developments-roundup/>.

¹⁹¹ Michael Knights, "The ISIL stand in the Ramadi-Falluja Corridor," *CTC Sentinel* 7, no. 5 (May 2014), <https://www.hsdl.org/?view&did=754163>.

¹⁹² Blanchard, Humud, and Nikitin, *Armed Conflict in Syria*, 8–11.

¹⁹³ Bryan Price, Dan Milton, and Muhammad al-'Ubaydi, "CTC Perspectives: Al-Baghdadi's Blitzkrieg, ISIL's Psychological Warfare, and What it Means for Syria and Iraq," *Combatting Terrorism Center at West Point*, June 12, 2014, <https://www.ctc.usma.edu/posts/ctc-perspectives-al-baghdadis-blitzkrieg-isils-psychological-warfare-and-what-it-means-for-syria-and-iraq>.

advance was to cause the collapse of the Iraqi state and establish a regional Islamist caliphate.¹⁹⁴

The Islamic State employs psychological warfare, social media, recruiting, and marketing techniques to develop their image among Muslims and gain support among local populations prone to their ideology's influence.¹⁹⁵ Within 24 hours of their Northern Iraq offensive in 2014, they began publishing photos documenting their actions.¹⁹⁶ This proved to be only the beginning of an extensive media campaign, examples of which are analyzed in this section as sample data. The videos analyzed in this section are self-produced videos of the Islamic State executing its adversaries.

The following IS-produced videos were selected for analysis as representative samples of their particular strategic communication structures. While access to al-Hayat Media Center is restricted within the United States, the links are included to websites that host the videos at the time of this writing. The samples include videos that focus on execution as well as videos that contain allusions to their executions.

- James Foley Execution: <http://leaksource.info/2014/08/19/graphic-video-islamic-state-beheads-american-journalist-james-foley/>
- Drowning Execution: <http://leaksource.info/2015/06/23/islamic-state-death-cult-finds-gruesome-new-ways-to-murder-spies-rpgd-in-car-drowned-in-cage-explosive-collars/>
- Egyptian Christians Execution: <http://www.zerocensorship.com/bbs/uncensored/87427-isis-egypt-isis-executing-21-egyptian-christians#axzz3mOA4eJU6>
- Japanese Journalist Kenji Goto Execution: http://www.zerocensorship.com/bbs/show_topic/81901-isis-group-beheads-japanese-journalist-goto#axzz3mOA4eJU6
- *Flames of War* Full Version: <http://www.clarionproject.org/analysis/isis-releases-flames-war-feature-film-intimidate-west>

¹⁹⁴ Paul Rogers, "The Iraq Crisis: A Note on ISIL Advances and Potential Military Intervention," Oxford Research Group, June 14, 2014, 1, <https://www.hsdl.org/?view&did=755265>.

¹⁹⁵ Price, Milton, and al-'Ubaydi, "CTC Perspectives: Al-Baghdadi's Blitzkrieg," 1–2.

¹⁹⁶ Ibid.

- “For the Sake of Allah” Nasheed Video: https://archive.org/details/ForTheSakeOfAllah_201509

Using the codebook to analyze the IS sample data, the following elements and themes emerged.

(1) Film Production and Style

Islamic State videos vary in length, style, and complexity. The subject matter ranges from theological lectures to promotional material purportedly documenting military activities throughout the region. Early videos were typically relatively straightforward, but as the group uses content provided by affiliates from different regions that employ different technology, these simpler videos are still produced as well. As the group grew in capabilities and resources, their production style evolved as well. The increase in capability resulted in the release of more technically complex videos, combining documentary-style arguments with filmmaking techniques that invoke modern viewers’ entertainment vocabulary.

Islamic State videos are distributed via the Internet, so these communications are made available to viewers everywhere. They are primarily in Arabic, although a few clips appear in English; nevertheless, the use of symbolism and particular imagery identifies individuals and groups as adversaries. Due to the significance of imagery and music to develop the narrative, the sample data uses both Arabic- and English-based videos for analysis.

In the case of their execution videos, capability development is observable. Early videos were short and simple. The executioner addresses the camera and states his grievance, and then commits the execution. This style requires minimal resources and relies little on directing, editing, or producing. Later videos exhibit more production complexity, and develop a more unique style overall. Even with the increased capacity to produce more complex videos, the sample data still show the varied use of length and complexity. While this variation does exist, analysis reveals that the Islamic State employs themes, which can be observed as patterns in their communications, and that indicate their identity, their adversaries, their beliefs, and their intentions.

(2) Theme: Allah’s Blessing/Divine Mandate

The Islamic State claims Allah’s blessing and support for their activities. Directed by the grace of Allah, they are carrying out their campaign in the region. Victories are attributed to Allah, and defeats are viewed as struggles allowed by Allah to strengthen the holy warriors. During the “Flames of War,” one man purported to be a victim in the IS capture of a local military outpost declares that they overthrew so many soldiers with so few fighters that “it’s as if Allah has blessed the Islamic State.”¹⁹⁷

(3) Theme: Authority of Islamic State/ Caliphate

Closely related to the “divine mandate” theme, the IS claims authority over the Muslim world as the true caliphate. This is evident in their renaming strategy, opting to call themselves the “Islamic State.” The figure known as “Jihadi John” declares that the Islamic State is a “caliphate with authority and power” during his address to the camera on the Japanese journalist execution video.¹⁹⁸ Jihadi John is believed by many to be Mohammed Emwazi, a Kuwaiti-born British citizen.¹⁹⁹ But with the black balaclava obscuring his face, he effectively represents the IS in both word and deed.

(4) Theme: Judgment, Sacrifice, and Purification

Each video makes the declaration against the victim clear from the outset. Themes of judgment vary through the sample data, but allegations against the victims are either proclaimed or implied through the use of visual storytelling devices. Images of maps, flags, and uniforms delineate in-groups and out-groups, and judgment is carried out to avenge religious unfaithfulness or violence directed toward the Islamic State.

¹⁹⁷ Ryan Mauro, “ISIS Releases ‘Flames of War’ Feature Film to Intimidate West,” The Clarion Project, September 21, 2014, 53:03, <http://www.clarionproject.org/analysis/isis-releases-flames-war-feature-film-intimidate-west>.

¹⁹⁸ Doug Stanglin, “Video: Islamic State Group Beheads Japanese Journalist,” USA Today, January 31, 2015, <http://www.usatoday.com/story/news/world/2015/01/31/japan-jordan-islamic-state-hostage/22643137/>.

¹⁹⁹ “Case File: Mohammed Emwazi,” CAGE, accessed November 20, 2015, <http://www.cageuk.org/case/mohammed-emwazi>.

Death at the hands of the executioners is carried out to purge the Islamic world of unfaithfulness. The execution videos heavily feature the spilled blood of the victims. The “filthy blood” is described in the “Egyptian Christian” video as being spilled for revenge.²⁰⁰ The ritualistic method of slaughter invokes religious understandings of blood sacrifices for purification. Those who have willingly given their lives in support of the struggle are honored throughout these sample communications.

(5) Theme: Military Power

The Islamic State consistently portrays themselves as military victors. While the degree to which this is emphasized varies in the videos, this theme is found throughout. “The Flames of War” is filmed as a documentary that chronicles the acts of IS soldiers in the region. The video is heavy with military activity, weapons, and equipment, and the narration asserts the power of IS troops active against local populations of adversarial Muslims and ethnic groups. Special emphasis is placed on IS victories against U.S. equipment used by American allies in the region.

Even outside of the explicitly military context, the execution videos contribute to the theme of military prowess. The executioner declares, “You are no longer fighting an insurgency; we are an Islamic army” in the James Foley video.²⁰¹ The use of imagery includes guns, uniforms, military equipment, and camouflage masks continually reasserting their identity as a military presence. Islamic State soldiers wear masks in most of their execution videos, but not in all of them.

(6) Theme: Regional Claim

The Islamic State’s regional claims are asserted throughout the sample data. The videos feature references to nearby nations and disputes over boundaries and territory. Videos are set against specific backdrops with regional implications. For instance, the

²⁰⁰ “ISIS Egypt: ISIS Executing 21 Egyptian Christians,” video, February 15, 2015, 3:45, <http://www.zerocensorship.com/bbs/uncensored/87427-isis-egypt-isis-executing-21-egyptian-christians#axzz3mOA4eJU6>.

²⁰¹ “(GRAPHIC VIDEO) Islamic State Beheads American Journalist James Foley,” LeakSource video, August 19, 2014, 3:50, <http://leaksource.info/2014/08/19/graphic-video-islamic-state-beheads-american-journalist-james-foley/>.

Egyptian Christian video uses the Mediterranean Sea as the immediate backdrop. The IS spokesman turns and declares aspirations to conquer Rome. In the context of the video, this statement is directed not only at the region across the Mediterranean, but also the Christian ideology and America by association, as the “Nation of the Cross.” Spilled blood is carefully displayed in the dirt after each killing, symbolizing Islamic State territorial domination.

(7) Theme: America as Enemy

America and its allies are identified as enemies throughout the sample data. The Foley video declares itself a “Message to America,” and specifically identifies that the purpose of the video is to proclaim revenge on the United States for its involvement in IS affairs.²⁰² Each subsequent video specifically directs messages to the United States and its allies.

The adversarial theme directed toward the United States throughout the sample data synthesizes the other themes found in this section. The Islamic State has declared the presence of their Islamic caliphate within the region, and has demanded the loyalty of Muslims worldwide. They claim to carry out the will of Allah in word and deed, and their actions support their assertions that they are a military and political authority capable of military and religious victories. Their stated objective, as stated in the “Flames of War,” is “to rule the entire world.”²⁰³

(8) Social Identity Markers

The Islamic State’s strategic communications exhibit social identity markers that can be used to analyze their self-ascribed identity, their ideology, and their intentions. The in-group is the Islamic State themselves, and the videos allude to affiliates and allies along the way. In declaring their dominion over the entire Muslim world, the Islamic State challenges Muslims to either join them or oppose them. Statements that support this idea, found throughout the data, function as both positive honor challenges to the in-

²⁰² “(GRAPHIC VIDEO),” 1:53.

²⁰³ Mauro, “ISIS Releases ‘Flames of War’ Feature Film to Intimidate West,” 30:45.

group and unaffiliated sympathizers, and negative honor challenges to those opposing their ideology. Islamic State control over the religion of Islam is a limited good, but references to their group's honor and superiority are consistently found throughout the data as well.

Out-groups are many, but are clearly defined by the Islamic State in every case. Christians, Jews, Israel, unfaithful Muslims, ethnic regional groups, and adversarial nations such as the United States and its allies are all identified at various times throughout the data as objects of disdain or intended targets of violence. Each video sample explicitly states the significance of their actions in the context of the group's perspective.

The Islamic State declares the return of caliph rule over the Muslim world, and alludes to Muslims' historical struggle to gain control over the region. This "golden age" myth promises a glorious future, both in terms of their control of the Muslim ideology and as a future in the paradise of an afterlife.

(9) Key Production Contributions

The various Islamic State execution videos exhibit similar production patterns. While varying in length and complexity, the patterns contribute to the overall style of the videos and establish a framework for understanding the videos' intent. The direction, filming, editing, and distribution of the films all contribute to these patterns' use as storytelling devices.

Every video sample used for this analysis contains a recognizable introduction. Set upon a black background, white Arabic lettering introduces the video content with "in the name of God, the most compassionate, the most merciful." The style is similar in appearance to the black Islamic State flag bearing the white letters of the *shahada*, which appears shortly and continues to be displayed in the corner of the screen for the duration of the videos.

The introduction is continued as the *al-Hayat Media Center* logo appears on screen. This logo immediately introduces sound effects and computer graphics. The

logo's gold shine contrasts against the black background. Sound effects accompany the logo's appearance, and are found throughout the videos to emphasize computer graphics that assist in advancing the narrative.

Each video directs its message at a specific out-group, and the execution videos explicitly describe the accusations against that group. The Islamic State uses flags, maps, uniforms, patches, and footage to identify and reinforce their adversary in each case. The executed victims are symbolic of their specified group, and the ensuing execution symbolizes the group purging their land of an opposing ideology.

The victims are presented to the viewer in interviews early in each video. In the English execution videos, the victims appear to read scripted material accusing the United States of causing their death. The Arabic videos, including the Jordanian pilot execution and the Islamic State spy execution, use interviews to introduce the victim. These introductions also serve as accusations against the victim and set the narrative in motion.

The videos vary in sophistication, but the longer samples are typically more complex. The filmmakers use standard editing techniques to support the narration or monologues in most cases, but the sophistication becomes more noticeable in their use of timing changes, focus, and pace. They regularly employ abrupt disruptions in the tempo of the films to emphasize specific elements of the videos. Sudden switches to slow motion are used to capture such emotions as fear, uncertainty, and terror. Speeding up the video adds a chaotic and frantic quality. At times, video is immediately reversed and replayed at various speeds for emphasis, and action is often replayed from different camera angles to emphasize different components. Long shots of the setting provide the context, and close-ups accent human elements of the discourse. In particular, as their impending execution becomes apparent, terror is seen in the victims' faces, and their reactions to the acts of execution are presented in careful detail.

Beheadings, burnings, drowning, and death by explosion are vividly shown in detail. The victims suffer and die on camera at the hands of IS executioners. The

elaborate production and editing are used intentionally to disseminate their ideology and emphasize the suffering inflicted on their victims as they are slaughtered.

(10) Music

In every case, *nasheeds* accompany the action. These religious doctrinal songs sound decidedly Arabic, and add a particular atmosphere to the films. Using minor-key melodies, the rhythmic *a capella* vocals implore jihadists to endure in the struggle. “Dawlat al-Islam Qamat”—in English, “My Ummah, Dawn has Appeared”—is the most common *nasheed* used by the IS. The English translation is:

My Ummah, accept the good news, and don't despair: victory is near.

The Islamic State has arisen and the dreaded might has begun.

It has arisen tracing out glory, and the period of setting has ended,

By faithful men who do not fear warfare.

They have created eternal glory that will not perish or disappear.

My Ummah, God is our Lord, so grant your blood,

For victory will not return except by the blood of the martyrs,

Who have spent their time hoping for their Lord in the Abode of the Prophets.

They have offered their souls to God, and for the religion there is self-sacrifice.

The people of giving and granting are the people of excellence and pride.

My Ummah, accept the good news: the Sun of Steadfastness has risen.

Verily we have marched in masses for the hills: the time-honoured glory,

That we may return the light, faith and glorious might,

By men who have forsaken the dunya and attained immortality.

And have revived the Ummah of glory and the assured victory.²⁰⁴

In a more recent addition, the Islamic State has released an English *nasheed* to accompany a short video:

For the sake of Allah we'll march to the gate of the paradise where our maidens await,

We are men that love death just as you love your life,

We are the soldiers that fight in the day and the night;

We are the soldiers that fight in the day and the night.

Going forth preparing to roar are the brothers of light with kufar in sight.

Their ranks are many and weapons are heavy,

But the soldiers of Allah are more than ready;

But The Soldiers of Allah are more than ready.

For the sake of Allah we'll march to the gate of the paradise where our maidens await,

We are men that love death just as you love your life;

We are soldiers that fight in the day and the night;

We are soldiers that fight in the day and the night.

Defending the pride of our sisters who have cried for fearing none but the Almighty as ONE

Their voices motivated, the men who migrated,

To fulfill the duty of making GOD words THE GREATEST;

²⁰⁴ Aymenn Jawad Al-Tamimi, “‘My Ummah, Dawn Has Appeared’: Nasheed for the Islamic State of Iraq and ash-Sham,” *Aymenn Jawad Al-Tamimi’s Blog*, January 28, 2014, <http://www.aymennjawad.org/2014/01/my-ummah-dawn-has-appeared-nasheed-for>.

To fulfill the duty of making GOD words THE GREATEST.

For the sake of Allah we'll march to the gate of the paradise where our
maidens await,

We are men that love death just as you love your life;

We are soldiers that fight in the day and the night;

We are soldiers that fight in the day and the night.

O my brothers, O my brothers, jihad is the way to bring back the honor

Of our glorious days the promise of Allah will always remain,

That fighting for His sake is the ultimate gain;

That fighting for His sake is the ultimate gain.

For the sake of Allah we'll march to the gate of the paradise where our
maidens await,

We are men that love death just as you love your life;

We are soldiers that fight in the day and the night;

We are soldiers that fight in the day and the night.

Now the time has come for the battles to be won,

Shahada on our tongues as our hearts beat as one;

The sunnah is alive, khilafah on the Rise,

The flag of tawheed shining bright before our eyes;

The flag of tawheed shining bright before our eyes.²⁰⁵

²⁰⁵ "For the Sake of Allah," Internet Archive video, posted by "MujahidAzhar," August 14, 2015,
https://archive.org/details/ForTheSakeOfAllah_201509.

The music providing the background for the videos uses repetition to emphasize the group narrative. Conflict is framed in the context of their religious understanding, and the group identity is defined and reiterated. Music becomes the battle hymn, leading soldiers into war by providing them with repeated, memorable doctrinal frames that explain who they are and why they fight.

(11) Conclusion—Islamic State Execution Videos

The videos produced by the Islamic State vary in style and intent, but they do exhibit patterns that allow viewers to understand the group's identity and the nature of their conflicts with other groups. The style of video production not only indicates sophisticated capabilities, but also exhibits an intentional strategy—using mass media to tell the story. Imagery is used to identify out-groups and reinforce the in-group's identity, building a narrative that draws on religious history. Actions that are shown in these videos are used to symbolically assault competing ideologies and undermine their opponents' credibility. In their prolific distribution of videos containing vivid imagery and music, the IS exhibits not only a sophisticated video production capability, but also a sophisticated ability to conduct psychological warfare through strategic communication directed at the Western world.

F. ANALYSIS CONCLUSION

The sample analysis revealed recurrent themes and structures within each of the videos. In addition, production techniques and stylistic elements effectively combine image and sound to craft a narrative. The production styles used to construct the films themselves are appropriate in each case to connect the intended message to the intended audience. The effectiveness of communicating ideas with complex implications is enhanced when the components of image, sound, and storytelling are combined.

(1) Production Style

The various production styles are consistent with each video's intent. The World War II-era films, being the product of sovereign states seeking to influence and inspire populations, are highly produced with clear intentions. In each of those samples,

government officials used professional storytellers to convey the narrative and influence the populations' attitudes in order to affect behavior changes. These productions are straightforward and clear about their purpose, and they utilize an explicit style of filmmaking.

Music videos take different approaches to influencing audiences. Beginning with writing, performing, and recording music, these pieces result in short films that reinforce the music's assertions. The era of the music video has resulted in shifts in production techniques as audiences have grown more accustomed to faster-paced edits and disconnected visual images woven together. This stylistic development can be seen in TV and film, but it has not completely replaced legacy styles of film production and editing.

The two music video samples analyzed in this thesis are products of two different types of groups. In each case, the music takes center stage, describing relationships, priorities, threats, and values for group members, outsiders, and fringe affiliates. The music videos center on the music production, and then uses imagery to reinforce the assertions in the music. The production style of these videos, then, reflects the fact that the music is the focal point. As with the films, intentional production techniques are used to drive the story and emphasize the artist's intent.

The Islamic State execution videos exhibit a particular arc of production quality. They are somewhat basic in the beginning of their media campaign. Using only a few cameras, dialogue is addressed directly to the viewer in an explanatory declaration. The executioner states the nature of the group's grievance directly to the audience, and the victim's speech is included in the spectacle. Eventually, the IS demonstrates more sophisticated production capabilities, and the story is told in more complex visual terms. The more modern samples use variations in film speed to emphasize details of their videos. Particular attention is given to important details that advance the narrative, and the effect is achieved without verbal explanation. The IS uses slow-motion to capture reactions of terror, and accelerated-motion to create frantic activity and action. Reverse-motion is also used to accentuate violence by repeating an action over and over again. In manipulating the speed and direction of the images, the Islamic State in particular exhibits mastery of the modern storytelling trade to create a desired effect.

(2) Symbolism and Logos

In each sample, symbolism is used to narrate and then reinforce the story. The early films display a significant presence of flags, logos, and uniforms throughout. They utilize maps and graphics to define the nature of the conflict, and overtly address their own use of uniforms, flags, and symbols. In each case, the state-sponsored films take care to delineate their position in contrast with their adversaries, and symbolism is used throughout to connect their ideas to particular visual images.

The samples analyzed build on the visual vocabulary of their own in-groups. Symbols, such as the swastika or the American flag, are used to connect audiences with the ideas espoused by those groups. The music videos display logos and icons for a similar effect, and all the samples use uniforms to associate individuals with groups.

In particular, the IS combines interviews with computer graphics to thoroughly establish the victim's identity as a member of an out-group. Although the interview is conducted in Arabic, maps and flags are used to describe the alliance between Israel, the United States, and other Western allies in the Middle East. The victims in every case are symbolic of an adversary group. These groups are typically the United States, Israel, non-compliant Muslim groups, or any of the nations collaborating with them. This demonstrates that filmmakers may use graphic symbolism to identify other symbols and, in the process, continue to construct the narrative.

(3) Music

Music is a fundamental element in each of the samples, inextricably linked with the visuals and the message. Military music is used in the World War II-era samples to set a mood or atmosphere, and musical accents emphasize filmmakers' key points. The artists in the music videos direct their attention to the listening audience, and the music present in each is typical of its respective genre. The Islamic State uses the *nasheed* to accompany images of its actions, imparting doctrinal and theological implications upon their symbolic actions.

The analysis shows that music is used intentionally to support the imagery and vice versa in strategic communication. Music sets the atmosphere and allows a mood to

develop. In all of these samples, the music is also doctrinally explicit, describing allegiances, beliefs, and priorities of the group.

(4) Narrative

The thematic analysis reveals similar patterns of communicating ideas to both members inside and outside of the group. Joseph Campbell's Jungian argument that groups view life through the framework of stories is evident in each of the sample's themes. The structures of the stories support Campbell's idea of the hero common to all cultures, whose objective is saving a people, a person, or supporting an idea.²⁰⁶ In each sample, the in-group is threatened by conditions or actions from great forces outside the group. The survival and ultimate ability for the people to thrive is dependent on both group cohesion and individual action on behalf of the group. The group must define itself, and music and symbols are significant parts of the defining language. In the course of defining itself, the group constructs its ideas about the world around them.

Social identity theory (SIT) applies analytical tools to observe markers in a group's culture and communications. These markers expose the framework of a group's identity and allow analysts to apply the cultural markers to the challenge/response cycle. The markers that allow SIT practitioners to analyze a group are the same tools that construct their identity, and that group members use to identify themselves with each other and outsiders alike.

In each of these cases of strategic communication, the groups' identities are constructed through crafted mass media images and music. The analysis identified recurrent themes of identity within strategic communications produced by groups or their representatives. In exploring these communications for recurrent themes, groups' priorities and beliefs are exposed. These themes found in the samples construct, support, and reinforce the groups' identities and their beliefs about themselves and the world in which they live.

²⁰⁶ Campbell, Joseph, "The Power of Myth," 133

V. DISCUSSION

A. MUSIC, IDEOLOGY, AND IDENTITY

MacDonald, Hargreaves, and Miell find evidence that music in contemporary society plays a crucial role in the development and maintenance of personal identities.²⁰⁷ Used as a “badge” of identity, music helps individuals develop their sense of who they are in relation to the society around them.²⁰⁸ Music is shown to be an important identity marker, “enmeshed in everyday life,” that provides important cues for in-group and out-group delineation and the attending sense of identity.²⁰⁹ According to these authors, social variables account for many fundamental roles in an individual’s musical identity.²¹⁰ Their assessment of the academic psychology of music points to a discipline historically focused on combining variables in a quantitative fashion. They advocate for the emerging model of music psychology that includes social factors, cultural significance, and identity studies.²¹¹

Likewise, Simon Frith assesses that music and identity are uniquely situated together because music “offers, so intensely, a sense of both self and others.”²¹² Music is then critical to identity, which Frith describes as a process rather than a “thing.”²¹³ Groups identify themselves through cultural activities; Frith argues that music is the key collaborative activity for group identification.²¹⁴ Music may be discussed in terms of lyrical analysis or notational analysis, but, in all of its forms, music is fundamentally

²⁰⁷ Raymond MacDonald, David Hargreaves, and Dorothy Miell, *Musical Identities* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 462.

²⁰⁸ MacDonald, Hargreaves, and Miell, *Musical Identities*, 462.

²⁰⁹ Ibid.

²¹⁰ Ibid.

²¹¹ Ibid., 469.

²¹² Simon Frith, “Music and Identity,” in *Questions of Cultural Identity*, ed. Stuart Hall and Paul du Gay (London: SAGE, 2006), 110.

²¹³ Frith, “Music and Identity,” 110.

²¹⁴ Ibid.

linked to the perception of truth and identity.²¹⁵ Music, for all, offers a way of making “sense of the world and our place in it.”²¹⁶

1. Group Identity and Religious Music

Friedlind Riedel assessed music’s central role in religious worship services.²¹⁷ In both observing a particular congregation and interviewing the religious practitioners, he set out to analyze the social relationship of music and group identity within the context of a German religious community’s worship service. Riedel offers that music has the unique ability to affect an individual’s emotions and understandings, and that the study of music’s effects on participants should seek to understand music’s characteristic ability to influence the social “atmosphere.”²¹⁸

In analyzing music’s social effects, Riedel found evidence that corporate intimacy is an inherent and fundamental element of shared musical experiences. This begins to provide insight into the universal use of music as a vehicle of worship among religious congregations. Experiencing music together provides a common sense of purpose and emotion. Sacred music in particular involves the group in a way that has become less common in the modern era in other types of gatherings. But the model of corporate worship further reflects music’s historical role in shaping social dynamics. Riedel finds that music’s ability to shape atmosphere is a crucial property, allowing it to contribute to constructing social dynamics.

Riedel describes atmosphere as the relationship between “environmental qualities and human states.”²¹⁹ The human atmosphere is created by “constellations of things” articulating and developing feelings that make sense of the situation. Atmosphere is indefinable, but completely present and, in itself, defines a particular social

²¹⁵ Frith, “Music and Identity,” 113.

²¹⁶ Ibid.

²¹⁷ Friedlind Riedel, “Music as Atmosphere: Lines of Becoming in Congregational Worship,” *Lebenswelt*, no. 6 (2015). doi 10.13130/2240-9599/4913.

²¹⁸ Riedel, “Music as Atmosphere,” 81.

²¹⁹ Ibid., 88.

situation.²²⁰ Riedel further describes atmosphere as human involvement in a social environment.²²¹ He argues that sound possesses the capacity to “gradually demarcate and alter the [atmosphere]...both spatially and temporally.”²²² Atmosphere is constructed of a dynamic set of variable components, any of which contribute to varying degrees and may shift the atmosphere when altered.

Humans experience the atmosphere in their feelings as well. Riedel finds that music shapes feelings, and sharing emotions in a social situation develops a sense of “becoming.”²²³ This particular characteristic is unique to music, and helps define a group’s sense of identity. Songs and hymns exemplify music bringing the congregation into a common emotional state—a “common situation.”²²⁴ Atmosphere is often describable but usually indefinable. In films, music infuses atmosphere into the story to achieve a specific emotional effect. Whether somber, humorous, dramatic, or emotional, music is used to direct an audience’s perception of what they are experiencing. This is possible because of music’s unique effect on people’s emotions and cognition.

Cultural markers, such as a particular language, style, and imagery, contribute to the shared identity by creating “territorialisation.”²²⁵ Specifically, the repetition of stylistic cues builds and reinforces the group’s experience and identity. In the case of religious worship services, atmosphere is constructed and ideas are repeated in order to control the group’s boundaries. Style becomes a marker of the accepted reality. Repetition, then, becomes an effective method of socially constructing the group’s “territory,” both ideologically and socially. When combined with language—using lyrics to explicitly introduce and reinforce beliefs about the world, relationships to others, and identity—music is a powerful tool of influence and social control.

²²⁰ Riedel, “Music as Atmosphere,” 85.

²²¹ *Ibid.*, 88.

²²² *Ibid.*, 96.

²²³ *Ibid.*, 91.

²²⁴ *Ibid.*, 97.

²²⁵ *Ibid.*, 106.

While music may be analyzed with a number of academic frameworks, Riedel is among those who believe music is inextricable from its social situation. He notes, “Whereas ethnographic accounts of ecclesial practices tend to focus on narratives and liturgy, it is the unsayable (and unreadable) that is crucial in the emergence of identity and difference, doctrine, and denomination.”²²⁶ Based on the results of his studies, Riedel concludes, “the study of music is always the study of the atmosphere alongside which it occurs and from which it cannot be separated.”²²⁷ In the case of music, the construction of social identity can be seen in action. Social reality is both constructed and understood with the same set of tools.

2. American Music and Oppression Identity

Jazz and blues are particularly significant examples of American music with overt identity characteristics. The closely related genres are products of oppressed black culture in America. Jazz is uniquely structured to allow individual musicians to improvise within the established confines of the song; it is typically musically complex, requiring of its musicians extensive music theory knowledge. Ralph Ellison describes jazz as the “art of individual assertion within and against the group.”²²⁸ In this way, jazz is a symbolic discussion of identity against a group narrative.

Blues is more musically straightforward than jazz, and contains more lyrically explicit descriptions of life and oppression. While blues has a more standard set of chord structures and simplified scales, Paul Gilroy offers that both jazz and blues amplify and explain struggles by communicating information, providing the participants—both musicians and listeners—the courage to “go on living in the present.”²²⁹

Both jazz and blues have thrived over the decades and given rise to genres such as rhythm and blues (R&B), rock and roll, soul, funk, rap, and ultimately, every sub-genre of popular music that can be seen today. Social change throughout the 20th century has

²²⁶ Riedel, “Music as Atmosphere,” 109.

²²⁷ *Ibid.*, 94.

²²⁸ Frith, “Music and Identity,” 118.

²²⁹ *Ibid.*

been attributed to the popularity of certain types of music and their messages. The 1960s saw dramatic social shifts in American culture that are often directly attributed to the influence of musicians such as the Beatles and Jimi Hendrix. Both musicians developed their particular brands of rock and roll directly from black American blues and R&B. Social changes immediately accompanied the shifting musical landscape.

But while narrative shifts are made possible by music's cultural influence, the results are not necessarily predictable and never guaranteed. Frith offers that “a good jazz performance, that is to say (like any good musical performance), depends on rhetorical truth, on the musicians’ ability to convince and persuade the listener that what they are saying matters.”²³⁰ In this way, music is seen as a constitutive factor in the “patterning of social values and social interaction.”²³¹ So when it is perceived to be authentic, music can directly build social structures, making it, in fact, one of the very tools constructing social reality. In order to be effective, however, music must be seen as a genuine expression of the performer. Like all messaging, if the message is perceived to be false by the listeners, the music is not typically persuasive.

Frith also finds that music symbolizes collective identity.²³² In being both highly affective toward the individual and “obviously collective,” identity is developed and reaffirmed through experiencing music.²³³ And the narrative is the central external factor in developing identity.²³⁴ The dominant narrative is crucial to music’s positioning within a social situation. Music that aligns itself with a prevailing narrative may find an immediate connection with a mainstream audience that already shares key assumptions about the world. Music that challenges conventions, questions assumptions, or defies the prevailing narrative both in style and content may not fit within the dominant social situation. But such music often finds or builds an audience and successfully challenges

²³⁰ Frith, “Music and Identity,” 117.

²³¹ *Ibid.*

²³² *Ibid.*, 121.

²³³ *Ibid.*

²³⁴ *Ibid.*

social norms to become the agent for changing the social landscape. American culture is replete with examples of music steering massive shifts in social understandings.

3. American Rap and Identity

Rap is an example of a musical genre that overtly addresses social narratives, exhibits highly explicit social markers, and unashamedly attempts to craft identity. In addition to its socially charged lyrics, the use of sampling beats, melodies, and references to life and popular culture are themselves allusions to identity, and therefore discursive tools.²³⁵ By appropriating significant cultural markers in the form of musical elements, identity is continually shaped.²³⁶ Charis E. Kubrin examines rap's role in identity, culture, and violence.²³⁷ Developed from the gang culture of underclass Southern California, gangsta rap is specifically symbolic of violent life in the black ghetto.²³⁸ In constructing violent identities for themselves, rappers organize their violent social structures and account for violent behavior.²³⁹ Kubrin argues that the gang identity and behavioral code are built and reinforced with popular culture. In studying the "subtle discursive process," Kirbin finds that music does not necessarily cause violence, but acts to organize violent social identity.

A variety of socio-economic factors converge in America's black underclass ghettos. The "opportunity structure" is inadequate or absent, decreasing the avenues available for youth to advance into social roles that are available to others.²⁴⁰ Technological advances were important in the emergence of rap as a social tool. By sampling previously existing music, artists have access to important elements of pop music without needing instruments, lessons, or other musicians. This phenomenon directly allows artists to access their creativity and develop a meaningful piece of music

²³⁵ Frith, "Music and Identity," 115.

²³⁶ Ibid.

²³⁷ Charis E. Kubrin, "Gangstas, Thugs, and Hustlas: Identity and the Code of the Street in Rap Music," *Social Problems*, 52, no. 3 (2005): 360–378, <http://socpro.oxfordjournals.org/content/52/3/360>.

²³⁸ Kubrin, "Gangstas, Thugs, and Hustlas," 361.

²³⁹ Ibid.

²⁴⁰ Ibid., 362.

in a resource-lean environment. This factor has been amplified significantly in the last decade with the digital revolution and its far-reaching effects on communication and distribution.

Image is crucial, and social identity markers are significant in this environment; social identity and respect are shown to be its most important features.²⁴¹ According to Kubrin's research, illegitimate opportunities outnumber legitimate opportunities in this disadvantaged environment.²⁴² This develops a culture in which criminal professions become an accepted part of the culture; guns, violence, and violent prowess then become social symbols and identity markers.²⁴³ Kubrin concludes that violent imagery in rap is primarily used to establish social identity and exert social control.²⁴⁴ Conflict becomes naturally more violent in such an environment. Donald Black describes this violence as a culture deploying moralistic social control to enforce justice in a social environment.²⁴⁵ Violence in this context is used to correct behaviors and reinforce cultural expectations in the perceived absence of another authority's justice. This sense is a response to offensive behavior—a social challenge requiring a response according to SIT.

SIT also views this conflict in the challenge/response cycle. When occurring in a violence-prone environment, honor challenges and their responses will be more violent in nature. Gangsta rap has been used as a weapon for articulating challenges and responses in a socially mediated environment. Perceived offenses are addressed, and retaliation is enacted through verbal assaults, both expressed and implied. In fact, gangsta rap has a notable history of use as weaponized communication between groups in conflict. By using mass media in this way, gangsta rap serves as a tool for shaping its environment's discourse. While music does not compel violence, it provides a framework for interpreting and constructing the social world. Action often follows, but music's influence on intent occurs within the complex framework of the social context. Music

²⁴¹ Kubrin, "Gangstas, Thugs, and Hustlas," 364.

²⁴² *Ibid.*, 361.

²⁴³ *Ibid.*, 363.

²⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 370.

²⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 364.

may or may not provoke violence, but it certainly affects the ideologies of sympathetic listeners.

Music also provides the machinery for the challenge/response cycle in a conflict, in which a social idea—such as reputation, respect, or religious belief—is the limited good. The violence referred to in gangsta rap’s hostile, aggressive lyrics is usually symbolic; however, any perceived distinction between word and deed is quickly blurred when the limited good is respect. These ideological limited goods may be directly affected by verbal honor challenges. Words used as weapons can embarrass and undermine the out-group. The words themselves are the attack. The music symbolically attacks the opponent’s status to reclaim the limited good, and embarrassment is equivalent to defeat. In a socially mediated environment, respect and credibility are paramount. An effective negative honor challenge can destroy.

4. Music Conclusion

Music has been used to convey stories and build understanding in every culture. It is present at every stage of life, and is used in both the background and the foreground to affect human perception. Kubrin describes culture as “an interpretive tool kit that is useful for understanding experiences.”²⁴⁶ At the same time, words are “discursive actions,” and the music of a culture works to construct the social environment in which it exists.²⁴⁷ Before 20th-century mass media, art and music were the “mass media” of their time and place. Music and culture remain the cultural tools of influencing ideology. Music, symbolism, and culture are the tools of discourse construction analysis. As such, they can be useful for both analyzing and disrupting terrorist ideologies. A group’s music reveals how the group perceives its own identity and its beliefs about the world, its members, and others. Tribes, religious congregations, nations, ethnic groups, diasporas, and subcultures all use music to unify their members and define their boundaries.

Persuasive music is the tool of social influence, transcending state-sponsored propaganda, political rhetoric, or verbal persuasion. Music fuels social shifts and is

²⁴⁶ Kubrin, “Gangstas, Thugs, and Hustlas,” 366.

²⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 366.

capable of both building and destroying ideologies. Being so critical to the construction of group identity, understanding music's social influence may be particularly useful to warfighters and security practitioners.

B. SYMBOLISM, NARRATIVE, AND STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION

Terrorist acts of violence are fundamentally acts of communication.²⁴⁸ If acts of terrorism are intergroup communications, then terrorist groups' strategic communications may be viewed as acts of terrorist violence. Mass communication has changed substantially and rapidly over the last few years, resulting in a new environment in which groups may forge their identity. In "Collective Action in the Age of the Internet," Postmes and Brunsting assert that the Internet "affords movements and activists the power of mass communication."²⁴⁹ Digital technology allows photos and videos to be quickly and easily captured, produced, and distributed globally, placing the tools of mass media into the hands of the masses. For the purposes of this paper, both the terms "social media" and "digital technology" refer to web-based platforms and tools that allow mass distribution of digital written material, photos, videos, audio, or any combination of these that present users with "ideal circumstances to express social identity."²⁵⁰

Postmes and Brunsting argue that the use of Internet-based mass communication can both form and strengthen social movements.²⁵¹ as the Internet, they assess, is a mass communication system that allows a "strong intergroup dynamic" to develop.²⁵² The web-based platforms that make up social media not only allow ideas to be transmitted effortlessly, but also allow the mass distribution of images through digital photos and videos. These now-ubiquitous digital media tools have become the unremarkable communication channels of everyday life; as such, groups use them to construct and reinforce a group identity, regardless of the physical proximity of the group's

²⁴⁸ David Brannan, Kristin Darken, and Anders Strindberg, *A Practitioner's Way Forward*, Agile Press, 85

²⁴⁹ Postmes and Brunsting, "Collective Action," 294.

²⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 295.

²⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 294.

²⁵² *Ibid.*, 293.

members.²⁵³ Social media allow ideas and images to be transmitted effortlessly and ubiquitously.

Images resonate immediacy, giving viewers direct experience to events.²⁵⁴ Symbolism and imagery can transmit powerful ideas that imply the entire story is being told. Images build ideas about events and fuel the event's dominant narrative or relationship.²⁵⁵ Imagery allows people to process complex ideas in terms that they can understand.²⁵⁶

This section discusses communication principles related to the psychology of symbolism, its effect on group narrative, and its role in conflict. Media richness theory as described by Lengel, Daft, and Trevino, and the nature of symbolism are synthesized with Blumer's symbolic interactionism to view the act of communication as social action itself.²⁵⁷ The section also discusses symbolism's specific role in constructing reality in extremist conflict, and historic use and psychological significance of flags, masks, and ritual beheadings as salient social symbols. Finally, research on the Islamic State's use of black flags and ritual executions is examined, arguing that the IS' use of "rich" digital media constitutes a pattern of identity building, narrative construction, and symbolic violent action directed at the United States and its allies, demanding an appropriate response from homeland security practitioners.

1. Symbolism

Symbols are useful for simplifying complex ideas.²⁵⁸ Anthropologists believe that symbols—along with myths, rituals, and ceremonies—are central to the study of sociology.²⁵⁹ Joseph R. Gusfield and Jerzy Michalowicz address symbolism's formative

²⁵³ Postmes and Brunsting, "Collective Action," 295.

²⁵⁴ U.S. Marine Corps, *Command and Control* (MCDP 6), 72.

²⁵⁵ Ibid.

²⁵⁶ Ibid.

²⁵⁷ Trevino, Lengel, and Daft, "Media Symbolism"; Blumer, *Symbolic Interactionism*, 2.

²⁵⁸ Sherry B. Ortner, "On Key Symbols," *American Anthropologist* 75, no. 5 (October 1973): 1340, http://www.jstor.org/stable/674036?seq=1#page_scan_tab_contents.

²⁵⁹ Gusfield and Michalowicz, "Secular Symbolism," 417.

role in identity building within society, and they view symbolism as images or ideas that imply deeper meanings than the accepted definition of the symbols themselves.²⁶⁰ They assert that symbolic meanings are found in all levels of human interaction, and these pervasive symbols help to define the social structure.²⁶¹

(1) Media Richness Theory and Symbolism

Communication researchers Trevino, Lengel, and Daft conducted a series of studies in 1987 utilizing both media richness theory and symbolic interactionism.²⁶² Media richness theory states that communication channels—“media”—have varied effectiveness in conveying an idea. Media is described as “rich” or “lean” depending upon the possibility of reaching a “common understanding,” the use of “multiple cues to convey meaning,” and “natural language to convey subtleties.”²⁶³ For example, face-to-face interaction is typically considered a richer medium than the telephone due to the immediate feedback and natural use of language.²⁶⁴ The richer the medium, the more effectively a clear message is delivered. These authors use symbolic interactionism to observe both “symbol creating” behavior and “symbol communication.”²⁶⁵ Within a group, certain meanings are already shared among members.²⁶⁶ In these cases, symbols are readily understood, and messages are relatively clear. This is when symbol communication occurs—communicators understand the shared meanings of symbols. But messages with ambiguous meanings are not communicated as easily. These ill-defined messages require symbol creation—the process of socially constructing a shared meaning of symbols and grammar.²⁶⁷

²⁶⁰ Gusfield and Michalowicz, “Secular Symbolism,” 419.

²⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 423.

²⁶² Trevino, Lengel, and Daft, “Media Symbolism.”

²⁶³ Trevino, Lengel, and Daft, “Media Symbolism,” 557.

²⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 557.

²⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 556.

²⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁶⁷ *Ibid.*

Berger and Luckmann address the importance of symbolic universes in explaining the biographical meanings of the individuals in the group.²⁶⁸ Symbolic universes integrate “realms of reality” that provide shared understandings about the world.²⁶⁹ Through the use of symbolism, entire ideological systems are legitimized, understood, passed along to newcomers, and asserted against competing systems or “universes.” Symbolism provides communication systems for the construction of ideology and identity. A communication system of shared meanings is relatively stable; meanings are relatively clear. But in highly ambiguous situations, the group must exert effort to mutually understand terms and signals. They must work to “shape their own social reality.”²⁷⁰ This is when the choice of media becomes particularly important. As a group struggles to organize its own reality, ambiguity must give way to shared meanings for symbols and language in order to stabilize the system. Rich media accelerates the process by decreasing ambiguity, allowing rapid feedback between communicators. Symbols and language are easily understood.

The Trevino, Lengel, and Daft paper takes the theories one step further, suggesting that, from a symbolic interactionist perspective, the perception of the media itself serves as an important contextual factor in understanding its meaning.²⁷¹ High-performing communicators exhibited a greater sensitivity to the “match between message ambiguity and media.”²⁷² The authors also reveal that people often use certain media to symbolically legitimize their positions and appear competent.²⁷³ The choice of communication medium then becomes highly symbolic of “intention” within a social group. For instance, a face-to-face conversation implies a certain amount of caring and effort, whereas a manager emphasizing his authority may use formal written communication.²⁷⁴ Any medium may be used effectively or disastrously based upon the

²⁶⁸ Berger and Luckmann, *The Social Construction of Reality*, 96.

²⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 96.

²⁷⁰ Trevino, Lengel, and Daft, “Media Symbolism,” 556.

²⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 558.

²⁷² *Ibid.*

²⁷³ *Ibid.*

²⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

social context and the recipient's perception. According to Trevino, Lengel, and Daft, the medium can itself be the message.²⁷⁵

The Trevino, Lengel, and Daft paper is also valuable for its synthesis of media richness and symbolic interactionism theories to provide insight into communication methods' symbolic significance. The study pre-dates the widespread use of digital media such as email, video, text, or web-based broadcast platforms. Email is addressed, but only briefly, and in a much different socio-technological context than would be applied today. But Postmes and Brunsting's more recent work addresses Internet-based communication systems. They argue that the potential for individuals to mobilize into collective action is greatly enhanced by the greater reach of mass communication channels into ordinary life.²⁷⁶ In this sense, the principles asserted by Trevino, Lengel, and Daft may be applied to a variety of socially mediated group situations that now use digital media to communicate. Trevino, Lengel, and Daft conclude that "media have symbolic value, and symbols influence culture."²⁷⁷

(2) Symbolism and Terrorism

If symbols influence culture, then symbolism also directly influences the social construction of cultures' realities. Symbols provide shortcuts to deeper meanings, allowing those who agree about the meanings the opportunity to communicate with each other. Symbols are used intentionally and unintentionally to signal messages between communicators, and their use affects the social situation in which they exist.

In the same way, acts of violence, specifically terrorism, are symbolic as well.²⁷⁸ In selecting actions designed to instill fear in a larger population or advance an ideological cause, terrorists use symbolism to deliver their message.²⁷⁹ Targets are selected due to their relevance to the specific conflict at hand. Grievances against the out-

²⁷⁵ Trevino, Lengel, and Daft, "Media Symbolism," 559.

²⁷⁶ Postmes and Brunsting, "Collective Action," 296.

²⁷⁷ Trevino, Lengel, and Daft, "Media Symbolism," 571.

²⁷⁸ Brannan, Darken, and Strindberg, *A Practitioner's Way Forward*, 86.

²⁷⁹ Ibid.

group are communicated by selecting the most salient landmark or population to emphasize the point. While the nature of warfare may be changing due to globalization, post-modernist influence, and the increasing threat of hybrid warfare, violent conflict is still likely to remain highly symbolic—perhaps even more so than it already has. The use of symbolism in intergroup conflict may both reveal and affect the nature of the conflict. As a tool of social construction, strategic communication shapes the social situation. In violent conflict, the dominant narrative may serve to direct populations’ perceptions and, in turn, reflect the group’s priorities and intentions.

Digital media now allows social construction tools to be wielded by any member of society. Captured and broadcast imagery amplifies actions. Typically, images that receive the most attention are those that advance a specific narrative of a social situation. As terrorist groups’ strategic communications advance in capability, their ability to affect the conflict narrative increases. Jihadists specifically use powerful symbolism in their mass communication through black flags, masks, and beheadings. Each of these visual symbols is used intentionally in public communication to convey important beliefs about the group and their ways of thinking. They are constructing the social world in which the conflict exists.

(3) Flags

Anthropologists show that a culture’s symbols hold a central position in the construction of its reality.²⁸⁰ In her article “On Key Symbols,” Sherry B. Ortner offers that flags are considered “key symbols”—symbols that are culturally important and arouse feelings and ideas.²⁸¹ Key symbols are also present in a variety of other fundamentally significant contexts, such as music, myth, and ritual, and there are important cultural restrictions regarding their use and misuse.²⁸²

As key symbols, flags represent ideas and feelings as understood by the observer, and Ortner argues that they encourage an “all-or-nothing kind of allegiance” to their

²⁸⁰ Gusfield and Michalowicz, “Secular Symbolism.”

²⁸¹ Ortner, “On Key Symbols,” 1340, 1339.

²⁸² *Ibid.*, 1339.

ideals.²⁸³ She finds that these key symbols provide a framework for categorizing and conceptualizing experiences.²⁸⁴ A flag may represent many things, and it can represent all of those things at the same time.²⁸⁵ As instantly recognizable symbols, flags do not necessarily encourage the observer to reflect on the ideals being represented; their function is to summarize those ideals.²⁸⁶

Gusfield and Michalowicz discuss the display of the American flag as a symbol of the United States.²⁸⁷ They observe that symbols are meaningful only to audiences with a proper frame of reference for that symbol; the American flag represents meaningful ideas to “socialized members of American society.”²⁸⁸ By this logic, the American flag would then represent very different ideals to different audiences with different perspectives. These authors find that understandings of metaphorical devices like poetry and symbolism rely on both the actor’s intent and the audience’s understanding.²⁸⁹ A mutual understanding of the symbol, then, must be reached in order for the symbol to actually contain symbolic meaning. Intentionally displaying a flag implies support of the ideology represented by that flag. The display of summarized ideologies may not only rally support for the ideology, but may also generate conflict. Ortner’s “all-or-nothing allegiance” may either unify or divide, essentially defining and reinforcing in-groups and out-groups

Recently, conflict over the display of the “Confederate Battle Flag” led to the slaughter of nine parishioners in a black-majority church in Charleston, South Carolina.²⁹⁰ The assailant in that shooting was seen displaying images of the

²⁸³ Ortner, “On Key Symbols,” 1340.

²⁸⁴ Ibid.

²⁸⁵ Ibid.

²⁸⁶ Ortner, “On Key Symbols,” 1340.

²⁸⁷ Gusfield and Michalowicz, “Secular Symbolism,” 421.

²⁸⁸ Ibid.

²⁸⁹ Ibid., 422.

²⁹⁰ Sarah Dutton et al., “Poll: Views on Charleston Shooting, Confederate Flag,” CBS News, July 23, 2015, <http://www.cbsnews.com/news/cbs-news-poll-charleston-shooting-and-the-confederate-flag/>.

Confederate, Rhodesian, and South African flags in Internet photos.²⁹¹ The ensuing conflict centered on whether the Confederate flag symbolizes Southern heritage or black oppression, and to what degree the symbol should be displayed publicly. In actuality, because a symbol relies on both intent and interpretation, it may be intended and interpreted in a variety of conflicting ways. Because of their use as identity-constructing symbols, flags may be used in times and places remote from the original meanings to draw a connection to the ideology symbolized by the flag. The Charleston shooter adorned himself in the “defunct” flags of previous apartheid regimes to connect his identity with ideologies of racial separation.²⁹² Similarly, a modern-day white supremecists who has no official connection to the German Nazi Party of the early 20th century may adopt a Nazi flag. The only connection necessary is a sense of shared identity with that particular ideology; the flag and swastika build the identity, and the narrative of events is naturally a part of the identity.

In the era of “virtual state” jihad, flags are becoming especially useful to quickly connect a violent action to a group’s ideology. From any point on the globe, a non-affiliated violent actor may identify with a group ideology and take action, independent of any official connection to any actual organization. The strategic placement of a flag in visual communication provides important contextual clues to an individual’s motives and frame of reference by identifying him with an ideology. In the 2014 Sydney hostage incident, a lone actor displayed a *shahada* flag in the window of building to affiliate his actions with the violent jihadist movement.²⁹³ The display of the black flag used by Jabhat al-Nusra, but similar to the black IS flag, amplified his actions to the level of an international incident by implying an affiliation with violent jihadists. The flag’s symbolism successfully identified him with the group without any official affiliation to a violent organization.

²⁹¹ Nicole Hemmer, “Those Two Other Flags,” U.S. News & World Report, June 23, 2015, <http://www.usnews.com/opinion/blogs/nicole-hemmer/2015/06/23/confederate-flag-wasnt-the-only-inspiration-for-dylann-storm-roof>.

²⁹² Hemmer, “Those Two Other Flags.”

²⁹³ Ayaan Hirsi Ali, “The Shahada in Sydney Reminds Us that Political Islam Is Deadly,” *Time*, December 16, 2014, <http://time.com/3634750/shahada-in-sydney-political-islam-ayaan-hirsi-ali/>.

Anthropologists and sociologists have identified the long-standing role of flags as symbolic carriers of cultural ideologies, but the new environment in which media may be instantly broadcast worldwide places these identity-constructing symbols in a new context. The powerful and immediate effect of flags on human understanding combined with the instantaneous transmission of information now place group identities into relationship in ways that have not yet been fully recognized. Since understanding of reality is informed by such cultural symbols, flags may be viewed as powerful identity-constructing tools that fundamentally contribute to social understanding.

(4) Masks

Masks have particular significance to the study of symbolism, identity, and behavior. Masks conceal the individual identity of the wearer, simultaneously providing a group identity characterized by the particular mask. Masks are salient symbols to humans, and are used similarly to uniforms to connote authority and connect with a narrative.

Anthropologists have conducted studies on tribal communities' use of masks as symbols of ancestors, gods, and their attendant ideologies. Roy Sieber's article entitled "Masks as Agents of Social Control" reveals these patterns in various African tribes.²⁹⁴ Sieber assesses that traditional African art combined both iconography and social values, and that such tribal art should be viewed primarily as social mechanisms.²⁹⁵ Masks in particular were used to maintain formalized order and tribal well-being.²⁹⁶ Sieber argues that masks used by African tribal leaders "may be described as symbols or foci for the spiritual forces that loaned their authority to the edicts that emanated from the masks."²⁹⁷ These symbolic masks were used to invoke authority to the rest of the tribe, and were broken down by levels of authority; certain masks carried greater authority than others

²⁹⁴ Roy Sieber, "Masks as Agents of Social Control," *African Studies Bulletin* 5, no. 2 (May 1962): 8–13, http://www.jstor.org/stable/523143?seq=1#page_scan_tab_contents.

²⁹⁵ Sieber, "Masks as Agents of Social Control," 8.

²⁹⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 9.

that had narrower, more specific areas of responsibility.²⁹⁸ Tribal masks' symbolism largely centered on cultural leaders casting judgment on social issues by invoking revered religious and cultural symbols, which were inextricably intertwined with music as well.²⁹⁹

Sieber's research provides examples in which masks were used publically to control cultural behavior, administer punishment, and enforce cultural expectations.³⁰⁰ By donning a mask and effectively "borrowing" authority (to expand on Sieber's description of "loaning" authority) to render judgment on tribal activities, the masked individuals made public declarations about the tribe's expectations of behavior and boundaries. The actions of the masked leader symbolized the "status and power" of the tribal process.³⁰¹ With this research, Sieber makes the case that altering one's physical appearance—in this case, by wearing masks—is an effective means of altering one's identity to exert social control over a group and its members.

Philip Zimbardo has also addressed the significance of masks and their effects on perception, identity, and behavior. In *The Lucifer Effect*, Zimbardo conducted a set of studies designed to test the effects of "deindividuation" and anonymity on human behavior.³⁰² This series of experiments involved analyzing human behavior under conditions in which the subjects were highly identifiable. Those behaviors were then compared and contrasted to behaviors performed under similar circumstances with the added condition of anonymity.³⁰³ In the Stanford prison experiment, individuals assigned the appearance of prison guards quickly began exhibiting authoritarian and assertive behaviors.³⁰⁴ The mirrored sunglasses and military-style uniforms issued to them were shown to both provide anonymity and encourage antisocial behavior. In that experiment,

²⁹⁸ Sieber, "Masks as Agents of Social Control," 11.

²⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 9, 12.

³⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 12.

³⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 13.

³⁰² Philip Zimbardo, *The Lucifer Effect* (New York: Random House, 2007), 298.

³⁰³ Zimbardo, *The Lucifer Effect*, 298–307.

³⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 301.

the researchers concluded that the anonymous conditions directly encouraged violent action.³⁰⁵

In the Halloween costume experiment, schoolchildren's behavior was assessed during a series of games. When Halloween masks were introduced, the level of aggression increased dramatically.³⁰⁶ This experiment notably allowed researchers to remove the items providing the anonymity and observe the subjects' behaviors upon returning to their identifiable state. In this case, the aggressive behavior subsided once the masks were removed.³⁰⁷ Changing the social situation was shown to immediately change behaviors "in lockstep fashion."³⁰⁸ In other experiments, Zimbardo introduces anonymity into a test population in other ways, and the results are consistent from one experiment to the next.

Zimbardo's findings support his claim that deindividuation—the process by which the individual is made indistinguishable from others in some way—"reduces the cues of social accountability."³⁰⁹ This freedom to act with perceived impunity tends to skew humans toward base behaviors, depending on the social situation's permissiveness. In a competitive context, this leads to increased aggression and violence. Restraint and reason are replaced with "mindless emotional responses."

Deindividuation then accelerates a process of substituting the individual's identity with a group identity. Zimbardo points out that all personal identities are socially situated, and that social context is a defining factor in one's identity and others' perception of the individual.³¹⁰ In this light, adopting a group's overt physical characteristics provides a powerful signal to the individual and others that he is identifying with that group. Replacing his own personal identity by donning a specific uniform or physically concealing his face with a mask then provides a uniquely visual

³⁰⁵ Zimbardo, *The Lucifer Effect*, 301.

³⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 302.

³⁰⁷ *Ibid.*

³⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 303.

³⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 305.

³¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 321.

way to observe the deliberate adopting of a group identity at the expense of the individual's identity. These social signals also provide anonymity (to varying degrees), potentially heightening the behavioral possibilities depending on the situation's social expectations.

(5) Beheading, Identity, and Narrative

Jihadists commonly use masks in their strategic communications to provide the necessary group identity. In donning the uniform and mask of jihad, the group identity takes over and the narrative continues to be constructed. The most common technique for jihadist public execution is the ritualistic beheading. The use of beheading is not a matter of convenience or simple shock value; a beheading is symbolic, and should be seen as a symbolic act of aggression toward the entire group represented by the particular victim.

Pete Lentini and Muhammad Bakashmar analyzed the symbolic nature of jihadist beheadings in "Jihadist Beheading: A Convergence of Technology, Theology, and Teleology?"³¹¹ They contend that violence directed at fewer victims is still used in a similar way to acts of mass violence. Although the victims are fewer in number, the communication of aggression is intentionally used to demonstrate strength and strike terror into the hearts of observers from the target group.³¹² Beheading generates a high shock value in order to gain a wider audience, publicize the cause, and inflict psychological damage.³¹³ A limitation of this study is that it was performed in 2007, but that only limits the scale of their analysis. Since 2007, the Islamic State has increased the frequency of filmed beheadings, and has elevated the use of symbolic storytelling in their videos. Their highly produced videos are more plentiful than any previous group's, and contain more specific signals of their group's grievances.

The Islamic State uses the video beheadings to strategically define their identity and beliefs. Symbols are used throughout to identify the victim as member of an out-group, whether Muslim or Western. The landscape lends the setting to the story; whether

³¹¹ Lentini and Bakashmar, "Jihadist Beheading," 303.

³¹² Ibid.

³¹³ Ibid., 303–304.

a conquered territory, a bombed village, or the Mediterranean Sea, the backdrop supports the group's claims of legitimacy, power, and authority. IS executioners alternate between camouflage and black uniforms, and the victims are dressed as prisoners. This symbolism reinforces their message's effectiveness, providing even more evidence to support Lentini and Bakashmar's assertions about symbolism in jihadist beheadings. The most common method of IS execution is beheading with a large-bladed knife or sword. Lentini and Bakashmar find that the symbolism of the sword carries significant meaning with Muslims, particularly in the Middle East.³¹⁴ The sword is used symbolically as jihadists invoke the *hadith*, in which Muhammad said, "Know that paradise is under the shade of swords."³¹⁵ The authors point out that this is a misinterpretation of a religious text taken out of context—so common in violent Islam that it has its own word: *ahadith*.

Misinterpretations and conflicting ideas about religious doctrines are frequently problematic for religious adherents. A group's hermeneutics are the "correct" understandings of a doctrine from the group's perspective. The belief that a group holds the correct understanding of theology or text fuels the conflict between the group and others. Opposing interpretations are automatically dismissed, and conflict is framed in terms of "right" and "wrong." While some Muslim authorities may declare that the violent interpretation of the *hadith* is mistaken, such declarations only further construct the conflict by forcing the group to define themselves against the others.

The narrative of jihadist beheadings by sword, however, is deeply entrenched and permeates "various forms of folk culture."³¹⁶ Folk music boasts of Afghan *mujahidin* decapitating Russian soldiers, and Algerian jihadists and the Taliban have used images of animal slaughter to parallel decapitation of offenders.³¹⁷ The idea of beheading in the Middle East is symbolic of judgment and justice, allowing those who believe they are holy warriors to distribute punishment to the unfaithful.³¹⁸ Rather than using an actual

³¹⁴ Lentini and Bakashmar, "Jihadist Beheading," 305.

³¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 305.

³¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 307.

³¹⁷ *Ibid.*

³¹⁸ *Ibid.*

sword, the Islamic State uses a military bayonet to decapitate most of their victims. This blends the symbolism of ideologies into its own powerful symbol. The religious purification of the sword blade is manifest in the military blade of the IS bayonet. The group's identity as both religious authority and military power is asserted, and is reinforced by their appearance in camouflage uniforms.

Lentini and Bakashmar point out that globalization was identified and embraced by Osama bin Laden as he developed a strategy to engage his enemies wherever they could be found.³¹⁹ This strategy became significant, as globalization has become an ever-increasing factor in Islamist terrorism. The global nature of the conflict requires global tools capable of distributing the conflict's messages. Arab-language media has expanded in concert with other digital media, and symbolic messages sent by terrorists have virtually no barriers to worldwide distribution. This allows Islamist terrorists to plot their attacks to maximize their actions' effects.³²⁰ Lentini and Bakashmar analyze that the "propaganda objectives" of Islamist terrorists include "identification of the main enemy," "spreading fear," and destruction of the target population's "image and stature."³²¹ In their 2007 paper, the authors argue that jihadists use beheadings infrequently. The metrics are likely much different based on the Islamic State's emergence and significant use of filmed beheadings throughout 2014 and 2015. This ritual is a significant piece of their narrative and identity machinery. But while American media typically focuses on the act of execution featured in the videos, the execution imagery is only one piece of a more complex communication strategy that includes the symbolic use of flags, music, and masks to construct their narrative.

2. The Islamic State and Symbolism

The Islamic State has proven adept at leveraging social media platforms to broadcast their group's story through music and violent imagery. Specifically, they have mastered the art of the execution spectacle—a use of broadcast imagery only made

³¹⁹ Lentini and Bakashmar, "Jihadist Beheading," 310.

³²⁰ *Ibid.*, 313.

³²¹ *Ibid.*

possible on their terms through social media. This section synthesizes findings presented earlier regarding IS and jihadist strategic communications.

The IS makes their videos available online primarily through their media wing known as al-Hayat Media Center.³²² A recent analysis by Aaron Zelin of one week's worth of IS video production found that the group's videos vary greatly in subject matter.³²³ Their productions include theological and social discussions, although Western media displays a tendency to focus on the most graphic examples.³²⁴ Zelin notes in his analysis that the strategic communication released by the IS is 88 percent visual.³²⁵ The use of visuals—both still photos and produced videos—include documenting acts of war carried out by IS foot soldiers, religious proclamations, images of victory, and the executions for which they have achieved such notoriety among the Western world.³²⁶ Their communication covers a broad spectrum and is crafted to create an impression of military power and religious authority.

In contrast, one of the U.S. State Department's attempts to counter the IS video onslaught is a state-sponsored video entitled "Run, Do Not Walk, to ISIS Land."³²⁷ Using the format of a mock recruitment video, this video uses images of the IS committing atrocities in an attempt to ridicule and undermine their use of visual imagery. A key difference between this video and IS strategic communication is that the IS is somewhat careful in developing a consistent message of who they are. This U.S. attempt to counter the IS narrative appears to miss the point. Containing no assertion of any discernible U.S. identity, the State Department attempts to counter what it understands as jihadist recruitment videos. The apparent strategy to dissuade potential suicide jihadists by threatening loss of life in the course of jihad leaves many unanswered questions, and

³²² Zelin, "Picture or It Didn't Happen," 85.

³²³ Ibid.

³²⁴ Ibid.

³²⁵ Ibid.

³²⁶ Ibid., 85.

³²⁷ "Welcome to the Islamic State Land," Military.com video, posted by "vlogger," September 9, 2014, <http://www.military.com:80/video/operations-and-strategy/terrorism/welcome-to-the-islamic-state-land/3775821940001/>.

the United States’ use of graphic IS brutality is somewhat jarring. IS use of video and visual imagery defines their doctrine and describes their beliefs about themselves and others. Rather than relying strictly on prosaic descriptions for religious and social discourse—which they do incorporate into their body of work—their narrative is made real through video and music. Their ideology is removed from the realm of theory and placed into action through symbolism.

Research reveals some important uses of visual symbolism by the IS. This section addresses:

1. The presence of black flags bearing the *shahada*—the Muslim declaration of faith and claim to religious exclusivity
2. Ritualistic beheadings by executioners

(1) Black Flags

Muslim extremists’ appear to use black flags by design. In *The Black Banners*, former FBI Special Agent Ali Soufan describes his interactions with, and analysis of, al-Qaeda around the time of the World Trade Center attacks in 2001.³²⁸ Soufan describes al-Qaeda’s understanding of a particular *hadith*, purportedly narrated by Abu Hurairah. Although its authorship is questionable, the *hadith* says: “If you see the black banners coming from Khurasan, join that army, even if you have to crawl over ice; no power will be able to stop them...and they will finally reach [Jerusalem], where they will erect their flags.”³²⁹

This *hadith* is well known to violent Muslim extremists, and is believed to be one of the favorites of al-Qaeda, the predecessors of the IS.³³⁰ As Soufan describes, “It’s not a coincidence that bin Laden made al-Qaeda’s flag black; he regularly cited the *hadith*.”³³¹ Likewise, it is no coincidence that the Islamic State attaches its now-notorious black flag to its strategic communications. Soufan cites another Muslim *hadith*, declaring,

³²⁸ Soufan, *Black Banners*.

³²⁹ *Ibid.*, 10.

³³⁰ *Ibid.*

³³¹ *Ibid.*, 11.

“The black banners will come from the East, led by mighty men, with long hair and long beards; their surnames are taken from the names of their hometowns and their first names are [an alias].”³³² Not only does this reinforce the “black flag” narrative, it also explains why violent Muslims adopt aliases containing the names of their hometowns. Soufan explains that Muslims who believe the authenticity of these *hadith* would understand that the black flags herald the beginning of the apocalypse, culminating in a large-scale Islamic victory over Judaism and Christianity.³³³ Perpetuating this narrative reinforces the belief that war between the major religions is inevitable, and that a Muslim victory will be the result.

The black flag of the Islamic State prominently displays the *shahada*—the Muslim decree that, “there is no god but God and Muhammad is the prophet of Allah.”³³⁴ This in itself is an overt statement of group identity and a challenge to the out-group. The declaration is explicit, but as a symbol, the flag also carries the story of a culture, a sect of a religion, and a historical lineage. The black flag is not simply an identifier; it is used by design to represent the violent group and their ideology. It is a symbol of social construction that reinforces the group identity and narrative.

(2) The Islamic State’s Beheading Narrative

The Islamic State also uses ritualized beheadings to construct their narrative. Doyle Quiggle argues that the IS has “made beheading into a powerful symbol and narrative of their jihad” that specifically advances the construction of their narrative.³³⁵ Reminiscent of Jung’s and Johnson’s assertions that humans share a collective idea of events and their symbolic significance, Quiggle describes narrative as “[creating] meaning by having characters do things (events) through time.”³³⁶ People understand and relate to stories, and find it easy to find their place in a narrative. Quiggle argues that the

³³² Soufan, *Black Banners*, 11.

³³³ *Ibid.*, 12.

³³⁴ “Shahada,” ReligionFacts, accessed December 1, 2015, <http://www.religionfacts.com/shahada>.

³³⁵ Doyle Quiggle, “The ISIS Beheading Narrative,” *Small Wars Journal*, February 26, 2015, 1, 2, <http://smallwarsjournal.com/jrnl/art/the-isis-beheading-narrative>.

³³⁶ Quiggle, “The ISIS Beheading Narrative,” 2.

IS beheading narrative performs critical functions of building group identity by drawing on religious and cultural symbolism that people inherently understand.³³⁷ The IS plotline fulfills four ritualistic “social tasks” for group members, falling into four categories of beheading: judicial, sacrificial, presentational, and trophy.³³⁸

Quiggle asserts that rituals are narrative building.³³⁹ The IS’ highly publicized beheadings are ritualistic. New members are incorporated into the group through rituals, but the narrative being built is directed at the out-group as well as the in-group. The presentational element of beheading requires that the actions be displayed to an audience.³⁴⁰ In the case of the IS following a traditional ritualistic model, judgment is proclaimed on the unfaithful, the sacrifice is made, and the event is presented on the world stage via digital media.

(3) A Lethal Combination of Symbols

The Islamic State is able to amplify the beheading ritual’s effects through a potent combination of public symbolism. Using symbols of authority, power, and historical lineage, IS executioners publicly judge their victims. The Islamic State *nasheed*, “Ummati, Qad Lāḥa Fajarun,” begins to play, distinctly Arabic in its atmosphere and lyrically recounting the IS’ place in history: “My Ummah, do not despair...victory is near.”³⁴¹ The accused is dressed as a prisoner, but only after clearly establishing which out-group they represent in this ritual. The executioners and foot-soldiers wear masks, concealing their individual identities while establishing a menacing group identity and inflaming primal violent tendencies. Swords are wielded alongside heavy firearms and bombs. While a gun would make for a cleaner death, the blade ties the executioner to his historical and theological roots; the “sword” is the preferred (although not exclusive) method of execution. Black flags unfurl to display the *shahada*, proclaiming their understanding of theological truth and signifying the religious soldiers’ view of their

³³⁷ Quiggle, “The ISIS Beheading Narrative,” 2.

³³⁸ Ibid.

³³⁹ Ibid.

³⁴⁰ Ibid., 3.

³⁴¹ Al-Tamimi, “My Ummah, Dawn Has Appeared.”

place in a holy war. Grievances are levied against the accused. As the head is removed from the struggling victim, the victim's identity and ideology are symbolically, violently removed from the body—the vessel that has lived the out-group's identity. The individual's identity is rendered useless as it is cut from the body.

(4) Enemy Signals, Not Recruitment Commercials

Perhaps indicative of their democratic, capitalist lifestyle, Westerners generally assume IS videos are some kind of recruitment campaign. Even Quiggle's article, one of the most precise on the subject of symbolic beheading, immediately refers to the videos as "ISIS Internet recruitment propaganda."³⁴² This thesis contends, however, that the videos are not intended to simply recruit followers into the organization. Approaching these strategic communications as recruitment commercials reduces them to a category in which they do not neatly fit.

Building group cohesion and legitimacy are certainly products of IS execution videos, and gaining membership naturally follows; but the intentions appear to be more complex with further-reaching effects. While recruitment may be an effect, the use of imagery and symbolism in jihadist communication should be seen as direct action in the ideological conflict—a series of violent honor challenges that demand a strategically clear response. The videos clearly spell out the nature of the conflict, and contain signals of hostility and the intent to commit large-scale violence. Similar signals of hostility were identified as being critical oversights by security and intelligence officials prior to the World Trade Center attacks in 2001.³⁴³ Overlooked signals indicated increasing hostility and the threat of an imminent attack, but widespread ignorance about the nature of the threat led to those signals being disregarded.

C. THE IDEOLOGICAL WAR

Strategic communications are being used to great effect by violent extremists to establish their reputation, build their identity, and direct challenges at their adversaries.

³⁴² Quiggle, "The ISIS Beheading Narrative," 1.

³⁴³ National Commission on Terrorist Attacks upon the United States, *9/11 Commission Report* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2004), 349.

Their actions in the realm of mass media rely on commonplace technology, but exhibit relatively sophisticated methods for advancing their narrative on the global stage. In producing communications that direct symbolic violence at the United States and its allies, violent Islamists in particular have engaged America in war of ideas designed to instill fear and uncertainty.

While definitions may vary somewhat regarding such terms as terrorism, insurgency, violent extremism, low intensity conflict, and guerilla warfare, this thesis argues that each of these terms represents an ideological conflict manifested by violence to instill fear and assert a specific ideology. This description may also apply to conventional warfare as well; however state-on-state conflict tends to have different stakes and contextual elements than insurgency or terrorism. Each of these terms provides an example of a complex group conflict in which an amorphous and ambiguous non-state group directs violence at a population or government with the intent to instill fear. The uses of strategic violence to instill fear, exert power, and advance an ideology are common to all. These terms may be used somewhat interchangeably, as they convey similar characteristics, but they are used accurately.

This section discusses the war of ideas involving violent Islamism and argues that it is both an immediate threat to the U.S. homeland and an example of psychological warfare. Research on disrupting insurgency and psychological operations (PSYOP) is discussed in the application of disrupting ideological conditions and influencing attitudes. The use of strategic communication is recommended to undermine the enemy by influencing belief and countering the narrative that allows the violent ideology to thrive.

1. Nature of the Threat—The War of Ideas

J. Michael Waller argues that a comprehensive strategic communication strategy should be used to disrupt insurgent ideology; this strategy begins with accurately identifying the nature of the conflict. He begins his exhaustive book on the subject by pointing out, “American decision-makers irrespective of political affiliation seem far more comfortable with bombing people in other countries than trying to persuade them to

change their attitudes or behavior.”³⁴⁴ He argues that a communication strategy should not be a public relations tool; the proper strategy should include techniques for influencing behaviors and beliefs to defeat the enemy.³⁴⁵ He delineates the three prongs of U.S. strategic communication: public diplomacy, public affairs, and information operations (IO, which include PSYOP).³⁴⁶ Strategic communication itself is described as the toolbox available to understand, engage, advise, and influence others. Waller offers, specifically, that the immediate actions necessary to defeat the enemy include isolating and marginalizing the enemy, confronting their ideology, and undermining their efforts.³⁴⁷ His is a model of “true warfare”—a “political and psychological strategy not just to undermine the enemy but to help our diplomats and combat forces destroy it.”³⁴⁸

Waller analyzes the full effect of the ideological conflict with Islamic jihadists; in his words, the “war of ideas.” This is a true war, and one that can be won. He argues that constructing counter-narratives, branding the enemy (and the war itself) and ridiculing opposing ideologies can be used to defeat the enemy.³⁴⁹ He asserts that the United States must not be ashamed to use “strategic influence.”³⁵⁰ This type of strategic influence is achieved through the use of Waller’s strategic communication tools. Public diplomacy—diplomatic relationships with foreign governments—and public affairs—structured communications usually directed at the homeland population—may offer some opportunity to craft the narrative, but should not be confused with more powerful tools of influence. Waller suggests that public diplomacy and public affairs are important, but should not be the only communication tools. These methods “are inconsistent with the new realities of the international environment.”³⁵¹ He optimistically describes that the communication-based operational environment offers the United States a unique second

³⁴⁴ Waller, *Fighting the War of Ideas Like a Real War*, 13.

³⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 14.

³⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 15.

³⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 16.

³⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 16.

³⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 17.

³⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 18.

³⁵¹ Waller, *Fighting the War of Ideas Like a Real War*, 19.

chance to recalibrate its messaging strategy.³⁵² Due to the special operation community's less centralized structure, IO and PSYOP present an immediate possibility to change attitudes and behaviors. In fact, Waller describes terrorism as psychological warfare, intended to influence the attitudes of the public.³⁵³

Waller establishes that group members' adherence to an ideology tends to follow certain patterns, regardless of the specific ideology.³⁵⁴ His description of those patterns echoes the general principles of SIT. Ideologies structure the world in a coherent way that resonates with believers. They build a sense of order, and usually identify a competing group that threatens the well-being of the in-group based on a competition for a limited good. He offers that these typical patterns allow ideologies to be disrupted by exposing their absurdities. Dispelling myths and lies and destroying credibility are possible by using the right ideas and arguments through the right channels.³⁵⁵ Significantly, he points out that the United States has fought and won this type of war before.³⁵⁶

Jerrold M. Post argues that terrorism itself is a "vicious species of psychological warfare."³⁵⁷ The battleground is the media, and the limited good at stake is hearts and minds—in other words, beliefs, attitudes, and support.³⁵⁸ In analyzing the threat to the United States in this way, he further argues that high-tech weapons are not appropriate to counter the activity.³⁵⁹ The most appropriate weapon against a psychological threat is a psychological operation.³⁶⁰ In his view, PSYOP addresses the source of the problem by reducing support for the ideology and disrupting the process of self-identifying with the

³⁵² Ibid., 18.

³⁵³ Ibid., 20.

³⁵⁴ Ibid., 22.

³⁵⁵ Ibid., 22.

³⁵⁶ Ibid., 14

³⁵⁷ Jerrold Post, "Psychological Operations and Counterterrorism," *Joint Force Quarterly* 37 (2005): 105.

³⁵⁸ Post, "Psychological Operations and Counterterrorism," 106.

³⁵⁹ Ibid., 105.

³⁶⁰ Post, "Psychological Operations and Counterterrorism," 106.

group.³⁶¹ In order to effectively disrupt an ideological insurgency, the ideology must be engaged and defeated.

2. Disrupting Insurgency

In a Naval Postgraduate School thesis on the subject of insurgency, Reed and Donahoe use the trust relationship model to indicate that insurgencies flourish when a population trusts the insurgents' ability to deliver on their ideologies.³⁶² The level of trust necessary for an insurgent group to flourish is achieved through the insurgent group's reputation, performance, appearance, and accountability.³⁶³ These four components combine to develop the perception of a group seeking to control some political space.³⁶⁴ These are precisely the types of conditions developed by adept communication strategists using communication channels to affect the perception of the group and its ideology. At their core, each of these conditions addresses the ideas the group has about themselves, the ideology and worldview espoused by the group, and how the group is perceived by the local and global populations. This is the narrative, and when it is effectively controlled by violent extremists, it can grow and flourish.

Digital technology and social media have introduced an infinitely more accessible system of mass communication. This digital communication system now allows groups of all kinds to contribute significantly to their appearance. The tools that allow groups to influence their own appearance are the very tools that maintain trust relationships. Reputation, performance, appearance, and accountability no longer rely on traditional media outlets for distribution, but are now easily crafted by communications strategists advancing their group's appearance and ideology. Among the results is a proliferation of threats toward the United States and its allies.

If these conditions may be developed through strategic communications, then disruption of those conditions may also be affected through the strategic use of mass

³⁶¹ Ibid.

³⁶² Reed and Donahoe, "The Tao of Special Forces," 24.

³⁶³ Ibid., 25.

³⁶⁴ Ibid., 23.

communications. Reed and Donahoe argue that an established government threatened by insurgent actions must disrupt the insurgent group's networks and trust relationships as well as develop their own alternative trust relationships with the population.³⁶⁵ These networks, then, must be disrupted by undermining those same elements that have allowed the insurgency to thrive—reputation, performance, appearance, and accountability. Their vision of a counterinsurgency strategy relies on government forces establishing trust by building a superior reputation in each of the four elements.³⁶⁶ Establishing a superior reputation in these areas requires an intentional effort based on a comprehensive strategy for engaging the ideas of the population and the insurgent group. As the authors state, “trust development is an accumulation of successful interactions between the population and government forces.”³⁶⁷

3. PSYOP and Counterterrorism

The ideology with which the United States is in conflict is the fascist political movement of violent Islamism. Not to be confused with, but using the facade of, the Islamic religion, a “global insurgency” has been mounted that threatens to commit large-scale violence against the United States and its allies.³⁶⁸ This ideology is now driven by global ambition and a self-perpetuating apocalyptic identity. Major Cabanas of the United States Air Force argues that the struggle is similar to the Cold War, in which a rapidly spreading, threatening ideology must be defeated in the “same seams” as the opponent in a battle for the hearts and minds of large populations.³⁶⁹ This does not replace defeating armed adversarial organizations, but the ideology must be publicly defeated as well.

Major Cabanas advocates the use of IO, specifically PSYOP conducted by special operations forces to alter the target audiences' attitudes and behaviors.³⁷⁰ The use of PSYOP to disrupt decision making and influence ideological conditions is considered a

³⁶⁵ Reed and Donahoe, “The Tao of Special Forces,” 23.

³⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 27.

³⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 23.

³⁶⁸ Cabanas, *Organizing SOCOM*, 7.

³⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁷⁰ Cabanas, *Organizing SOCOM*, 3.

long-term operation, needing time to “grow and ripen.”³⁷¹ Regardless of the time commitment, he argues that the results are worth the effort.³⁷² This type of conflict is best resolved by U.S. operators when performed in conjunction with on-the-ground operators providing real-time intelligence and an element of human judgment that cannot be duplicated with machines controlled remotely.³⁷³

The U.S. military doctrine governing the use of PSYOP describes the practice as using information to inform and influence to achieve a desired effect.³⁷⁴ It is described as “planned operations to convey selected information and indicators to foreign audiences to influence their emotions, motives, objective reasoning, and ultimately the behavior of foreign governments, organizations, groups, and individuals.”³⁷⁵ The doctrine asserts that lowering adversary morale reduces their efficiency and creates dissidence within their ranks.³⁷⁶ As a strategy for disrupting adversaries, “PSYOP can be employed to undermine a potential opponent’s will or capacity to wage war.”³⁷⁷ The best adversary is one “that is unsure about its cause and capabilities.”³⁷⁸ This opponent “has little will to engage in combat.”³⁷⁹

The PSYOP methodology consists of first identifying the core task for the mission and gaining approval through proper channels.³⁸⁰ The mission is planned, and then analysis is conducted on the adversary to develop the themes, activities, and symbols to be used for the operation.³⁸¹ The projected impact to military operations is assessed, and

³⁷¹ Ibid.

³⁷² Ibid.

³⁷³ Ibid.

³⁷⁴ Joint Chiefs of Staff, *Doctrine for Joint Psychological Operations* (Joint Publication 3–53) (Washington, DC: Joint Chiefs of Staff, 2003), I-1, <https://www.hsdl.org/?view&did=472329>.

³⁷⁵ Joint Chiefs of Staff, *Doctrine for Joint Psychological Operations*, I-1.

³⁷⁶ Ibid.

³⁷⁷ Ibid.

³⁷⁸ Ibid., I-7.

³⁷⁹ Ibid.

³⁸⁰ Ibid., I-5.

³⁸¹ Joint Chiefs of Staff, *Doctrine for Joint Psychological Operations*, Ibid., I-6.

the appropriate media is selected.³⁸² The mission must be timely and continuously assessed for results based on a predetermined measure of effectiveness that varies from mission to mission.³⁸³

PSYOP is directed at a specific target audience.³⁸⁴ Groups suitable for selection as target audiences include “nonmilitary interest groups who can influence military policies and decisions.”³⁸⁵ PSYOP is also used specifically to conduct counterpropaganda operations in which operators “identify adversary propaganda, contribute to situational awareness, and serve to expose adversary attempts to influence.”³⁸⁶ PSYOP are used to cease hostilities by influencing beliefs and attitudes. These operations rely on analysis of culture and communications in order to determine beliefs and attitudes that contribute to an adversary’s success. This may be done through intelligence gathering and analysis of enemy propaganda. Communications are then used to influence the target audience to “reorient” their beliefs and undermine their support for the enemy.

The PSYOP doctrine was developed in order to deploy U.S. might in the arena of ideas. The intended effect is to degrade an adversary’s ideological strength in order to ensure defeat. U.S. PSYOP use has been extensive, including leaflet distribution, loudspeaker campaigns, and mass media efforts such as the development of false German folk music radio channels in World War II. While PSYOP has been used successfully and is always a necessary component in wartime, the stakes are raised significantly in the current conflict in a new ideological battlespace. PSYOP specialists must engage the ideology in a way that meaningfully influences their attitudes, and thus their intent. This requires cultural sensitivity and keen situational awareness, allowing the operator to craft effective counter-messaging. Often, operators must respond immediately to changing conditions and develop themes in a dynamic and ambiguous environment. The PSYOP

³⁸² Ibid.

³⁸³ Ibid.

³⁸⁴ Ibid., I-10.

³⁸⁵ Ibid.

³⁸⁶ Ibid.

doctrine is clear that “success or failure can hinge on accurate analysis of culturally sensitive themes.”³⁸⁷

Digital media has been used as powerful weapon for violent Islamists to distribute their ideology and build their reputation. Extremists’ digital ideological broadcasting not only challenges the United States, but also hand-delivers their ideology to the United States in specific detail. This includes cultural identities, theological understandings, group priorities, and SIT markers indicating “limited good,” challenges, and responses. However, this use of social media has been one-sided, leveraged by extremists to persuade and influence without any effective response from the United States. The discipline of PSYOP offers a well-established set of practices that are shown to have battle-winning effects when used to analyze, persuade, and influence.

4. Conclusion—Strategic Communication and PSYOP

The research indicates that the United States is involved in an ideological conflict with insurgents conducting psychological warfare against the homeland. The ideology espoused by violent actors in the name of Islamism is inherently violent, and they have publicly committed murder and destruction in the name of that ideology. In this sense, the principles of disrupting an insurgency provide valuable insight into the United States’ ability to develop a strategy that analyzes and disrupts this conflict by undermining reputation and trust. The battle space is the realm of socially-mediated mass communication. Honor challenges are directed at the United States and its allies using universally accessible media tools to explain an ideology and create a salient group identity that fundamentally identifies the United States as an existential enemy. The group identity and narrative are being articulated on the world stage to the public and security operators alike; all that is still needed is strategic action to disrupt their attempts.

A cohesive “operational communications” strategy would benefit warfighters and security practitioners by allowing them to engage and disrupt the conditions permitting the violent ideology to flourish. A developing strategy should allow operators to identify violent groups’ ideologies based on analysis of their strategic communications, and then

³⁸⁷ Joint Chiefs of Staff, *Doctrine for Joint Psychological Operations*, IV-13.

to craft a series of thematically appropriate responses, counter-narratives, or challenges. These communications may use tactics such as narrative crafting, identity building, and engaging with the opponent in the challenge/response cycle. In all cases, they require understanding how the adversary uses communication tools and focusing engagement in order to disrupt the threat.

VI. CONCLUSION

As communication technologies have rapidly emerged, violent extremists have conducted campaigns against the United States in the realm of information. These challenges represent a form of psychological warfare directing ritualistic honor challenges at the United States and its allies. In constructing their identity in the socially-mediated realm of digital information, violent ideological groups are able to establish credibility and challenge adversaries. While violent groups have historically used strategic communications to establish their identities and influence attitudes, this combination of age-old social structures and powerful new technology has created an ideological conflict that is not yet well understood.

A. DISCUSSION

People are uniquely inspired by what they see.³⁸⁸ Images enable humans to rapidly, often instantly, acquire a perception of situations and ideas.³⁸⁹ Symbolism uses this characteristic of imagery to allow humans to comprehend more complex ideas through the use of simple physical forms. Symbolism has been used to build a group's view of itself and the world around it; by using stories, images, rituals, and music, groups reinforce their narratives and worldviews.³⁹⁰ Using symbolism and rituals to understand the events and ideas, a group's identity is constructed.³⁹¹

As a universal ritual, music is used to evoke emotion, construct identity, and reinforce beliefs. Possessing the ability to combine doctrine and emotion, music contributes uniquely to the adoption of identity characteristics.³⁹² Groups use music to build a sense of community and commonality, elevating its members emotions and

³⁸⁸ U.S. Marines Corps, *Command and Control* (MCDP 6), 72

³⁸⁹ Winkler and Dauber, *Visual Propaganda and Extremism*, 10.

³⁹⁰ Swidler, "Culture in Action," 273.

³⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 279.

³⁹² MacDonald, Gargreaves, and Miell, *Musical Identities*, 462.

reinforcing their sense of truth.³⁹³ Other cultural markers, such as flags, uniforms, standards, icons, and logos, are used similarly to symbolize the the group's identity and its "organizational goals" through a system of shared understandings.³⁹⁴ Masks, in particular, are powerful symbols of group identity, as the individual's identity is concealed and replaced with the group's identity.³⁹⁵ Violent groups aspiring to gain control of populations have naturally used these devices to influence attitudes and inspire action. The Nazi Party developed sophisticated strategic communications designed to assert their identity and influence attitudes.³⁹⁶ The United States countered that effort by enlisting the services of filmmakers and communication professionals to launch its own identity-building campaign.³⁹⁷

Seeking common patterns in human understanding of conflict should allow practitioners to develop solutions to complex challenges in the area of group conflict. Based on the analysis of the samples, many of the stories perpetuated by these symbolic rituals contain similar themes that seem to resonate specifically with people feeling threatened by instability. One of the most common themes exhibited is that of a group being threatened by an existential crisis. The credible description of a threat from outsiders seems to mobilize group members who value their group's unique identity. Consistent with Joseph Campbell's "Adventure of the Hero," the threatened group requires a hero to liberate them from the imminent threat.³⁹⁸ The hero must leave his old world behind and overcome great personal trials before returning with solutions to the seemingly insurmountable challenges that threaten the group's existence. An understanding of this particular arc may allow communications specialists to craft counter narratives to disrupt violent ideologies. In the new realm of web-based mass communication, these ideologies have unlimited channels for distribution. Where time and distance once inhibited communications, social movements are now strengthened

³⁹³ Frith, "Music and Identity," 113.

³⁹⁴ Gusfield and Michalowicz, "Secular Symbolism," 418.

³⁹⁵ Zimbardo, *The Lucifer Effect*, 298.

³⁹⁶ Laurie, *The Propaganda Warriors*, 8.

³⁹⁷ Clayton, *Propaganda Warriors*, 192.

³⁹⁸ Campbell, *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*.

through web-based platforms.³⁹⁹ Images and rituals, representing complex ideologies, are transmitted directly to members, sympathizers, and adversaries alike. Violent identity assertions in the information realm are used to instill fear in adversaries.⁴⁰⁰ This use of violence to create fear may be seen as a form of psychological warfare directed at the United States and its allies, and places powerful tools of terrorism directly into the hands of violent extremists.⁴⁰¹ When left unchecked, the social construction of the group's violent narrative is allowed to flourish on its own terms.

The Islamic State exhibits a particularly sophisticated command of psychological warfare tools. Using digital video to direct violent honor challenges at the United States, they display significant symbolism to indicate their belief in a superior, exclusive, violent ideology. Their distribution of video executions is a new iteration of ritualistic sacrifice and cleansing, and the United States is consistently identified as an enemy. Conducting both military and religious rituals under the black *shahada* flag, the Islamic State defines their identity in direct opposition to the identity of the United States and its allies. Far from being simple recruitment commercials, these videos directly challenge the United States in an attempt to compromise its values and reputation.

The United States has experience in confronting adversarial ideologies. America has challenged these ideologies by asserting its own identity in ways that disrupt the adversary's ability to influence attitudes.⁴⁰² Drawing on this historical success with engaging opposing ideologies, success in this particular conflict is likely to depend on approaching the conflict as a true war of ideas necessitating assertions of ideological influence alongside kinetic force.⁴⁰³

³⁹⁹ Postmes and Brunsting, "Collective Action," 294.

⁴⁰⁰ Post, "Psychological Operations and Counterterrorism," 106

⁴⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 105.

⁴⁰² Waller, *Fighting the War of Ideas Like a Real War*, 22.

⁴⁰³ *Ibid.*, 4–5.

B. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

This thesis provides an important initial study situated in the appropriate methodologies, and exposes the need for additional research on the topics addressed. Future research could examine the effects of music on identity construction in the context of “information-age” group behavior. Further research on the effects of visual images, films, and stories can offer researchers greater insight into the identity construction of violent groups. A more thorough exploration of the salience of Campbell’s “Hero’s Journey” and lifecycle identity may be appropriate for homeland security researchers seeking solutions to counter violent extremism and radicalization.

Likewise, the significance of individuals resisting or rebelling against a group’s identity offers potential for important research findings. Research exists on the use of former members of violent groups offering alternative group identities. This may also provide solutions for redirecting individuals vulnerable to violent ideologies.

Finally, this thesis only seeks to establish the nature of the current conflict and address the possibility that a counternarrative may be developed. Future research may be directed more specifically toward developing methodologies that may be employed to construct counter narratives. Communications practitioners may offer solutions in this area.

C. CONCLUSION

Ideological wars are serious matters with serious stakes.⁴⁰⁴ As seen in this study, the drive to exist in social groups allows individuals to adopt and maintain salient social identities that inform their sense of reality. Ideologies form the framework for constructing these group identities. Such social identities are complete with ideas about the world, the group, and the individuals within the group. Images inspire these ideas, and ideas inspire action. Emergent technology allows the effortless distribution of inspirational ideas to mobilize group identities into action. Ideologies that appeal to human nature in meaningful ways continue to gather support and manifest themselves in

⁴⁰⁴ Waller, *Fighting the War of Ideas Like a Real War*, 39.

the form of human action. As the global insurgency continues to gather momentum, U.S. security continues to be threatened by the symbolic actions of members of a violent ideology.

The United States has a history of constructing its own identity and defeating adversarial ideologies to provide stability in ambiguous environments. Americans have carried out successful campaigns designed to influence attitudes, mobilize its citizens, and disrupt the conditions that allow insurgencies to flourish. Disrupting this global insurgency may require action from the United States to develop creative solutions to function in the same realm as the violent insurgency.

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APPENDIX. CODING CHARTS

This appendix contains charts used for analyzing the sample data. The charts were developed by the author to provide a consistent and useful tracking system during the observation of the strategic communication samples. The codes developed in the Methodology section were arranged into general categories, then the most common themes and production techniques were placed on the charts. As themes were observed, they were marked on the corresponding space on the chart. A new chart was used for each segment or scene of a video sample, resulting in multiple charts for each item.

This system was designed to function as an analytical research tool, so the contents are not intended to be comprehensive. The charts provided a manageable visual reference for the thematic analysis, and revealed patterns within the samples that aided in the analysis. The results are reported in Chapter IV.

A. TRIUMPH OF THE WILL

Table 2. *Triumph* Intro 00:00–4:32

SOCIAL IDENTITY	IN GROUP	VIOLENCE	PRODUCTION	RELIGION	AUDIO	HUMANITY	MILITARY	SETTING
In Group	Power	Implied	Complex	Divine Blessing	Music Central	Expression	Dress Uniform	Civilization
Out Group	Authority	Explicit	Tempo Change	Divine Mandate	Music Background	Reaction	Working Uniform	Wilderness
Positive Honor Challenge	Victory	Battle	Slow Motion	Divine Curse	Lyrics	Anticipation	Weapon	War Affected
Negative Honor Challenge	Territory	One-on-One	Speed Motion	Savior	March	Fear	Heavy Weapon	Indoors
Response	Wealth	Ritual	Combination Motion	Salvation	Nasheed Arabic	Confidence	Vehicle	Outdoors
Limited Good	Prowess Military	Stabbing	Reverse Motion	Heaven	Nasheed English	Disdain	Aircraft	Stylized
Patron	Prowess Physical	Gunshot	Repeat Motion	Hell	Narration	Helplessness	Battle	Culturally Significant
Client	Social Status	Explosion	Camera Address	Sacrifice	Sound Effects	Suffering	Display	Limited Good
Constrained Resources	Superiority	Beheading	B-Roll	Jihad	Ambient Sound	Dying	Action	Pre-Planned
Culture	Flag	Drowning	Fast Edits	Reward	Emphasis Audio	Close Up	Civilian Attire	Religious
Heritage	Attire	Falling	Lingering Edits	Apostasy	Public Speech	Slow Motion		
Existential Threat	Swastika	Active Dying	Close Up	Sin	Dialogue	Dead Body		
Golden Age	Mask	Observer	Long Shot	Righteousness	Camera Address			
Glorious Future	Head Covering	Child as Perpetrator	Low Camera/ High Subject	Exclusivity		NOTES:		
Nihilization	Architecture	Child as Victim	Graphics					
Dehumanization	Identity Shift							
Conspiracy	Identity Marker							

Table 3. *Triumph Motorcade* 04:33–09:12

SOCIAL IDENTITY	IN GROUP	VIOLENCE	PRODUCTION	RELIGION	AUDIO	HUMANITY	MILITARY	SETTING
In Group	Power	Implied	Complex	Divine Blessing	Music Central	Expression	Dress Uniform	Civilization
Out Group	Authority	Explicit	Tempo Change	Divine Mandate	Music Background	Reaction	Working Uniform	Wilderness
Positive Honor Challenge	Victory	Battle	Slow Motion	Divine Curse	Lyrics	Anticipation	Weapon	War Affected
Negative Honor Challenge	Territory	One-on-One	Speed Motion	Savior	March	Fear	Heavy Weapon	Indoors
Response	Wealth	Ritual	Combination Motion	Salvation	Nasheed Arabic	Confidence	Vehicle	Outdoors
Limited Good	Prowess Military	Stabbing	Reverse Motion	Heaven	Nasheed English	Disdain	Aircraft	Stylized
Patron	Prowess Physical	Gunshot	Repeat Motion	Hell	Narration	Helplessness	Battle	Culturally Significant
Client	Social Status	Explosion	Camera Address	Sacrifice	Sound Effects	Suffering	Display	Limited Good
Constrained Resources	Superiority	Beheading	B-Roll	Jihad	Ambient Sound	Dying	Action	Pre-Planned
Culture	Flag	Drowning	Fast Edits	Reward	Emphasis Audio	Close Up	Civilian Attire	Religious
Heritage	Attire	Falling	Lingering Edits	Apostasy	Public Speech	Slow Motion		
Existential Threat	Swastika	Active Dying	Close Up	Sin	Dialogue	Dead Body		
Golden Age	Mask	Observer	Long Shot	Righteousness	Camera Address			
Glorious Future	Head Covering	Child as Perpetrator	Low Camera/ High Subject	Exclusivity		NOTES:		
Nihilization	Architecture	Child as Victim	Graphics					
Dehumanization	Identity Shift							
Conspiracy	Identity Marker							

Table 4. *Triumph Night Rally 09:13-12:02*

SOCIAL IDENTITY	IN GROUP	VIOLENCE	PRODUCTION	RELIGION	AUDIO	HUMANITY	MILITARY	SETTING
In Group	Power	Implied	Complex	Divine Blessing	Music Central	Expression	Dress Uniform	Civilization
Out Group	Authority	Explicit	Tempo Change	Divine Mandate	Music Background	Reaction	Working Uniform	Wilderness
Positive Honor Challenge	Victory	Battle	Slow Motion	Divine Curse	Lyrics	Anticipation	Weapon	War Affected
Negative Honor Challenge	Territory	One-on-One	Speed Motion	Savior	March	Fear	Heavy Weapon	Indoors
Response	Wealth	Ritual	Combination Motion	Salvation	Nasheed Arabic	Confidence	Vehicle	Outdoors
Limited Good	Prowess Military	Stabbing	Reverse Motion	Heaven	Nasheed English	Disdain	Aircraft	Stylized
Patron	Prowess Physical	Gunshot	Repeat Motion	Hell	Narration	Helplessness	Battle	Culturally Significant
Client	Social Status	Explosion	Camera Address	Sacrifice	Sound Effects	Suffering	Display	Limited Good
Constrained Resources	Superiority	Beheading	B-Roll	Jihad	Ambient Sound	Dying	Action	Pre-Planned
Culture	Flag	Drowning	Fast Edits	Reward	Emphasis Audio	Close Up	Civilian Attire	Religious
Heritage	Attire	Falling	Lingering Edits	Apostasy	Public Speech	Slow Motion		
Existential Threat	Swastika	Active Dying	Close Up	Sin	Dialogue	Dead Body		
Golden Age	Mask	Observer	Long Shot	Righteousness	Camera Address			
Glorious Future	Head Covering	Child as Perpetrator	Low Camera/High Subject	Exclusivity		NOTES:		
Nihilization	Architecture	Child as Victim	Graphics					
Dehumanization	Identity Shift							
Conspiracy	Identity Marker							

Table 5. *Triumph Dawn* in Nuremberg 12:08–14:21

SOCIAL IDENTITY	IN GROUP	VIOLENCE	PRODUCTION	RELIGION	AUDIO	HUMANITY	MILITARY	SETTING
In Group	Power	Implied	Complex	Divine Blessing	Music Central	Expression	Dress Uniform	Civilization
Out Group	Authority	Explicit	Tempo Change	Divine Mandate	Music Background	Reaction	Working Uniform	Wilderness
Positive Honor Challenge	Victory	Battle	Slow Motion	Divine Curse	Lyrics	Anticipation	Weapon	War Affected
Negative Honor Challenge	Territory	One-on-One	Speed Motion	Savior	March	Fear	Heavy Weapon	Indoors
Response	Wealth	Ritual	Combination Motion	Salvation	Nasheed Arabic	Confidence	Vehicle	Outdoors
Limited Good	Prowess Military	Stabbing	Reverse Motion	Heaven	Nasheed English	Disdain	Aircraft	Stylized
Patron	Prowess Physical	Gunshot	Repeat Motion	Hell	Narration	Helplessness	Battle	Culturally Significant
Client	Social Status	Explosion	Camera Address	Sacrifice	Sound Effects	Suffering	Display	Limited Good
Constrained Resources	Superiority	Beheading	B-Roll	Jihad	Ambient Sound	Dying	Action	Pre-Planned
Culture	Flag	Drowning	Fast Edits	Reward	Emphasis Audio	Close Up	Civilian Attire	Religious
Heritage	Attire	Falling	Lingering Edits	Apostasy	Public Speech	Slow Motion		
Existential Threat	Swastika	Active Dying	Close Up	Sin	Dialogue	Dead Body		
Golden Age	Mask	Observer	Long Shot	Righteousness	Camera Address			
Glorious Future	Head Covering	Child as Perpetrator	Low Camera/High Subject	Exclusivity		NOTES:		
Nihilization	Architecture	Child as Victim	Graphics					
Dehumanization	Identity Shift							
Conspiracy	Identity Marker							

Table 6. *Triumph* Camp Life 14:20–18:03

SOCIAL IDENTITY	IN GROUP	VIOLENCE	PRODUCTION	RELIGION	AUDIO	HUMANITY	MILITARY	SETTING
In Group	Power	Implied	Complex	Divine Blessing	Music Central	Expression	Dress Uniform	Civilization
Out Group	Authority	Explicit	Tempo Change	Divine Mandate	Music Background	Reaction	Working Uniform	Wilderness
Positive Honor Challenge	Victory	Battle	Slow Motion	Divine Curse	Lyrics	Anticipation	Weapon	War Affected
Negative Honor Challenge	Territory	One-on-One	Speed Motion	Savior	March	Fear	Heavy Weapon	Indoors
Response	Wealth	Ritual	Combination Motion	Salvation	Nasheed Arabic	Confidence	Vehicle	Outdoors
Limited Good	Prowess Military	Stabbing	Reverse Motion	Heaven	Nasheed English	Disdain	Aircraft	Stylized
Patron	Prowess Physical	Gunshot	Repeat Motion	Hell	Narration	Helplessness	Battle	Culturally Significant
Client	Social Status	Explosion	Camera Address	Sacrifice	Sound Effects	Suffering	Display	Limited Good
Constrained Resources	Superiority	Beheading	B-Roll	Jihad	Ambient Sound	Dying	Action	Pre-Planned
Culture	Flag	Drowning	Fast Edits	Reward	Emphasis Audio	Close Up	Civilian Attire	Religious
Heritage	Attire	Falling	Lingering Edits	Apostasy	Public Speech	Slow Motion		
Existential Threat	Swastika	Active Dying	Close Up	Sin	Dialogue	Dead Body		
Golden Age	Mask	Observer	Long Shot	Righteousness	Camera Address			
Glorious Future	Head Covering	Child as Perpetrator	Low Camera/High Subject	Exclusivity	Fanfare	NOTES:		
Nihilization	Architecture	Child as Victim	Graphics		Drums			
Dehumanization	Identity Shift							
Conspiracy	Identity Marker							

Table 7. *Triumph Parade of Nationals 18:05–22:15*

SOCIAL IDENTITY	IN GROUP	VIOLENCE	PRODUCTION	RELIGION	AUDIO	HUMANITY	MILITARY	SETTING
In Group	Power	Implied	Complex	Divine Blessing	Music Central	Expression	Dress Uniform	Civilization
Out Group	Authority	Explicit	Tempo Change	Divine Mandate	Music Background	Reaction	Working Uniform	Wilderness
Positive Honor Challenge	Victory	Battle	Slow Motion	Divine Curse	Lyrics	Anticipation	Weapon	War Affected
Negative Honor Challenge	Territory	One-on-One	Speed Motion	Savior	March	Fear	Heavy Weapon	Indoors
Response	Wealth	Ritual	Combination Motion	Salvation	Nasheed Arabic	Confidence	Vehicle	Outdoors
Limited Good	Prowess Military	Stabbing	Reverse Motion	Heaven	Nasheed English	Disdain	Aircraft	Stylized
Patron	Prowess Physical	Gunshot	Repeat Motion	Hell	Narration	Helplessness	Battle	Culturally Significant
Client	Social Status	Explosion	Camera Address	Sacrifice	Sound Effects	Suffering	Display	Limited Good
Constrained Resources	Superiority	Beheading	B-Roll	Jihad	Ambient Sound	Dying	Action	Pre-Planned
Culture	Flag	Drowning	Fast Edits	Reward	Emphasis Audio	Close Up	Civilian Attire	Religious
Heritage	Attire	Falling	Lingering Edits	Apostasy	Public Speech	Slow Motion		
Existential Threat	Swastika	Active Dying	Close Up	Sin	Dialogue	Dead Body		
Golden Age	Mask	Observer	Long Shot	Righteousness	Camera Address	Pleasure		
Glorious Future	Head Covering	Child as Perpetrator	Low Camera/High Subject	Exclusivity	Fanfare	NOTES:		
Nihilization	Architecture	Child as Victim	Graphics		Drums			
Dehumanization	Identity Shift							
Conspiracy	Identity Marker - Gifts							

Table 8. *Triumph* 6th Party Congress 22:18–31:20

SOCIAL IDENTITY	IN GROUP	VIOLENCE	PRODUCTION	RELIGION	AUDIO	HUMANITY	MILITARY	SETTING
In Group	Power	Implied	Complex	Divine Blessing	Music Central	Expression	Dress Uniform	Civilization
Out Group	Authority	Explicit	Tempo Change	Divine Mandate	Music Background	Reaction	Working Uniform	Wilderness
Positive Honor Challenge	Victory	Battle	Slow Motion	Divine Curse	Lyrics	Anticipation	Weapon	War Affected
Negative Honor Challenge	Territory	One-on-One	Speed Motion	Savior	March	Fear	Heavy Weapon	Indoors
Response	Wealth	Ritual	Combination Motion	Salvation	Nasheed Arabic	Confidence	Vehicle	Outdoors
Limited Good	Prowess Military	Stabbing	Reverse Motion	Heaven	Nasheed English	Disdain	Aircraft	Stylized
Patron	Prowess Physical	Gunshot	Repeat Motion	Hell	Narration	Helplessness	Battle	Culturally Significant
Client	Social Status	Explosion	Camera Address	Sacrifice	Sound Effects	Suffering	Display	Limited Good
Constrained Resources	Superiority	Beheading	B-Roll	Jihad	Ambient Sound	Dying	Action	Pre-Planned
Culture	Flag	Drowning	Fast Edits	Reward	Emphasis Audio	Close Up	Civilian Attire	Religious
Heritage	Attire	Falling	Lingering Edits	Apostasy	Public Speech	Slow Motion		
Existential Threat	Swastika	Active Dying	Close Up	Sin	Dialogue	Dead Body		
Golden Age	Mask	Observer	Long Shot	Righteousness	Camera Address	Pleasure		
Glorious Future	Head Covering	Child as Perpetrator	Low Camera/High Subject	Exclusivity	Fanfare	NOTES:		
Nihilization	Architecture	Child as Victim	Graphics		Drums			
Dehumanization	Identity Shift							
Conspiracy	Identity Marker - Gifts							
Truth	Work							

Table 9. *Triumph Workers Speech 31:20–38:10*

SOCIAL IDENTITY	IN GROUP	VIOLENCE	PRODUCTION	RELIGION	AUDIO	HUMANITY	MILITARY	SETTING
In Group	Power	Implied	Complex	Divine Blessing	Music Central	Expression	Dress Uniform	Civilization
Out Group	Authority	Explicit	Tempo Change	Divine Mandate	Music Background	Reaction	Working Uniform	Wilderness
Positive Honor Challenge	Victory	Battle	Slow Motion	Divine Curse	Lyrics	Anticipation	Weapon	War Affected
Negative Honor Challenge	Territory	One-on-One	Speed Motion	Savior	March	Fear	Heavy Weapon	Indoors
Response	Wealth	Ritual	Combination Motion	Salvation	Nasheed Arabic	Confidence	Vehicle	Outdoors
Limited Good	Prowess Military	Stabbing	Reverse Motion	Heaven	Nasheed English	Disdain	Aircraft	Stylized
Patron	Prowess Physical	Gunshot	Repeat Motion	Hell	Narration	Helplessness	Battle	Culturally Significant
Client	Social Status	Explosion	Camera Address	Sacrifice	Sound Effects	Suffering	Display	Limited Good
Constrained Resources	Superiority	Beheading	B-Roll	Jihad	Ambient Sound	Dying	Action	Pre-Planned
Culture	Flag	Drowning	Fast Edits	Reward	Emphasis Audio	Close Up	Civilian Attire	Religious
Heritage	Attire	Falling	Lingering Edits	Apostasy	Public Speech	Slow Motion		
Existential Threat	Swastika	Active Dying	Close Up	Sin	Dialogue	Dead Body		
Golden Age	Mask	Observer	Long Shot	Righteousness	Camera Address	Pleasure		
Glorious Future	Head Covering	Child as Perpetrator	Low Camera/High Subject	Exclusivity	Fanfare	NOTES:		
Nihilization	Architecture	Child as Victim	Graphics		Drums			
Dehumanization	Identity Marker							
Conspiracy	Roman Salute							
Truth	Work							

Table 10. *Triumph S.A. Night Rally 38:10–41:50*

SOCIAL IDENTITY	IN GROUP	VIOLENCE	PRODUCTION	RELIGION	AUDIO	HUMANITY	MILITARY	SETTING
In Group	Power	Implied	Complex	Divine Blessing	Music Central	Expression	Dress Uniform	Civilization
Out Group	Authority	Explicit	Tempo Change	Divine Mandate	Music Background	Reaction	Working Uniform	Wilderness
Positive Honor Challenge	Victory	Battle	Slow Motion	Divine Curse	Lyrics	Anticipation	Weapon	War Affected
Negative Honor Challenge	Territory	One-on-One	Speed Motion	Savior	March	Fear	Heavy Weapon	Indoors
Response	Wealth	Ritual	Combination Motion	Salvation	Nasheed Arabic	Confidence	Vehicle	Outdoors
Limited Good	Prowess Military	Stabbing	Reverse Motion	Heaven	Nasheed English	Disdain	Aircraft	Stylized
Patron	Prowess Physical	Gunshot	Repeat Motion	Hell	Narration	Helplessness	Battle	Culturally Significant
Client	Social Status	Explosion	Camera Address	Sacrifice	Sound Effects	Suffering	Display	Limited Good
Constrained Resources	Superiority	Beheading	B-Roll	Jihad	Ambient Sound	Dying	Action	Pre-Planned
Culture	Flag	Drowning	Fast Edits	Reward	Emphasis Audio	Close Up	Civilian Attire	Religious
Heritage	Attire	Falling	Lingering Edits	Apostasy	Public Speech	Slow Motion		
Existential Threat	Swastika	Active Dying	Close Up	Sin	Dialogue	Dead Body		
Golden Age	Mask	Observer	Long Shot	Righteousness	Camera Address	Pleasure		
Glorious Future	Head Covering	Child as Perpetrator	Low Camera/High Subject	Exclusivity	Fanfare	NOTES:		
Nihilization	Architecture	Child as Victim	Graphics		Drums			
Dehumanization	Identity Marker							
Conspiracy	Roman Salute							
Truth	Work							

Table 11. *Triumph Youth Speech 41:52–52:35*

SOCIAL IDENTITY	IN GROUP	VIOLENCE	PRODUCTION	RELIGION	AUDIO	HUMANITY	MILITARY	SETTING
In Group	Power	Implied	Complex	Divine Blessing	Music Central	Expression	Dress Uniform	Civilization
Out Group	Authority	Explicit	Tempo Change	Divine Mandate	Music Background	Reaction	Working Uniform	Wilderness
Positive Honor Challenge	Victory	Battle	Slow Motion	Divine Curse	Lyrics	Anticipation	Weapon	War Affected
Negative Honor Challenge	Territory	One-on-One	Speed Motion	Savior	March	Fear	Heavy Weapon	Indoors
Response	Wealth	Ritual	Combination Motion	Salvation	Nasheed Arabic	Confidence	Vehicle	Outdoors
Limited Good	Prowess Military	Stabbing	Reverse Motion	Heaven	Nasheed English	Disdain	Aircraft	Stylized
Patron	Prowess Physical	Gunshot	Repeat Motion	Hell	Narration	Helplessness	Battle	Culturally Significant
Client	Social Status	Explosion	Camera Address	Sacrifice	Sound Effects	Suffering	Display	Limited Good
Constrained Resources	Superiority	Beheading	B-Roll	Jihad	Ambient Sound	Dying	Action	Pre-Planned
Culture	Flag	Drowning	Fast Edits	Reward	Emphasis Audio	Close Up	Civilian Attire	Religious
Heritage	Attire	Falling	Lingering Edits	Apostasy	Public Speech	Slow Motion		
Existential Threat	Swastika	Active Dying	Close Up	Sin	Dialogue	Dead Body		
Golden Age	Mask	Observer	Long Shot	Righteousness	Camera Address	Pleasure		
Glorious Future	Head Covering	Child as Perpetrator	Low Camera/ High Subject	Exclusivity	Fanfare	NOTES:		
Nihilization	Architecture	Child as Victim	Graphics		Drums			
Dehumanization	Identity Marker							
Conspiracy	Roman Salute							
Truth	Work							

Table 12. *Triumph Cavalry Display 51:37–53:01*

SOCIAL IDENTITY	IN GROUP	VIOLENCE	PRODUCTION	RELIGION	AUDIO	HUMANITY	MILITARY	SETTING
In Group	Power	Implied	Complex	Divine Blessing	Music Central	Expression	Dress Uniform	Civilization
Out Group	Authority	Explicit	Tempo Change	Divine Mandate	Music Background	Reaction	Working Uniform	Wilderness
Positive Honor Challenge	Victory	Battle	Slow Motion	Divine Curse	Lyrics	Anticipation	Weapon	War Affected
Negative Honor Challenge	Territory	One-on-One	Speed Motion	Savior	March	Fear	Heavy Weapon	Indoors
Response	Wealth	Ritual	Combination Motion	Salvation	Nasheed Arabic	Confidence	Vehicle	Outdoors
Limited Good	Prowess Military	Stabbing	Reverse Motion	Heaven	Nasheed English	Disdain	Aircraft	Stylized
Patron	Prowess Physical	Gunshot	Repeat Motion	Hell	Narration	Helplessness	Battle	Culturally Significant
Client	Social Status	Explosion	Camera Address	Sacrifice	Sound Effects	Suffering	Display	Limited Good
Constrained Resources	Superiority	Beheading	B-Roll	Jihad	Ambient Sound	Dying	Action	Pre-Planned
Culture	Flag	Drowning	Fast Edits	Reward	Emphasis Audio	Close Up	Civilian Attire	Religious
Heritage	Attire	Falling	Lingering Edits	Apostasy	Public Speech	Slow Motion	Horses	
Existential Threat	Swastika	Active Dying	Close Up	Sin	Dialogue	Dead Body	Chariot	
Golden Age	Mask	Observer	Long Shot	Righteousness	Camera Address	Pleasure		
Glorious Future	Head Covering	Child as Perpetrator	Low Camera/High Subject	Exclusivity	Fanfare	NOTES:		
Nihilization	Architecture	Child as Victim	Graphics		Drums			
Dehumanization	Identity Marker							
Conspiracy	Roman Salute							
Truth	Work							

Table 13. *Triumph Loyalty Speech 53:01–1:00:59*

SOCIAL IDENTITY	IN GROUP	VIOLENCE	PRODUCTION	RELIGION	AUDIO	HUMANITY	MILITARY	SETTING
In Group	Power	Implied	Complex	Divine Blessing	Music Central	Expression	Dress Uniform	Civilization
Out Group	Authority	Explicit	Tempo Change	Divine Mandate	Music Background	Reaction	Working Uniform	Wilderness
Positive Honor Challenge	Victory	Battle	Slow Motion	Divine Curse	Lyrics	Anticipation	Weapon	War Affected
Negative Honor Challenge	Territory	One-on-One	Speed Motion	Savior	March	Fear	Heavy Weapon	Indoors
Response	Wealth	Ritual	Combination Motion	Salvation	Nasheed Arabic	Confidence	Vehicle	Outdoors
Limited Good	Prowess Military	Stabbing	Reverse Motion	Heaven	Nasheed English	Disdain	Aircraft	Stylized
Patron	Prowess Physical	Gunshot	Repeat Motion	Hell	Narration	Helplessness	Battle	Culturally Significant
Client	Social Status	Explosion	Camera Address	Sacrifice	Sound Effects	Suffering	Display	Limited Good
Constrained Resources	Superiority	Beheading	B-Roll	Jihad	Ambient Sound	Dying	Action	Pre-Planned
Culture	Flag	Drowning	Fast Edits	Reward	Emphasis Audio	Close Up	Civilian Attire	Religious
Heritage	Attire	Falling	Lingering Edits	Apostasy	Public Speech	Slow Motion	Horses	
Existential Threat	Swastika	Active Dying	Close Up	Sin	Dialogue	Dead Body	Chariot	
Golden Age	Mask	Observer	Long Shot	Righteousness	Camera Address	Pleasure		
Glorious Future	Head Covering	Child as Perpetrator	Low Camera/High Subject	Exclusivity	Fanfare	NOTES:		
Nihilization	Architecture	Child as Victim	Graphics		Drums			
Dehumanization	Identity Marker							
Conspiracy	Roman Salute							
Loyalty	Work							

Table 14. *Triumph SA & SS Honor Challenge 1:00:59–1:12:09*

SOCIAL IDENTITY	IN GROUP	VIOLENCE	PRODUCTION	RELIGION	AUDIO	HUMANITY	MILITARY	SETTING
In Group	Power	Implied	Complex	Divine Blessing	Music Central	Expression	Dress Uniform	Civilization
Out Group	Authority	Explicit	Tempo Change	Divine Mandate	Music Background	Reaction	Working Uniform	Wilderness
Positive Honor Challenge	Victory	Battle	Slow Motion	Divine Curse	Lyrics	Anticipation	Weapon	War Affected
Negative Honor Challenge	Territory	One-on-One	Speed Motion	Savior	March	Fear	Heavy Weapon	Indoors
Response	Wealth	Ritual	Combination Motion	Salvation	Nasheed Arabic	Confidence	Vehicle	Outdoors
Limited Good	Prowess Military	Stabbing	Reverse Motion	Heaven	Nasheed English	Disdain	Aircraft	Stylized
Patron	Prowess Physical	Gunshot	Repeat Motion	Hell	Narration	Helplessness	Battle	Culturally Significant
Client	Social Status	Explosion	Camera Address	Sacrifice	Sound Effects	Suffering	Display	Limited Good
Constrained Resources	Superiority	Beheading	B-Roll	Jihad	Ambient Sound	Dying	Action	Pre-Planned
Culture	Flag	Drowning	Fast Edits	Reward	Emphasis Audio	Close Up	Civilian Attire	Religious
Heritage	Attire	Falling	Lingering Edits	Apostasy	Public Speech	Slow Motion	Horses	
Existential Threat	Swastika	Active Dying	Close Up	Sin	Dialogue	Dead Body	Chariot	
Golden Age	Mask	Observer	Long Shot	Righteousness	Camera Address	Pleasure		
Glorious Future	Head Covering	Child as Perpetrator	Low Camera/High Subject	Exclusivity	Fanfare	NOTES:		
Nihilization	Architecture	Child as Victim	Graphics		Drums			
Dehumanization	Identity Marker							
Conspiracy	Roman Salute							
Loyalty	Work							

Table 15. *Triumph* Motorcade 1:12:10–1:29:42

SOCIAL IDENTITY	IN GROUP	VIOLENCE	PRODUCTION	RELIGION	AUDIO	HUMANITY	MILITARY	SETTING
In Group	Power	Implied	Complex	Divine Blessing	Music Central	Expression	Dress Uniform	Civilization
Out Group	Authority	Explicit	Tempo Change	Divine Mandate	Music Background	Reaction	Working Uniform	Wilderness
Positive Honor Challenge	Victory	Battle	Slow Motion	Divine Curse	Lyrics	Anticipation	Weapon	War Affected
Negative Honor Challenge	Territory	One-on-One	Speed Motion	Savior	March	Fear	Heavy Weapon	Indoors
Response	Wealth	Ritual	Combination Motion	Salvation	Nasheed Arabic	Confidence	Vehicle	Outdoors
Limited Good	Prowess Military	Stabbing	Reverse Motion	Heaven	Nasheed English	Disdain	Aircraft	Stylized
Patron	Prowess Physical	Gunshot	Repeat Motion	Hell	Narration	Helplessness	Battle	Culturally Significant
Client	Social Status	Explosion	Camera Address	Sacrifice	Sound Effects	Suffering	Display	Limited Good
Constrained Resources	Superiority	Beheading	B-Roll	Jihad	Ambient Sound	Dying	Action	Pre-Planned
Culture	Flag	Drowning	Fast Edits	Reward	Emphasis Audio	Close Up	Civilian Attire	Religious
Heritage	Attire	Falling	Lingering Edits	Apostasy	Public Speech	Slow Motion	Horses	
Existential Threat	Swastika	Active Dying	Close Up	Sin	Dialogue	Dead Body	Chariot	
Golden Age	Mask	Observer	Long Shot	Righteousness	Camera Address	Pleasure	Shovel	
Glorious Future	Head Covering	Child as Perpetrator	Low Camera/High Subject	Exclusivity	Fanfare	NOTES:		
Nihilization	Architecture	Child as Victim	Graphics		Drums			
Dehumanization	Identity Marker							
Conspiracy	Roman Salute							
Loyalty	Work							

Table 16. *Triumph* Final Assembly 1:29:47–END

SOCIAL IDENTITY	IN GROUP	VIOLENCE	PRODUCTION	RELIGION	AUDIO	HUMANITY	MILITARY	SETTING
In Group	Power	Implied	Complex	Divine Blessing	Music Central	Expression	Dress Uniform	Civilization
Out Group	Authority	Explicit	Tempo Change	Divine Mandate	Music Background	Reaction	Working Uniform	Wilderness
Positive Honor Challenge	Victory	Battle	Slow Motion	Divine Curse	Lyrics	Anticipation	Weapon	War Affected
Negative Honor Challenge	Territory	One-on-One	Speed Motion	Savior	March	Fear	Heavy Weapon	Indoors
Response	Wealth	Ritual	Combination Motion	Salvation	Nasheed Arabic	Confidence	Vehicle	Outdoors
Limited Good	Prowess Military	Stabbing	Reverse Motion	Heaven	Nasheed English	Disdain	Aircraft	Stylized
Patron	Prowess Physical	Gunshot	Repeat Motion	Hell	Narration	Helplessness	Battle	Culturally Significant
Client	Social Status	Explosion	Camera Address	Sacrifice	Sound Effects	Suffering	Display	Limited Good
Constrained Resources	Superiority	Beheading	B-Roll	Jihad	Ambient Sound	Dying	Action	Pre-Planned
Culture	Flag	Drowning	Fast Edits	Reward	Emphasis Audio	Close Up	Civilian Attire	Religious
Heritage	Attire	Falling	Lingering Edits	Apostasy	Public Speech	Slow Motion	Horses	
Existential Threat	Swastika	Active Dying	Close Up	Sin	Dialogue	Dead Body	Chariot	
Golden Age	Mask	Observer	Long Shot	Righteousness	Camera Address	Pleasure	Shovel	
Glorious Future	Head Covering	Child as Perpetrator	Low Camera/High Subject	Exclusivity	Fanfare	NOTES:		
Nihilization	Architecture	Child as Victim	Graphics		Drums			
Dehumanization	Identity Marker							
Conspiracy	Roman Salute							
Loyalty	Work							

B. UNITED STATES WORLD WAR II

Table 17. *Prelude to War* Intro 00:00–01:28

SOCIAL IDENTITY	IN GROUP	VIOLENCE	PRODUCTION	RELIGION	AUDIO	HUMANITY	MILITARY	SETTING
In Group	Power	Implied	Complex	Divine Blessing	Music Central	Expression	Dress Uniform	Civilization
Out Group	Authority	Explicit	Tempo Change	Divine Mandate	Music Background	Reaction	Working Uniform	Wilderness
Positive Honor Challenge	Victory	Battle	Slow Motion	Divine Curse	Lyrics	Anticipation	Weapon	War Affected
Negative Honor Challenge	Territory	One-on-One	Speed Motion	Savior	March	Fear	Heavy Weapon	Indoors
Response	Wealth	Ritual	Combination Motion	Salvation	Nasheed Arabic	Confidence	Vehicle	Outdoors
Limited Good	Prowess Military	Stabbing	Reverse Motion	Heaven	Nasheed English	Disdain	Aircraft	Stylized
Patron	Prowess Physical	Gunshot	Repeat Motion	Hell	Narration	Helplessness	Battle	Cultural Structures
Client	Social Status	Explosion	Camera Address	Sacrifice	Sound Effects	Suffering	Display	Limited Good
Constrained Resources	Superiority	Beheading	B-Roll	Jihad	Ambient Sound	Dying	Action	Pre-Planned
Threat to Culture	Flag	Drowning	Fast Edits	Reward	Emphasis Audio	Close Up		
Threat to Heritage	Attire	Falling	Lingering Edits	Apostasy	Public Speech	Slow Motion		
Existential Threat	In-Group Logo	Active Dying	Close Up	Sin	Dialogue			
Golden Age	Mask	Observer	Long Shot	Righteousness	Camera Address			
Glorious Future	Head Covering	Child as Perpetrator	Low Camera/ High Subject	Exclusivity		NOTES:		
Nihilization	Architecture	Child as Victim	Graphics					
Dehumanization	Identity Shift							
Conspiracy	Identity Marker							

Table 18. *Prelude to War* Free World 04:45–06:43

SOCIAL IDENTITY	IN GROUP	VIOLENCE	PRODUCTION	RELIGION	AUDIO	HUMANITY	MILITARY	SETTING
In Group	Power	Implied	Complex	Divine Blessing	Music Central	Expression	Dress Uniform	Civilization
Out Group	Authority	Explicit	Tempo Change	Divine Mandate	Music Background	Reaction	Working Uniform	Wilderness
Positive Honor Challenge	Victory	Battle	Slow Motion	Divine Curse	Lyrics	Anticipation	Weapon	War Affected
Negative Honor Challenge	Territory	One-on-One	Speed Motion	Savior	March	Fear	Heavy Weapon	Indoors
Response	Wealth	Ritual	Combination Motion	Salvation	Nasheed Arabic	Confidence	Vehicle	Outdoors
Limited Good	Prowess Military	Stabbing	Reverse Motion	Heaven	Nasheed English	Disdain	Aircraft	Stylized
Patron	Prowess Physical	Gunshot	Repeat Motion	Hell	Narration	Helplessness	Battle	Cultural Structures
Client	Social Status	Explosion	Camera Address	Sacrifice	Sound Effects	Suffering	Display	Limited Good
Constrained Resources	Superiority	Beheading	B-Roll	Jihad	Ambient Sound	Dying	Action	Pre-Planned
Threat to Culture	Flag	Drowning	Fast Edits	Reward	Emphasis Audio	Close Up		
Threat to Heritage	Attire	Falling	Lingering Edits	Apostasy	Public Speech	Slow Motion		
Existential Threat	In-Group Logo	Active Dying	Close Up	Sin	Dialogue			
Golden Age	Mask	Observer	Long Shot	Righteousness	Camera Address			
Glorious Future	Head Covering	Child as Perpetrator	Low Camera/ High Subject	Exclusivity		NOTES:		
Nihilization	Architecture	Child as Victim	Graphics					
Dehumanization	Identity Shift		Maps					
Conspiracy	Identity Marker							
Equality	Freedom							

Table 19. *Prelude to War Slave World 06:54–22:27*

SOCIAL IDENTITY	IN GROUP	VIOLENCE	PRODUCTION	RELIGION	AUDIO	HUMANITY	MILITARY	SETTING
In Group	Power	Implied	Complex	Divine Blessing	Music Central	Expression	Dress Uniform	Civilization
Out Group	Authority	Explicit	Tempo Change	Divine Mandate	Music Background	Reaction	Working Uniform	Wilderness
Positive Honor Challenge	Victory	Battle	Slow Motion	Divine Curse	Lyrics	Anticipation	Weapon	War Affected
Negative Honor Challenge	Territory	One-on-One	Speed Motion	Savior	March	Fear	Heavy Weapon	Indoors
Response	Wealth	Ritual	Combination Motion	Salvation	Nasheed Arabic	Confidence	Vehicle	Outdoors
Limited Good	Prowess Military	Stabbing	Reverse Motion	Heaven	Nasheed English	Disdain	Aircraft	Stylized
Patron	Prowess Physical	Gunshot	Repeat Motion	Hell	Narration	Helplessness	Battle	Cultural Structures
Client	Social Status	Explosion	Camera Address	Sacrifice	Sound Effects	Suffering	Display	Limited Good
Constrained Resources	Superiority	Beheading	B-Roll	Jihad	Ambient Sound	Dying	Action	Pre-Planned
Threat to Culture	Flag	Drowning	Fast Edits	Reward	Emphasis Audio	Close Up	Chaos	Religious
Threat to Heritage	Attire	Falling	Lingering Edits	Apostasy	Public Speech	Slow Motion		
Existential Threat	In-Group Logo	Active Dying	Close Up	Sin	Dialogue			
Golden Age	Mask	Observer	Long Shot	Righteousness	Camera Address			
Glorious Future	Head Covering	Child as Perpetrator	Low Camera/ High Subject	Exclusivity		NOTES:		
Nihilization	Architecture	Child as Victim	Graphics	Threat to Religion				
Dehumanization	Identity Shift		Maps					
Conspiracy	Identity Marker							
Equality	Freedom							

Table 20. *Prelude to War* Democratic World 22:30–38:39

SOCIAL IDENTITY	IN GROUP	VIOLENCE	PRODUCTION	RELIGION	AUDIO	HUMANITY	MILITARY	SETTING
In Group	Power	Implied	Complex	Divine Blessing	Music Central	Expression	Dress Uniform	Civilization
Out Group	Authority	Explicit	Tempo Change	Divine Mandate	Music Background	Reaction	Working Uniform	Wilderness
Positive Honor Challenge	Victory	Battle	Slow Motion	Divine Curse	Lyrics	Anticipation	Weapon	War Affected
Negative Honor Challenge	Territory	One-on-One	Speed Motion	Savior	March	Fear	Heavy Weapon	Indoors
Response	Wealth	Ritual	Combination Motion	Salvation	Nasheed Arabic	Confidence	Vehicle	Outdoors
Limited Good	Prowess Military	Stabbing	Reverse Motion	Heaven	Nasheed English	Disdain	Aircraft	Stylized
Patron	Prowess Physical	Gunshot	Repeat Motion	Hell	Narration	Helplessness	Battle	Cultural Structures
Client	Social Status	Explosion	Camera Address	Sacrifice	Sound Effects	Suffering	Display	Limited Good
Constrained Resources	Superiority	Beheading	B-Roll	Jihad	Ambient Sound	Dying	Action	Staged
Threat to Culture	Flag	Drowning	Fast Edits	Reward	Emphasis Audio	Close Up	Chaos	Religious
Threat to Heritage	Attire	Falling	Lingering Edits	Apostasy	Public Speech	Slow Motion	Propaganda	
Existential Threat	In-Group Logo	Active Dying	Close Up	Sin	Dialogue			
Golden Age	Mask	Observer	Long Shot	Righteousness	Camera Address			
Glorious Future	Head Covering	Child as Perpetrator	Low Camera/High Subject	Exclusivity	Religious Hymns	NOTES:		
Nihilization	Architecture	Child as Victim	Graphics	Threat to Religion	American Patriotic			
Dehumanization	Identity Shift		Maps		Christmas Music			
Conspiracy	Identity Marker							
Equality	Freedom							

Table 21. *Prelude to War When War Came 38:39–49:30*

SOCIAL IDENTITY	IN GROUP	VIOLENCE	PRODUCTION	RELIGION	AUDIO	HUMANITY	MILITARY	SETTING
In Group	Power	Implied	Complex	Divine Blessing	Music Central	Expression	Dress Uniform	Civilization
Out Group	Authority	Explicit	Tempo Change	Divine Mandate	Music Background	Reaction	Working Uniform	Wilderness
Positive Honor Challenge	Victory	Battle	Slow Motion	Divine Curse	Lyrics	Anticipation	Weapon	War Affected
Negative Honor Challenge	Territory	One-on-One	Speed Motion	Savior	March	Fear	Heavy Weapon	Indoors
Response	Wealth	Ritual	Combination Motion	Salvation	Nasheed Arabic	Confidence	Vehicle	Outdoors
Limited Good	Prowess Military	Stabbing	Reverse Motion	Heaven	Nasheed English	Disdain	Aircraft	Stylized
Patron	Prowess Physical	Gunshot	Repeat Motion	Hell	Narration	Helplessness	Battle	Cultural Structures
Client	Social Status	Explosion	Camera Address	Sacrifice	Sound Effects	Suffering	Display	Limited Good
Constrained Resources	Superiority	Beheading	B-Roll	Jihad	Ambient Sound	Dying	Action	Staged
Threat to Culture	Flag	Drowning	Fast Edits	Reward	Emphasis Audio	Close Up	Chaos	Religious
Threat to Heritage	Attire	Falling	Lingering Edits	Apostasy	Public Speech	Slow Motion	Propaganda	
Existential Threat	In-Group Logo	Active Dying	Close Up	Sin	Dialogue	Dead Bodies		
Golden Age	Mask	Observer	Long Shot	Righteousness	Camera Address			
Glorious Future	Head Covering	Child as Perpetrator	Low Camera/ High Subject	Exclusivity	Religious Hymns	NOTES:		
Nihilization	Architecture	Child as Victim	Graphics	Threat to Religion	American Patriotic			
Dehumanization	Identity Shift		Maps		Christmas Music			
Conspiracy	Identity Marker							
Equality	Reluctance							

Table 22. *Prelude to War* Expanding Oceans 49:30–END

SOCIAL IDENTITY	IN GROUP	VIOLENCE	PRODUCTION	RELIGION	AUDIO	HUMANITY	MILITARY	SETTING
In Group	Power	Implied	Complex	Divine Blessing	Music Central	Expression	Dress Uniform	Civilization
Out Group	Authority	Explicit	Tempo Change	Divine Mandate	Music Background	Reaction	Working Uniform	Wilderness
Positive Honor Challenge	Victory	Battle	Slow Motion	Divine Curse	Lyrics	Anticipation	Weapon	War Affected
Negative Honor Challenge	Territory	One-on-One	Speed Motion	Savior	March	Fear	Heavy Weapon	Indoors
Response	Wealth	Ritual	Combination Motion	Salvation	Nasheed Arabic	Confidence	Vehicle	Outdoors
Limited Good	Prowess Military	Stabbing	Reverse Motion	Heaven	Nasheed English	Disdain	Aircraft	Stylized
Patron	Prowess Physical	Gunshot	Repeat Motion	Hell	Narration	Helplessness	Battle	Cultural Structures
Client	Social Status	Explosion	Camera Address	Sacrifice	Sound Effects	Suffering	Display	Limited Good
Constrained Resources	Superiority	Beheading	B-Roll	Jihad	Ambient Sound	Dying	Action	Staged
Threat to Culture	Flag	Drowning	Fast Edits	Reward	Emphasis Audio	Close Up	Chaos	Religious
Threat to Heritage	Attire	Falling	Lingering Edits	Apostasy	Public Speech	Slow Motion	Propaganda	
Existential Threat	In-Group Logo	Active Dying	Close Up	Sin	Dialogue	Dead Bodies		
Golden Age	Mask	Observer	Long Shot	Righteousness	Camera Address			
Glorious Future	Head Covering	Child as Perpetrator	Low Camera/ High Subject	Exclusivity	Religious Hymns	NOTES:		
Nihilization	Architecture	Child as Victim	Graphics	Threat to Religion	American Patriotic			
Dehumanization	Identity Shift		Maps		Christmas Music			
Conspiracy	Identity Marker							
Equality	Reluctance							

C. SAGA

Table 23. Saga “Ode to a Dying People”

SOCIAL IDENTITY	IN GROUP	VIOLENCE	PRODUCTION	RELIGION	AUDIO	HUMANITY	MILITARY	SETTING
In Group	Power	Implied	Complex	Divine Blessing	Music Central	Expression	Dress Uniform	Civilization
Out Group	Authority	Explicit	Tempo Change	Divine Mandate	Music Background	Reaction	Working Uniform	Wilderness
Positive Honor Challenge	Victory	Battle	Slow Motion	Divine Curse	Lyrics	Anticipation	Weapon	War Affected
Negative Honor Challenge	Territory	One-on-One	Speed Motion	Savior	March	Fear	Heavy Weapon	Indoors
Response	Wealth	Ritual	Combination Motion	Salvation	Nasheed Arabic	Confidence	Vehicle	Outdoors
Limited Good	Prowess Military	Stabbing	Reverse Motion	Heaven	Nasheed English	Disdain	Aircraft	Stylized
Patron	Prowess Physical	Gunshot	Repeat Motion	Hell	Narration	Helplessness	Battle	Cultural Structures
Client	Social Status	Explosion	Camera Address	Sacrifice	Sound Effects	Suffering	Display	Limited Good
Constrained Resources	Superiority	Beheading	B-Roll	Jihad	Ambient Sound	Dying	Action	Pre-Planned
Threat to Culture	Flag	Drowning	Fast Edits	Reward	Emphasis Audio	Close Up	Horse	
Threat to Heritage	Attire	Falling	Lingering Edits	Apostasy	Public Speech	Slow Motion		
Existential Threat	In-Group Logo	Active Dying	Close Up	Sin	Dialogue	Dead Body		
Golden Age	Mask	Observer	Long Shot	Righteousness	Camera Address			
Glorious Future	Head Covering	Child as Perpetrator	Low Camera/High Subject	Exclusivity	Echo Emphasis	NOTES:		
Nihilization	Architecture	Child as Victim	Graphics					
Dehumanization	Identity Shift							
Conspiracy	Identity Marker							

D. SNOOP DOGG

Table 24. Snoop Dogg Intro

SOCIAL IDENTITY	IN GROUP	VIOLENCE	PRODUCTION	RELIGION	AUDIO	HUMANITY	MILITARY	SETTING
In Group	Power	Implied	Complex	Divine Blessing	Music Central	Expression	Dress Uniform	Civilization
Out Group	Authority	Explicit	Tempo Change	Divine Mandate	Music Background	Reaction	Working Uniform	Wilderness
Positive Honor Challenge	Victory	Battle	Slow Motion	Divine Curse	Lyrics	Anticipation	Weapon	War Affected
Negative Honor Challenge	Territory	One-on-One	Speed Motion	Savior	March	Fear	Heavy Weapon	Indoors
Response	Wealth	Ritual	Combination Motion	Salvation	Nasheed Arabic	Confidence	Vehicle	Outdoors
Limited Good	Prowess Military	Stabbing	Reverse Motion	Heaven	Nasheed English	Disdain	Aircraft	Stylized
Patron	Prowess Physical	Gunshot	Repeat Motion	Hell	Narration	Helplessness	Battle	Cultural Structures
Client	Social Status	Explosion	Camera Address	Sacrifice	Sound Effects	Suffering	Display	Limited Good
Constrained Resources	Superiority	Beheading	B-Roll	Jihad	Ambient Sound	Dying	Action	Pre-Planned
Threat to Culture	Flag	Drowning	Fast Edits	Reward	Emphasis Audio	Close Up	Horse	
Threat to Heritage	Attire	Falling	Lingering Edits	Apostasy	Public Speech	Slow Motion		
Existential Threat	In-Group Logo	Active Dying	Close Up	Sin	Dialogue	Dead Body		
Golden Age	Mask	Observer	Long Shot	Righteousness	Camera Address			
Glorious Future	Head Covering	Child as Perpetrator	Low Camera/ High Subject	Exclusivity	Echo Emphasis	NOTES:		
Nihilization	Architecture	Child as Victim	Graphics					
Dehumanization	Identity Shift							
Conspiracy	Identity Marker							

Table 25. Snoop Dogg Bridge and RR Scenes

SOCIAL IDENTITY	IN GROUP	VIOLENCE	PRODUCTION	RELIGION	AUDIO	HUMANITY	MILITARY	SETTING
In Group	Power	Implied	Complex	Divine Blessing	Music Central	Expression	Dress Uniform	Civilization
Out Group	Authority	Explicit	Tempo Change	Divine Mandate	Music Background	Reaction	Working Uniform	Wilderness
Positive Honor Challenge	Victory	Battle	Slow Motion	Divine Curse	Lyrics	Anticipation	Weapon	War Affected
Negative Honor Challenge	Territory	One-on-One	Speed Motion	Savior	March	Fear	Heavy Weapon	Indoors
Response	Wealth	Ritual	Combination Motion	Salvation	Nasheed Arabic	Confidence	Vehicle	Outdoors
Limited Good	Prowess Military	Stabbing	Reverse Motion	Heaven	Nasheed English	Disdain	Aircraft	Stylized
Patron	Prowess Physical	Gunshot	Repeat Motion	Hell	Narration	Helplessness	Battle	Cultural Structures
Client	Social Status	Explosion	Camera Address	Sacrifice	Sound Effects	Suffering	Display	Limited Good
Constrained Resources	Superiority	Beheading	B-Roll	Jihad	Ambient Sound	Dying	Action	Pre-Planned
Threat to Culture	Flag	Drowning	Fast Edits	Reward	Emphasis Audio	Close Up	Horse	
Threat to Heritage	Attire	Falling	Lingering Edits	Apostasy	Public Speech	Slow Motion		
Existential Threat	In-Group Logo	Active Dying	Close Up	Sin	Dialogue	Dead Body		
Golden Age	Mask	Observer	Long Shot	Righteousness	Camera Address			
Glorious Future	Head Covering	Child as Perpetrator	Low Camera/ High Subject	Exclusivity	Echo Emphasis	NOTES:		
Nihilization	Architecture	Child as Victim	Graphics					
Dehumanization	Identity Shift							
Conspiracy	Identity Marker							

Table 26. Snoop Dogg Rooftop VIP Records

SOCIAL IDENTITY	IN GROUP	VIOLENCE	PRODUCTION	RELIGION	AUDIO	HUMANITY	MILITARY	SETTING
In Group	Power	Implied	Complex	Divine Blessing	Music Central	Expression	Dress Uniform	Civilization
Out Group	Authority	Explicit	Tempo Change	Divine Mandate	Music Background	Reaction	Working Uniform	Wilderness
Positive Honor Challenge	Victory	Battle	Slow Motion	Divine Curse	Lyrics	Anticipation	Weapon	War Affected
Negative Honor Challenge	Territory	One-on-One	Speed Motion	Savior	March	Fear	Heavy Weapon	Indoors
Response	Wealth	Ritual	Combination Motion	Salvation	Nasheed Arabic	Confidence	Vehicle	Outdoors
Limited Good	Prowess Military	Stabbing	Reverse Motion	Heaven	Nasheed English	Disdain	Aircraft	Stylized
Patron	Prowess Physical	Gunshot	Repeat Motion	Hell	Narration	Helplessness	Battle	Cultural Structures
Client	Social Status	Explosion	Camera Address	Sacrifice	Sound Effects	Suffering	Display	Limited Good
Constrained Resources	Superiority	Beheading	B-Roll	Jihad	Ambient Sound	Dying	Action	Pre-Planned
Threat to Culture	Flag	Drowning	Fast Edits	Reward	Emphasis Audio	Close Up	Horse	
Threat to Heritage	Attire	Falling	Lingering Edits	Apostasy	Public Speech	Slow Motion		
Existential Threat	In-Group Logo	Active Dying	Close Up	Sin	Dialogue	Dead Body		
Golden Age	Mask	Observer	Long Shot	Righteousness	Camera Address			
Glorious Future	Head Covering	Child as Perpetrator	Low Camera/High Subject	Exclusivity	Echo Emphasis	NOTES:		
Nihilization	Architecture	Child as Victim	Graphics					
Dehumanization	Identity Shift							
Conspiracy	Identity Marker							

Table 27. Snoop Dogg Catchers

SOCIAL IDENTITY	IN GROUP	VIOLENCE	PRODUCTION	RELIGION	AUDIO	HUMANITY	MILITARY	SETTING
In Group	Power	Implied	Complex	Divine Blessing	Music Central	Expression	Dress Uniform	Civilization
Out Group	Authority	Explicit	Tempo Change	Divine Mandate	Music Background	Reaction	Working Uniform	Wilderness
Positive Honor Challenge	Victory	Battle	Slow Motion	Divine Curse	Lyrics	Anticipation	Weapon	War Affected
Negative Honor Challenge	Territory	One-on-One	Speed Motion	Savior	March	Fear	Heavy Weapon	Indoors
Response	Wealth	Ritual	Combination Motion	Salvation	Nasheed Arabic	Confidence	Vehicle	Outdoors
Limited Good	Prowess Military	Stabbing	Reverse Motion	Heaven	Nasheed English	Disdain	Aircraft	Stylized
Patron	Prowess Physical	Gunshot	Repeat Motion	Hell	Narration	Helplessness	Battle	Cultural Structures
Client	Social Status	Explosion	Camera Address	Sacrifice	Sound Effects	Suffering	Display	Limited Good
Constrained Resources	Superiority	Beheading	B-Roll	Jihad	Ambient Sound	Dying	Action	Pre-Planned
Threat to Culture	Flag	Drowning	Fast Edits	Reward	Emphasis Audio	Close Up	Horse	
Threat to Heritage	Attire	Falling	Lingering Edits	Apostasy	Public Speech	Slow Motion		
Existential Threat	In-Group Logo	Active Dying	Close Up	Sin	Dialogue	Dead Body		
Golden Age	Mask	Observer	Long Shot	Righteousness	Camera Address			
Glorious Future	Head Covering	Child as Perpetrator	Low Camera/ High Subject	Exclusivity	Echo Emphasis	NOTES:		
Nihilization	Architecture	Child as Victim	Graphics					
Dehumanization	Identity Shift							
Conspiracy	Identity Marker							

Table 28. Snoop Dogg Front Lawn

SOCIAL IDENTITY	IN GROUP	VIOLENCE	PRODUCTION	RELIGION	AUDIO	HUMANITY	MILITARY	SETTING
In Group	Power	Implied	Complex	Divine Blessing	Music Central	Expression	Dress Uniform	Civilization
Out Group	Authority	Explicit	Tempo Change	Divine Mandate	Music Background	Reaction	Working Uniform	Wilderness
Positive Honor Challenge	Victory	Battle	Slow Motion	Divine Curse	Lyrics	Anticipation	Weapon	War Affected
Negative Honor Challenge	Territory	One-on-One	Speed Motion	Savior	March	Fear	Heavy Weapon	Indoors
Response	Wealth	Ritual	Combination Motion	Salvation	Nasheed Arabic	Confidence	Vehicle	Outdoors
Limited Good	Prowess Military	Stabbing	Reverse Motion	Heaven	Nasheed English	Disdain	Aircraft	Stylized
Patron	Prowess Physical	Gunshot	Repeat Motion	Hell	Narration	Helplessness	Battle	Cultural Structures
Client	Social Status	Explosion	Camera Address	Sacrifice	Sound Effects	Suffering	Display	Limited Good
Constrained Resources	Superiority	Beheading	B-Roll	Jihad	Ambient Sound	Dying	Action	Pre-Planned
Threat to Culture	Flag	Drowning	Fast Edits	Reward	Emphasis Audio	Close Up	Horse	
Threat to Heritage	Attire	Falling	Lingering Edits	Apostasy	Public Speech	Slow Motion		
Existential Threat	In-Group Logo	Active Dying	Close Up	Sin	Dialogue	Dead Body		
Golden Age	Mask	Observer	Long Shot	Righteousness	Camera Address			
Glorious Future	Head Covering	Child as Perpetrator	Low Camera/ High Subject	Exclusivity	Echo Emphasis	NOTES:		
Nihilization	Architecture	Child as Victim	Graphics					
Dehumanization	Identity Shift							
Conspiracy	Identity Marker							

Table 29. Snoop Dogg Picnic

SOCIAL IDENTITY	IN GROUP	VIOLENCE	PRODUCTION	RELIGION	AUDIO	HUMANITY	MILITARY	SETTING
In Group	Power	Implied	Complex	Divine Blessing	Music Central	Expression	Dress Uniform	Civilization
Out Group	Authority	Explicit	Tempo Change	Divine Mandate	Music Background	Reaction	Working Uniform	Wilderness
Positive Honor Challenge	Victory	Battle	Slow Motion	Divine Curse	Lyrics	Anticipation	Weapon	War Affected
Negative Honor Challenge	Territory	One-on-One	Speed Motion	Savior	March	Fear	Heavy Weapon	Indoors
Response	Wealth	Ritual	Combination Motion	Salvation	Nasheed Arabic	Confidence	Vehicle	Outdoors
Limited Good	Prowess Military	Stabbing	Reverse Motion	Heaven	Nasheed English	Disdain	Aircraft	Stylized
Patron	Prowess Physical	Gunshot	Repeat Motion	Hell	Narration	Helplessness	Battle	Cultural Structures
Client	Social Status	Explosion	Camera Address	Sacrifice	Sound Effects	Suffering	Display	Limited Good
Constrained Resources	Superiority	Beheading	B-Roll	Jihad	Ambient Sound	Dying	Action	Pre-Planned
Threat to Culture	Flag	Drowning	Fast Edits	Reward	Emphasis Audio	Close Up	Horse	
Threat to Heritage	Attire	Falling	Lingering Edits	Apostasy	Public Speech	Slow Motion		
Existential Threat	In-Group Logo	Active Dying	Close Up	Sin	Dialogue	Dead Body		
Golden Age	Mask	Observer	Long Shot	Righteousness	Camera Address			
Glorious Future	Head Covering	Child as Perpetrator	Low Camera/ High Subject	Exclusivity	Echo Emphasis	NOTES:		
Nihilization	Architecture	Child as Victim	Graphics					
Dehumanization	Identity Shift							
Conspiracy	Identity Marker							

Table 30. Snoop Dogg Gambling

SOCIAL IDENTITY	IN GROUP	VIOLENCE	PRODUCTION	RELIGION	AUDIO	HUMANITY	MILITARY	SETTING
In Group	Power	Implied	Complex	Divine Blessing	Music Central	Expression	Dress Uniform	Civilization
Out Group	Authority	Explicit	Tempo Change	Divine Mandate	Music Background	Reaction	Working Uniform	Wilderness
Positive Honor Challenge	Victory	Battle	Slow Motion	Divine Curse	Lyrics	Anticipation	Weapon	War Affected
Negative Honor Challenge	Territory	One-on-One	Speed Motion	Savior	March	Fear	Heavy Weapon	Indoors
Response	Wealth	Ritual	Combination Motion	Salvation	Nasheed Arabic	Confidence	Vehicle	Outdoors
Limited Good	Prowess Military	Stabbing	Reverse Motion	Heaven	Nasheed English	Disdain	Aircraft	Stylized
Patron	Prowess Physical	Gunshot	Repeat Motion	Hell	Narration	Helplessness	Battle	Cultural Structures
Client	Social Status	Explosion	Camera Address	Sacrifice	Sound Effects	Suffering	Display	Limited Good
Constrained Resources	Superiority	Beheading	B-Roll	Jihad	Ambient Sound	Dying	Action	Pre-Planned
Threat to Culture	Flag	Drowning	Fast Edits	Reward	Emphasis Audio	Close Up	Horse	
Threat to Heritage	Attire	Falling	Lingering Edits	Apostasy	Public Speech	Slow Motion		
Existential Threat	In-Group Logo	Active Dying	Close Up	Sin	Dialogue	Dead Body		
Golden Age	Mask	Observer	Long Shot	Righteousness	Camera Address			
Glorious Future	Head Covering	Child as Perpetrator	Low Camera/ High Subject	Exclusivity	Echo Emphasis	NOTES:		
Nihilization	Architecture	Child as Victim	Graphics					
Dehumanization	Identity Shift							
Conspiracy	Identity Marker							

E. ISLAMIC STATE

Table 31. Foley Execution—Obama Section 00:00–00:39

SOCIAL IDENTITY	IN GROUP	VIOLENCE	PRODUCTION	RELIGION	AUDIO	HUMANITY	MILITARY	SETTING
In Group	Power	Implied	Complex	Divine Blessing	Music Central	Expression	Dress Uniform	Civilization
Out Group	Authority	Explicit	Tempo Change	Divine Mandate	Music Background	Reaction	Working Uniform	Wilderness
Positive Honor Challenge	Victory	Battle	Slow Motion	Divine Curse	Lyrics	Anticipation	Weapon	War Affected
Negative Honor Challenge	Territory	One-on-One	Speed Motion	Savior	March	Fear	Heavy Weapon	Indoors
Response	Wealth	Ritual	Combination Motion	Salvation	Nasheed Arabic	Confidence	Vehicle	Outdoors
Limited Good	Prowess Military	Stabbing	Reverse Motion	Heaven	Nasheed English	Disdain	Aircraft	Stylized
Patron	Prowess Physical	Gunshot	Repeat Motion	Hell	Narration	Helplessness	Battle	Cultural Structures
Client	Social Status	Explosion	Camera Address	Sacrifice	Sound Effects	Suffering	Display	Limited Good
Constrained Resources	Superiority	Beheading	B-Roll	Jihad	Ambient Sound	Dying	Action	Pre-Planned
Threat to Culture	Flag	Drowning	Fast Edits	Reward	Emphasis Audio	Close Up	Horse	
Threat to Heritage	Attire	Falling	Lingering Edits	Apostasy	Public Speech	Slow Motion		
Existential Threat	In-Group Logo	Active Dying	Close Up	Sin	Dialogue	Dead Body		
Golden Age	Mask	Observer	Long Shot	Righteousness	Camera Address			
Glorious Future	Head Covering	Child as Perpetrator	Low Camera/ High Subject	Exclusivity	Echo Emphasis	NOTES:		
Nihilization	Architecture	Child as Victim	Graphics					
Dehumanization	Identity Shift							
Conspiracy	Identity Marker							

Table 32. Foley Execution—American Aggression 01:40–01:52

SOCIAL IDENTITY	IN GROUP	VIOLENCE	PRODUCTION	RELIGION	AUDIO	HUMANITY	MILITARY	SETTING
In Group	Power	Implied	Complex	Divine Blessing	Music Central	Expression	Dress Uniform	Civilization
Out Group	Authority	Explicit	Tempo Change	Divine Mandate	Music Background	Reaction	Working Uniform	Wilderness
Positive Honor Challenge	Victory	Battle	Slow Motion	Divine Curse	Lyrics	Anticipation	Weapon	War Affected
Negative Honor Challenge	Territory	One-on-One	Speed Motion	Savior	March	Fear	Heavy Weapon	Indoors
Response	Wealth	Ritual	Combination Motion	Salvation	Nasheed Arabic	Confidence	Vehicle	Outdoors
Limited Good	Prowess Military	Stabbing	Reverse Motion	Heaven	Nasheed English	Disdain	Aircraft	Stylized
Patron	Prowess Physical	Gunshot	Repeat Motion	Hell	Narration	Helplessness	Battle	Cultural Structures
Client	Social Status	Explosion	Camera Address	Sacrifice	Sound Effects	Suffering	Display	Limited Good
Constrained Resources	Superiority	Beheading	B-Roll	Jihad	Ambient Sound	Dying	Action	Pre-Planned
Threat to Culture	Flag	Drowning	Fast Edits	Reward	Emphasis Audio	Close Up	Horse	
Threat to Heritage	Attire	Falling	Lingering Edits	Apostasy	Public Speech	Slow Motion		
Existential Threat	In-Group Logo	Active Dying	Close Up	Sin	Dialogue	Dead Body		
Golden Age	Mask	Observer	Long Shot	Righteousness	Camera Address			
Glorious Future	Head Covering	Child as Perpetrator	Low Camera/ High Subject	Exclusivity	Echo Emphasis	NOTES:		
Nihilization	Architecture	Child as Victim	Graphics					
Dehumanization	Identity Shift							
Conspiracy	Identity Marker							

Table 33. Foley Execution—Message to America 01:53–03:25

SOCIAL IDENTITY	IN GROUP	VIOLENCE	PRODUCTION	RELIGION	AUDIO	HUMANITY	MILITARY	SETTING
In Group	Power	Implied	Complex	Divine Blessing	Music Central	Expression	Dress Uniform	Civilization
Out Group	Authority	Explicit	Tempo Change	Divine Mandate	Music Background	Reaction	Working Uniform	Wilderness
Positive Honor Challenge	Victory	Battle	Slow Motion	Divine Curse	Lyrics	Anticipation	Weapon	War Affected
Negative Honor Challenge	Territory	One-on-One	Speed Motion	Savior	March	Fear	Heavy Weapon	Indoors
Response	Wealth	Ritual	Combination Motion	Salvation	Nasheed Arabic	Confidence	Vehicle	Outdoors
Limited Good	Prowess Military	Stabbing	Reverse Motion	Heaven	Nasheed English	Disdain	Aircraft	Stylized
Patron	Prowess Physical	Gunshot	Repeat Motion	Hell	Narration	Helplessness	Battle	Cultural Structures
Client	Social Status	Explosion	Camera Address	Sacrifice	Sound Effects	Suffering	Display	Limited Good
Constrained Resources	Superiority	Beheading	B-Roll	Jihad	Ambient Sound	Dying	Action	Pre-Planned
Threat to Culture	Flag	Drowning	Fast Edits	Reward	Emphasis Audio	Close Up	Horse	
Threat to Heritage	Attire	Falling	Lingering Edits	Apostasy	Public Speech	Slow Motion		
Existential Threat	In-Group Logo	Active Dying	Close Up	Sin	Dialogue	Dead Body		
Golden Age	Mask	Observer	Long Shot	Righteousness	Camera Address			
Glorious Future	Head Covering	Child as Perpetrator	Low Camera/ High Subject	Exclusivity	Echo Emphasis	NOTES:		
Nihilization	Architecture	Child as Victim	Graphics					
Dehumanization	Identity Shift							
Conspiracy	Identity Marker							

Table 34. Foley Execution—Execution Scene 03:25–END

SOCIAL IDENTITY	IN GROUP	VIOLENCE	PRODUCTION	RELIGION	AUDIO	HUMANITY	MILITARY	SETTING
In Group	Power	Implied	Complex	Divine Blessing	Music Central	Expression	Dress Uniform	Civilization
Out Group	Authority	Explicit	Tempo Change	Divine Mandate	Music Background	Reaction	Working Uniform	Wilderness
Positive Honor Challenge	Victory	Battle	Slow Motion	Divine Curse	Lyrics	Anticipation	Weapon	War Affected
Negative Honor Challenge	Territory	One-on-One	Speed Motion	Savior	March	Fear	Heavy Weapon	Indoors
Response	Wealth	Ritual	Combination Motion	Salvation	Nasheed Arabic	Confidence	Vehicle	Outdoors
Limited Good	Prowess Military	Stabbing	Reverse Motion	Heaven	Nasheed English	Disdain	Aircraft	Stylized
Patron	Prowess Physical	Gunshot	Repeat Motion	Hell	Narration	Helplessness	Battle	Cultural Structures
Client	Social Status	Explosion	Camera Address	Sacrifice	Sound Effects	Suffering	Display	Limited Good
Constrained Resources	Superiority	Beheading	B-Roll	Jihad	Ambient Sound	Dying	Action	Pre-Planned
Threat to Culture	Flag	Drowning	Fast Edits	Reward	Emphasis Audio	Close Up	Horse	
Threat to Heritage	Attire	Falling	Lingering Edits	Apostasy	Public Speech	Slow Motion		
Existential Threat	In-Group Logo	Active Dying	Close Up	Sin	Dialogue	Dead Body		
Golden Age	Mask	Observer	Long Shot	Righteousness	Camera Address			
Glorious Future	Head Covering	Child as Perpetrator	Low Camera/ High Subject	Exclusivity	Echo Emphasis	NOTES:		
Nihilization	Architecture	Child as Victim	Graphics					
Dehumanization	Identity Shift							
Conspiracy	Identity Marker							

Table 35. Palmyra Executions

SOCIAL IDENTITY	IN GROUP	VIOLENCE	PRODUCTION	RELIGION	AUDIO	HUMANITY	MILITARY	SETTING
In Group	Power	Implied	Complex	Divine Blessing	Music Central	Expression	Dress Uniform	Civilization
Out Group	Authority	Explicit	Tempo Change	Divine Mandate	Music Background	Reaction	Working Uniform	Wilderness
Positive Honor Challenge	Victory	Battle	Slow Motion	Divine Curse	Lyrics	Anticipation	Weapon	War Affected
Negative Honor Challenge	Territory	One-on-One	Speed Motion	Savior	March	Fear	Heavy Weapon	Indoors
Response	Wealth	Ritual	Combination Motion	Salvation	Nasheed Arabic	Confidence	Vehicle	Outdoors
Limited Good	Prowess Military	Stabbing	Reverse Motion	Heaven	Nasheed English	Disdain	Aircraft	Stylized
Patron	Prowess Physical	Gunshot	Repeat Motion	Hell	Narration	Helplessness	Battle	Cultural Structures
Client	Social Status	Explosion	Camera Address	Sacrifice	Sound Effects	Suffering	Display	Limited Good
Constrained Resources	Superiority	Beheading	B-Roll	Jihad	Ambient Sound	Dying	Action	Pre-Planned
Threat to Culture	Flag	Drowning	Fast Edits	Reward	Emphasis Audio	Close Up	Horse	
Threat to Heritage	Attire	Falling	Lingering Edits	Apostasy	Public Speech	Slow Motion		
Existential Threat	In-Group Logo	Active Dying	Close Up	Sin	Dialogue	Dead Body		
Golden Age	Mask	Observer	Long Shot	Righteousness	Camera Address			
Glorious Future	Head Covering	Child as Perpetrator	Low Camera/ High Subject	Exclusivity	Echo Emphasis	NOTES:		
Nihilization	Architecture	Child as Victim	Graphics					
Dehumanization	Identity Shift							
Conspiracy	Identity Marker							

Table 36. IS—Libya Egyptian Christians Execution

SOCIAL IDENTITY	IN GROUP	VIOLENCE	PRODUCTION	RELIGION	AUDIO	HUMANITY	MILITARY	SETTING
In Group	Power	Implied	Complex	Divine Blessing	Music Central	Expression	Dress Uniform	Civilization
Out Group	Authority	Explicit	Tempo Change	Divine Mandate	Music Background	Reaction	Working Uniform	Wilderness
Positive Honor Challenge	Victory	Battle	Slow Motion	Divine Curse	Lyrics	Anticipation	Weapon	War Affected
Negative Honor Challenge	Territory	One-on-One	Speed Motion	Savior	March	Fear	Heavy Weapon	Indoors
Response	Wealth	Ritual	Combination Motion	Salvation	Nasheed Arabic	Confidence	Vehicle	Outdoors
Limited Good	Prowess Military	Stabbing	Reverse Motion	Heaven	Nasheed English	Disdain	Aircraft	Stylized
Patron	Prowess Physical	Gunshot	Repeat Motion	Hell	Narration	Helplessness	Battle	Cultural Structures
Client	Social Status	Explosion	Camera Address	Sacrifice	Sound Effects	Suffering	Display	Limited Good
Constrained Resources	Superiority	Beheading	B-Roll	Jihad	Ambient Sound	Dying	Action	Pre-Planned
Threat to Culture	Flag	Drowning	Fast Edits	Reward	Emphasis Audio	Close Up	Horse	
Threat to Heritage	Attire	Falling	Lingering Edits	Apostasy	Public Speech	Slow Motion		
Existential Threat	In-Group Logo	Active Dying	Close Up	Sin	Dialogue	Dead Body		
Golden Age	Mask	Observer	Long Shot	Righteousness	Camera Address			
Glorious Future	Head Covering	Child as Perpetrator	Low Camera/ High Subject	Exclusivity	Echo Emphasis	NOTES:		
Nihilization	Architecture	Child as Victim	Graphics					
Dehumanization	Identity Shift							
Conspiracy	Identity Marker							

Table 37. IS—Goto Execution

SOCIAL IDENTITY	IN GROUP	VIOLENCE	PRODUCTION	RELIGION	AUDIO	HUMANITY	MILITARY	SETTING
In Group	Power	Implied	Complex	Divine Blessing	Music Central	Expression	Dress Uniform	Civilization
Out Group	Authority	Explicit	Tempo Change	Divine Mandate	Music Background	Reaction	Working Uniform	Wilderness
Positive Honor Challenge	Victory	Battle	Slow Motion	Divine Curse	Lyrics	Anticipation	Weapon	War Affected
Negative Honor Challenge	Territory	One-on-One	Speed Motion	Savior	March	Fear	Heavy Weapon	Indoors
Response	Wealth	Ritual	Combination Motion	Salvation	Nasheed Arabic	Confidence	Vehicle	Outdoors
Limited Good	Prowess Military	Stabbing	Reverse Motion	Heaven	Nasheed English	Disdain	Aircraft	Stylized
Patron	Prowess Physical	Gunshot	Repeat Motion	Hell	Narration	Helplessness	Battle	Cultural Structures
Client	Social Status	Explosion	Camera Address	Sacrifice	Sound Effects	Suffering	Display	Limited Good
Constrained Resources	Superiority	Beheading	B-Roll	Jihad	Ambient Sound	Dying	Action	Pre-Planned
Threat to Culture	Flag	Drowning	Fast Edits	Reward	Emphasis Audio	Close Up	Horse	
Threat to Heritage	Attire	Falling	Lingering Edits	Apostasy	Public Speech	Slow Motion		
Existential Threat	In-Group Logo	Active Dying	Close Up	Sin	Dialogue	Dead Body		
Golden Age	Mask	Observer	Long Shot	Righteousness	Camera Address			
Glorious Future	Head Covering	Child as Perpetrator	Low Camera/ High Subject	Exclusivity	Echo Emphasis	NOTES:		
Nihilization	Architecture	Child as Victim	Graphics					
Dehumanization	Identity Shift							
Conspiracy	Identity Marker							

Table 38. Flames of War—Introduction 00:00–00:50

SOCIAL IDENTITY	IN GROUP	VIOLENCE	PRODUCTION	RELIGION	AUDIO	HUMANITY	MILITARY	SETTING
In Group	Power	Implied	Complex	Divine Blessing	Music Central	Expression	Dress Uniform	Civilization
Out Group	Authority	Explicit	Tempo Change	Divine Mandate	Music Background	Reaction	Working Uniform	Wilderness
Positive Honor Challenge	Victory	Battle	Slow Motion	Divine Curse	Lyrics	Anticipation	Weapon	War Affected
Negative Honor Challenge	Territory	One-on-One	Speed Motion	Savior	March	Fear	Heavy Weapon	Indoors
Response	Wealth	Ritual	Combination Motion	Salvation	Nasheed Arabic	Confidence	Vehicle	Outdoors
Limited Good	Prowess Military	Stabbing	Reverse Motion	Heaven	Nasheed English	Disdain	Aircraft	Stylized
Patron	Prowess Physical	Gunshot	Repeat Motion	Hell	Narration	Helplessness	Battle	Cultural Structures
Client	Social Status	Explosion	Camera Address	Sacrifice	Sound Effects	Suffering	Display	Limited Good
Constrained Resources	Superiority	Beheading	B-Roll	Jihad	Ambient Sound	Dying	Action	Pre-Planned
Threat to Culture	Flag	Drowning	Fast Edits	Reward	Emphasis Audio	Close Up		
Threat to Heritage	Attire	Falling	Lingering Edits	Apostasy	Public Speech	Slow Motion		
Existential Threat	In-Group Logo	Active Dying	Close Up	Sin	Dialogue			
Golden Age	Mask	Observer	Long Shot	Righteousness	Camera Address			
Glorious Future	Head Covering	Child as Perpetrator	Low Camera/ High Subject	Exclusivity		NOTES:	Narrated in English	
Nihilization	Architecture	Child as Victim	Graphics					
Dehumanization	Identity Shift							
Conspiracy	Identity Marker							
Crusader								

Table 39. Flames of War—“War Was Ignited” 00:50–03:47

SOCIAL IDENTITY	IN GROUP	VIOLENCE	PRODUCTION	RELIGION	AUDIO	HUMANITY	MILITARY	SETTING
In Group	Power	Implied	Complex	Divine Blessing	Music Central	Expression	Dress Uniform	Civilization
Out Group	Authority	Explicit	Tempo Change	Divine Mandate	Music Background	Reaction	Working Uniform	Wilderness
Positive Honor Challenge	Victory	Battle	Slow Motion	Divine Curse	Lyrics	Anticipation	Weapon	War Affected
Negative Honor Challenge	Territory	One-on-One	Speed Motion	Savior	March	Fear	Heavy Weapon	Indoors
Response	Wealth	Ritual	Combination Motion	Salvation	Nasheed Arabic	Confidence	Vehicle	Outdoors
Limited Good	Prowess Military	Stabbing	Reverse Motion	Heaven	Nasheed English	Disdain	Aircraft	Stylized
Patron	Prowess Physical	Gunshot	Repeat Motion	Hell	Narration	Helplessness	Battle	Cultural Structures
Client	Social Status	Explosion	Camera Address	Sacrifice	Sound Effects	Suffering	Display	Limited Good
Constrained Resources	Superiority	Beheading	B-Roll	Jihad	Ambient Sound	Dying	Action	Pre-Planned
Threat to Culture	Flag	Drowning	Fast Edits	Reward	Emphasis Audio	Close Up		
Threat to Heritage	Attire	Falling	Lingering Edits	Apostasy	Public Speech	Slow Motion		
Existential Threat	In-Group Logo	Active Dying	Close Up	Sin	Dialogue	Dead Body		
Golden Age	Mask	Observer	Long Shot	Righteousness	Camera Address			
Glorious Future	Head Covering	Child as Perpetrator	Low Camera/ High Subject	Exclusivity		NOTES:		
Nihilization	Architecture	Child as Victim	Graphics					
Dehumanization	Identity Shift							
Conspiracy	Identity Marker							

Table 40. Flames of War—“Fighting has Just Begun” 03:48–04:14

SOCIAL IDENTITY	IN GROUP	VIOLENCE	PRODUCTION	RELIGION	AUDIO	HUMANITY	MILITARY	SETTING
In Group	Power	Implied	Complex	Divine Blessing	Music Central	Expression	Dress Uniform	Civilization
Out Group	Authority	Explicit	Tempo Change	Divine Mandate	Music Background	Reaction	Working Uniform	Wilderness
Positive Honor Challenge	Victory	Battle	Slow Motion	Divine Curse	Lyrics	Anticipation	Weapon	War Affected
Negative Honor Challenge	Territory	One-on-One	Speed Motion	Savior	March	Fear	Heavy Weapon	Indoors
Response	Wealth	Ritual	Combination Motion	Salvation	Nasheed Arabic	Confidence	Vehicle	Outdoors
Limited Good	Prowess Military	Stabbing	Reverse Motion	Heaven	Nasheed English	Disdain	Aircraft	Stylized
Patron	Prowess Physical	Gunshot	Repeat Motion	Hell	Narration	Helplessness	Battle	Cultural Structures
Client	Social Status	Explosion	Camera Address	Sacrifice	Sound Effects	Suffering	Display	Limited Good
Constrained Resources	Superiority	Beheading	B-Roll	Jihad	Ambient Sound	Dying	Action	Pre-Planned
Threat to Culture	Flag	Drowning	Fast Edits	Reward	Emphasis Audio	Close Up		
Threat to Heritage	Attire	Falling	Lingering Edits	Apostasy	Public Speech	Slow Motion		
Existential Threat	In-Group Logo	Active Dying	Close Up	Sin	Dialogue			
Golden Age	Mask	Observer	Long Shot	Righteousness	Camera Address			
Glorious Future	Head Covering	Child as Perpetrator	Low Camera/ High Subject	Exclusivity		NOTES:		
Nihilization	Architecture	Child as Victim	Graphics					
Dehumanization	Identity Shift							
Conspiracy	Identity Marker							

Table 41. Flames of War—“Fighting...in Sham” 04:14–08:03

SOCIAL IDENTITY	IN GROUP	VIOLENCE	PRODUCTION	RELIGION	AUDIO	HUMANITY	MILITARY	SETTING
In Group	Power	Implied	Complex	Divine Blessing	Music Central	Expression	Dress Uniform	Civilization
Out Group	Authority	Explicit	Tempo Change	Divine Mandate	Music Background	Reaction	Working Uniform	Wilderness
Positive Honor Challenge	Victory	Battle	Slow Motion	Divine Curse	Lyrics	Anticipation	Weapon	War Affected
Negative Honor Challenge	Territory	One-on-One	Speed Motion	Savior	March	Fear	Heavy Weapon	Indoors
Response	Wealth	Ritual	Combination Motion	Salvation	Nasheed Arabic	Confidence	Vehicle	Outdoors
Limited Good	Prowess Military	Stabbing	Reverse Motion	Heaven	Nasheed English	Disdain	Aircraft	Stylized
Patron	Prowess Physical	Gunshot	Repeat Motion	Hell	Narration	Helplessness	Battle	Cultural Structures
Client	Social Status	Explosion	Camera Address	Sacrifice	Sound Effects	Suffering	Display	Limited Good
Constrained Resources	Superiority	Beheading	B-Roll	Jihad	Ambient Sound	Dying	Action	Pre-Planned
Threat to Culture	Flag	Drowning	Fast Edits	Reward	Emphasis Audio	Close Up	Horse	
Threat to Heritage	Attire	Falling	Lingering Edits	Apostasy	Public Speech	Slow Motion		
Existential Threat	In-Group Logo	Active Dying	Close Up	Sin	Dialogue			
Golden Age	Mask	Observer	Long Shot	Righteousness	Camera Address			
Glorious Future	Head Covering	Child as Perpetrator	Low Camera/ High Subject	Exclusivity	Echo Emphasis	NOTES:		
Nihilization	Architecture	Child as Victim	Graphics			Khilafah		
Dehumanization	Identity Shift					Mujahideen		
Conspiracy	Identity Marker					Hadith		
						“The few of the few”		

Table 42. Flames of War Air Base Siege 08:04–END

SOCIAL IDENTITY	IN GROUP	VIOLENCE	PRODUCTION	RELIGION	AUDIO	HUMANITY	MILITARY	SETTING
In Group	Power	Implied	Complex	Divine Blessing	Music Central	Expression	Dress Uniform	Civilization
Out Group	Authority	Explicit	Tempo Change	Divine Mandate	Music Background	Reaction	Working Uniform	Wilderness
Positive Honor Challenge	Victory	Battle	Slow Motion	Divine Curse	Lyrics	Anticipation	Weapon	War Affected
Negative Honor Challenge	Territory	One-on-One	Speed Motion	Savior	March	Fear	Heavy Weapon	Indoors
Response	Wealth	Ritual	Combination Motion	Salvation	Nasheed Arabic	Confidence	Vehicle	Outdoors
Limited Good	Prowess Military	Stabbing	Reverse Motion	Heaven	Nasheed English	Disdain	Aircraft	Stylized
Patron	Prowess Physical	Gunshot	Repeat Motion	Hell	Narration	Helplessness	Battle	Cultural Structures
Client	Social Status	Explosion	Camera Address	Sacrifice	Sound Effects	Suffering	Display	Limited Good
Constrained Resources	Superiority	Beheading	B-Roll	Jihad	Ambient Sound	Dying	Action	Pre-Planned
Threat to Culture	Flag	Drowning	Fast Edits	Reward	Emphasis Audio	Close Up	Horse	
Threat to Heritage	Attire	Falling	Lingering Edits	Apostasy	Public Speech	Slow Motion		
Existential Threat	In-Group Logo	Active Dying	Close Up	Sin	Dialogue			
Golden Age	Mask	Observer	Long Shot	Righteousness	Camera Address			
Glorious Future	Head Covering	Child as Perpetrator	Low Camera/ High Subject	Exclusivity	Echo Emphasis	NOTES:		
Nihilization	Architecture	Child as Victim	Graphics			Documentary Style		
Dehumanization	Identity Shift					English Narration		
Conspiracy	Identity Marker					“Victory or shahada”		
						“Weapon of unshakeable faith”		

Table 43. Sake of Allah “Arrival” Scene

SOCIAL IDENTITY	IN GROUP	VIOLENCE	PRODUCTION	RELIGION	AUDIO	HUMANITY	MILITARY	SETTING
In Group	Power	Implied	Complex	Divine Blessing	Music Central	Expression	Dress Uniform	Civilization
Out Group	Authority	Explicit	Tempo Change	Divine Mandate	Music Background	Reaction	Working Uniform	Wilderness
Positive Honor Challenge	Victory	Battle	Slow Motion	Divine Curse	Lyrics	Anticipation	Weapon	War Affected
Negative Honor Challenge	Territory	One-on-One	Speed Motion	Savior	March	Fear	Heavy Weapon	Indoors
Response	Wealth	Ritual	Combination Motion	Salvation	Nasheed Arabic	Confidence	Vehicle	Outdoors
Limited Good	Prowess Military	Stabbing	Reverse Motion	Heaven	Nasheed English	Disdain	Aircraft	Stylized
Patron	Prowess Physical	Gunshot	Repeat Motion	Hell	Narration	Helplessness	Battle	Cultural Structures
Client	Social Status	Explosion	Camera Address	Sacrifice	Sound Effects	Suffering	Display	Limited Good
Constrained Resources	Superiority	Beheading	B-Roll	Jihad	Ambient Sound	Dying	Action	Pre-Planned
Threat to Culture	Flag	Drowning	Fast Edits	Reward	Emphasis Audio	Close Up		
Threat to Heritage	Attire	Falling	Lingering Edits	Apostasy	Public Speech	Slow Motion		
Existential Threat	In-Group Logo	Active Dying	Close Up	Sin	Dialogue	Dead Body		
Golden Age	Mask	Observer	Long Shot	Righteousness	Camera Address			
Glorious Future	Head Covering	Child as Perpetrator	Low Camera/ High Subject	Exclusivity		NOTES:		
Nihilization	Architecture	Child as Victim	Graphics			Emphasis of boots on ground		
Dehumanization	Identity Shift							
Conspiracy	Identity Marker							

Table 44. Sake of Allah “Decree” Scene

SOCIAL IDENTITY	IN GROUP	VIOLENCE	PRODUCTION	RELIGION	AUDIO	HUMANITY	MILITARY	SETTING
In Group	Power	Implied	Complex	Divine Blessing	Music Central	Expression	Dress Uniform	Civilization
Out Group	Authority	Explicit	Tempo Change	Divine Mandate	Music Background	Reaction	Working Uniform	Wilderness
Positive Honor Challenge	Victory	Battle	Slow Motion	Divine Curse	Lyrics	Anticipation	Weapon	War Affected
Negative Honor Challenge	Territory	One-on-One	Speed Motion	Savior	March	Fear	Heavy Weapon	Indoors
Response	Wealth	Ritual	Combination Motion	Salvation	Nasheed Arabic	Confidence	Vehicle	Outdoors
Limited Good	Prowess Military	Stabbing	Reverse Motion	Heaven	Nasheed English	Disdain	Aircraft	Stylized
Patron	Prowess Physical	Gunshot	Repeat Motion	Hell	Narration	Helplessness	Battle	Cultural Structures
Client	Social Status	Explosion	Camera Address	Sacrifice	Sound Effects	Suffering	Display	Limited Good
Constrained Resources	Superiority	Beheading	B-Roll	Jihad	Ambient Sound	Dying	Action	Pre-Planned
Threat to Culture	Flag	Drowning	Fast Edits	Reward	Emphasis Audio	Close Up		
Threat to Heritage	Attire	Falling	Lingering Edits	Apostasy	Public Speech	Slow Motion		
Existential Threat	In-Group Logo	Active Dying	Close Up	Sin	Dialogue	Dead Body		
Golden Age	Mask	Observer	Long Shot	Righteousness	Camera Address			
Glorious Future	Head Covering	Child as Perpetrator	Low Camera/ High Subject	Exclusivity		NOTES:		
Nihilization	Architecture	Child as Victim	Graphics					
Dehumanization	Identity Shift							
Conspiracy	Identity Marker							

Table 45. Sake of Allah “Battle Montage” Scene

SOCIAL IDENTITY	IN GROUP	VIOLENCE	PRODUCTION	RELIGION	AUDIO	HUMANITY	MILITARY	SETTING
In Group	Power	Implied	Complex	Divine Blessing	Music Central	Expression	Dress Uniform	Civilization
Out Group	Authority	Explicit	Tempo Change	Divine Mandate	Music Background	Reaction	Working Uniform	Wilderness
Positive Honor Challenge	Victory	Battle	Slow Motion	Divine Curse	Lyrics	Anticipation	Weapon	War Affected
Negative Honor Challenge	Territory	One-on-One	Speed Motion	Savior	March	Fear	Heavy Weapon	Indoors
Response	Wealth	Ritual	Combination Motion	Salvation	Nasheed Arabic	Confidence	Vehicle	Outdoors
Limited Good	Prowess Military	Stabbing	Reverse Motion	Heaven	Nasheed English	Disdain	Aircraft	Stylized
Patron	Prowess Physical	Gunshot	Repeat Motion	Hell	Narration	Helplessness	Battle	Cultural Structures
Client	Social Status	Explosion	Camera Address	Sacrifice	Sound Effects	Suffering	Display	Limited Good
Constrained Resources	Superiority	Beheading	B-Roll	Jihad	Ambient Sound	Dying	Action	Pre-Planned
Threat to Culture	Flag	Drowning	Fast Edits	Reward	Emphasis Audio	Close Up		
Threat to Heritage	Attire	Falling	Lingering Edits	Apostasy	Public Speech	Slow Motion		
Existential Threat	In-Group Logo	Active Dying	Close Up	Sin	Dialogue	Dead Body		
Golden Age	Mask	Observer	Long Shot	Righteousness	Camera Address			
Glorious Future	Head Covering	Child as Perpetrator	Low Camera/High Subject	Exclusivity		NOTES:		
Nihilization	Architecture	Child as Victim	Graphics					
Dehumanization	Identity Shift							
Conspiracy	Identity Marker							

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