

REWIRING KENNETH BURKE FOR THE 21ST CENTURY:
HIZB UT-TAHRIR'S SOCIAL MOVEMENT RHETORIC
AND ONLINE QUEST FOR THE CALIPHATE

by

DREW MARTIN LOEWE

Bachelor of Arts, 1989
University of California at Santa Barbara
Santa Barbara, California

Juris Doctorate, 1993
Gonzaga University School of Law
Spokane, Washington

Master of Arts, 2004
University of Texas at San Antonio
San Antonio, Texas

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DEDICATION AND ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Dedication

For Mireya, “without whom not” indeed!

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ABBREVIATIONS

In this dissertation, I use the following abbreviations:

HT

Hizb ut-Tahrir al Islami (“Islamic Party of Liberation”), an Islamist social movement with branches in many countries

HTB

The British branch of HT

C2007.com

HTB website, www.caliphate2007.com

Hizb.org

HTB website, www.hizb.org.uk

K.com

HTB website, www.khilafah.com

Chapter 1

Introduction and Overview: Changing the Tools

When even the best tools can no longer meet all our needs, we change the tools or create new ones. This need for change is as true of scholarly methods as it is of technical innovations. In this study, I examine the online rhetoric of the British branch of Islamist social movement Hizb ut-Tahrir al Islami (“Islamic Party of Liberation”) to refigure some of the most sensitive and useful tools of rhetorical inquiry ever developed: the tools developed by Kenneth Burke. (In the rest of this dissertation, I will refer to Hizb ut-Tahrir al Islami as “HT,” not only for brevity’s sake, but also because Hizb ut-Tahrir itself often uses that moniker. I will refer to the British branch of HT as “HTB.”) Burke’s extensive development of the critical methods of dramatism and logology, coupled with his lifelong project of understanding language as symbolic action has yielded a bounty of dazzling insights for rhetorical scholars. These insights include new ways to understand the fascinating (and frightening) implications of humans as “bodies that learn language,”

persuasion by identification and segregation, and the inescapable cycles of guilt and order built into language itself.

It is no exaggeration to place Burke among the most important English-language rhetoricians and critics of the last century (perhaps of any age). Burke's lasting influence in multiple disciplines, particularly in rhetoric, attests to the continued vitality of his body of work. Yet, even tools as richly developed as those Burke gave us have their limits and need to be updated from time to time if they are to retain their usefulness. As James W. Chesebro argues in the preface to the 1993 collection *Extensions of the Burkeian System*, the Burkean method is in some ways cursed by longevity—that is, Burke's long life and prodigious output do not identify him with one particular time or rhetorical problem (xiii). Thus, as always throughout Burke's long life, and now after it, we need to recontextualize his work if it is to remain vital and useful in the face of new and important social realities (xiii).

Burke did not have an opportunity to engage fully one of the most important social realities of the last decade: the rise of access to, and use of, the World Wide Web.¹ Burke died in 1993, when the Internet and the Web were almost exclusively the province of a small group of government and university researchers. Now, however, the Web affects most aspects of life in the developed world, including communication, politics, education, entertainment, commerce, law, and sexuality. Hallmarks of the Web include multimodality

¹Although the terms *Internet* and *World Wide Web* are often used interchangeably, they denote different (though related) realms. In brief, the Internet is a massive network of computers, itself consisting of smaller networks that share information using various standardized communications protocols. The World Wide Web is one important (though not the only) way of accessing and sharing information on the Internet using one such protocol, HTTP (Hypertext Transfer Protocol). In the remainder of this dissertation, I will refer to the World Wide Web simply as “the Web.”

(multiple means of symbolic action, including text, animation, video, sound, and images); hyperlinking; the ability to reach potentially large and diverse audiences at relatively low cost; the ability to respond to rhetorical exigencies nearly immediately; the ability to self-publish (quickly, too); a measure of free-form audience experience; and the audience's ability—on some web pages—to respond to content through comments.

Social movements, beginning most notably with the Zapatista movement in southern Mexico, and continuing through (and beyond) HTB, have exploited the Web's possibilities as a persuasive and performative environment. HTB uses the Web to reach audiences sympathetic to its aims, to engage agonistically with audiences hostile to those aims, and to reinforce the identity of movement members as committed to Islamic values and goals. As Burke puts it in *A Grammar of Motives* (his effort to understand the dialectical boundaries of how we talk about symbolic action), "The directional is embedded in the very word, 'motivation'... When an individual's acts are referred to some larger curve, we get *movement* as motive" (32, emphasis original). The Web is a particularly rich environment for HTB members to construct visions of that "larger curve" and to sustain a collective that seeks, from HTB's perspective, social change undergirded by divine mandate.

As I examine in Chapter 2, past Burkean approaches to social movement rhetoric have yielded valuable insights and constitute a distinct sub-area of rhetorical scholarship. However, much previous scholarship is preoccupied with defining what a social movement is or with describing the rhetorical arc of a social movement's life cycle. As valuable as these approaches are, they tend to overlook the role of particular media in movements' efforts to build identification with audiences and to move them to action. This is doubly

true in the case of the Web, a medium that is qualitatively different from the media that Burke himself and previous rhetorical scholarship on social movements examine. Qualitative differences have consequences. As Barbara Warnick points out in *Rhetoric Online: Persuasion and Politics on the World Wide Web*, the differences between the Web and other persuasive media are exemplified by a set of “media shifts” (12). These media shifts mean that

[p]rinted texts and continuous television programming generally have given way to ever-shorter segments on television and to discontinuous, chunked text in other media, including print media and the Web. Thus, substantive, integral texts in speech and writing have been displaced, as electronic and Web-based communications are parsed into sound bites, hyperlinked lexias, media clips, and images. (12)

Among the effects of such media shifts and the displacement of “integral” texts that Warnick examines are complications about authorship and collaboration, the effects of hypertext on writing and reading practices, and a shift in the relative importance of images versus text as the dominant persuasive resource (12). Despite (or perhaps because of) the qualitative differences between the Web and other persuasive media that have been studied by rhetorical scholars, and despite the pervasiveness of online persuasion, Warnick contends that “the use of rhetoric in new media environments has been understudied by scholars and critics of rhetoric” (13).

That general lack of studies of new media rhetoric is mirrored by a specific lack of studies of new media rhetoric by social movements. Yet, from the standpoint of a social movement seeking to shape and adapt an identity and a set of values coherent enough to constitute it *as a movement*, it is not trivial whether symbolic action takes place by means of pencil and paper, printed book, live speaking, photography, or video on a Web site. Indeed, as Tina A. Huey has argued in her study of website linking practices (within food movements) as performances of solidarity, “construction of a community is indivisible from the technology that allows it to exist” (127). Put another way, a social movement can take (or not take) certain kinds of symbolic action in a Web environment that are impossible (or easy) to take with the printed word. Consequently, Warnick calls for rhetorical scholars to modify their existing methods of scholarship to better account for the persuasive possibilities that the Web offers.

Because it is impossible for rhetors to compose (or audiences to experience) the Web in an unmediated form, it is time to ask what difference it makes that a social movement uses the Web. Although Warnick is not concerned with refiguring Burkean studies *per se*, she uses Burke’s definition of rhetoric’s function (forming attitudes and inducing action among humans)² to highlight the importance of developing robust research methods for rhetorical criticism of Web-based artifacts (13). My dissertation, by contrast, has explicitly Burkean purposes, those of 1.) refiguring Burkean approaches to social movement rhetoric by examining how the rhetorical possibilities of the Web as a communicative and persuasive event shape HTB’s discourse and 2.) drawing implications from that examination for future

²The definition is from page 41 of *A Rhetoric of Motives*.

research on Burkean approaches to social movement rhetoric.³ Thus, my study is both micro- and macroscopic.

Of course, I am not the first to see a need to refigure Burkean methods to better account for the interplay between media and symbolic action. As Robert Cathcart explains in his contribution to *Extensions of the Burkeian System*, and as I examine in Chapter 2, Burke was exceedingly wary of technology's promise to (always) help human beings live better lives. Moreover, as Cathcart points out, Burke's work is grounded mostly in linguistic, particularly print-based, examples. ("Instruments" 291). As a result, Burke doubted the potential of media themselves to rise to the level of symbolic action (media as persuasive) rather than nonsymbolic motion (media as conduits). Yet, as Cathcart contends, it would be far too simplistic, not to mention self-defeating, to simply classify Burke as a Luddite and thereby limit the application of his powerful and comprehensive body of work (289). Instead, Cathcart asks, "Can dramatism be technologized, that is, be reconceptualized and revitalized, to a point where it can become the necessary critique in a world dominated by the technological media of communication?" (287).⁴

This study is my attempt to answer Cathcart's question "Yes" for Burkean studies of social movements and to read the Web into HTB's rhetoric. To remedy the

³Nevertheless, there are connections between my project and Warnick's call for revised research methods, such as her call for preserving often-ephemeral Web artifacts (125). I have used several means of preserving HTB websites for this dissertation, including downloading pages from HTB sites and the Internet Archive using a program called WinMHT (Spidersoft Software) and the Firefox web browser extension DownThemAll!

⁴Cathcart does not mention the Web, which is entirely understandable because the Web was not yet pervasive when he wrote his essay. Instead, Cathcart focuses on a society in which "video and cinematic images" have challenged literature and in which "political rhetoric is conducted by telephone, fax, and TV spots" (288). In the years after Cathcart's essay, the abundance of communication and persuasion by electronic means has skyrocketed.

relative dearth of rhetorical studies of new media discourses, Warnick calls for case studies of online public discourse and especially for case studies of “counterpublic discourse” (13-14). A counterpublic, as defined by Nancy Fraser, is a “parallel discursive [arena] where members of subordinated social groups invent and circulate counterdiscourses to formulate oppositional interpretations of their identities, interests, and needs” (123). Counterpublics, Fraser explains, have two functions, working both as “spaces of withdrawal and regroupment” and as “bases and training grounds for agitational activities directed toward wider publics” (124). My dissertation examines how HTB uses the Web to build a counterpublic. Unlike the social movements traditionally studied in published rhetorical scholarship, HTB takes full advantage of the Web’s potential to engage in repeatable, sustained, customizable, highly kairotic, copious, and interactive symbolic action that is tailored to the values, practices, and expectations of a 21st century Web audience. But first, it will be necessary to understand some background about HT and HTB.

1.1 Object of Study: HT Britain (HTB)

HT was founded in 1953 by Islamic scholar and jurist Muhammad Taqiuddin al-Nabhani, a judge in the Islamic *shari’a* Court of Appeals in *Al-Quds* (Jerusalem) (“Who Is Hizb ut-Tahrir?” n.pag.). HT describes itself as “a global Islamic political party” whose mission is to work “at all levels of society to bring the Muslims back to living an Islamic

way of life under the shade of the *Khilafah* (Caliphate) State following an exclusively political method” (“Who Is Hizb ut-Tahrir?” n.pag.). However, the scope of HT’s desire to implement a religiopolitical, globalized state is not limited to Muslims alone. Several key articles of HT’s 186-article draft constitution for this globalized state impose Islamic law—but not necessarily religious belief—on non-Muslims (“Draft Constitution” n.pag.).

HT has mapped its transformative vision onto three sweeping stages. In the first stage, HT will seek to inculcate belief in its mission and gather followers; in the second stage, followers will establish Islam in worldly affairs (instead of, say, accommodating Islam within a field of “toleration” or “religious practice”); finally, HT will establish an Islamic government, overseen by the *khilafah*, and spreading the call of Islam to the world (*The Methodology of Hizb ut-Tahrir for Change* 32-35.)⁵ As the draft constitution for the caliphate makes clear, for HT, Islam is not simply a religion. Instead, Islam is “a comprehensive way of life that is capable of managing the affairs of state and society” (“Draft Constitution”). Although HT describes itself as a political party, it does not intervene in the political process by, for example, running candidates for office or seeking to intervene with lawmakers through mainstream procedural channels. HT is openly active in several countries, including England, Australia, Denmark, Malaysia, and Bangladesh, and

⁵Arabic words are difficult to transliterate. As just one example, according to a recent *Economist* article, the name Mohammed has over fifteen accepted transliterations from Arabic into English (“What’s in a Name?” 29). Not only are there different Arabic dialects, but Arabic also uses sounds that do not exist in English, making representation of such sounds from one language to another problematic. For instance, the word *khilafah* (HTB’s term for both an Islamic state and for its leader) can also be transliterated as *khaleefah* or *khulafah*. While HTB uses English to reach out to Web audiences that understand English, certain Arabic words and formulaic sayings appear over and over in its rhetoric. In my study, I will use HTB’s own transliterations of words simply because I want to focus on HTB’s rhetoric, not on matters of transliteration that might be important to linguists but are peripheral to my purposes. When not using HTB’s own preferred term, *khilafah*, I will use the generic English term, “caliphate” (which I have also seen spelled “khalifate”). All Arabic words in this dissertation will be noted with italics.

more or less covertly active in several others, though it is subject to government crackdowns in authoritarian states such as Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan.

I focus here on HT Britain (HTB). As Olivier Roy argues in *Globalized Islam*, English is increasingly the primary language of young Muslims born in Western countries and “the use of mother tongues is fading, especially by the third generation” (112). Moreover, Roy notes that the rise of primary English-language sources of Islamist discourse is part of “a new phenomenon of exporting radical Islam from West to East” (309). As Roy and other commentators have argued, such radical discourses are often prepared and disseminated by highly educated (and Western-educated) rhetors using the Web. In particular, HTB uses the Web as part of a comprehensive campaign to spread an Islamist message. HTB is a prolific rhetor, sponsoring and organizing discussions, demonstrations, protests, study groups, lectures, and conferences. HTB also recruits at college campuses; writes and distributes leaflets (in person and online); regularly sends spokespersons for appearances on television news and debate shows; translates its many detailed publications (some authored by HT founder al-Nabhani) into English; uploads video clips of its spokespersons’ appearances and of digital films to YouTube; and maintains several well-designed, high-production-value websites complete with online forums, books, and the means to play (and download) audio and video. While any of HTB’s many forms of symbolic action warrant sustained study, I concentrate on HTB’s uses of the Web, for the reason Warnick suggests: the methods and theories of rhetorical studies need to better account for this increasingly important means of symbolic action.

1.2 HTB's 21st Century Vision of the Caliphate

HTB's online call for a return to "the" Islamic caliphate resonates with its Muslim and Non-Muslim audiences, but the caliphate has always been a contested ideograph throughout Islamic history. Indeed, the split of Islam into its largest sects of Sunni (about 90%) and Shia (about 10%) centers on the question of who was to lead the Muslims after Muhammad's death in 632 CE. The early Muslims fought two civil wars over this question. The various caliphates that ruled over Muslim lands between the 7th and 20th centuries are certainly not monolithic. In other words, there are important differences between the various religiopolitical entities that have claimed the title of caliphate at different times and in different places. By contrast, HTB consistently portrays "the" caliphate as unitary. HT also ascribes a general decline in Islam—really, a general moving away from God himself because "Islam" means "submission to the will of God"—to the caliphate being overthrown by the forces of unbelief, ignorance, and apostasy. HTB portrays the *khilafah* state not merely as a just or expedient political arrangement, but indeed as nothing less than the implementation of God's will and, therefore, a mandatory duty for Muslims.

For HTB, the *khilafah* state is the ultimate temporal grounding of God's plan, which is the ultimate eternal grounding. The *khilafah* state is a counterpublic to the *Dar-al-Kufr*, the world of unbelief. The world of unbelief includes "the West" but can also include Muslim countries such as Saudi Arabia, which HTB portrays as a tyrannical puppet of the United States. HTB's vision of the *khilafah* state replaces national or ethnic identities with an overarching Muslim identity. Especially on the Web, the opportunities to create this

overarching Muslim identity for English-speaking Muslims and to argue against the world of unbelief abound. The Web is a space for HTB adherents to (re)define the values of what it means to be a real Muslim by participating (over and over, if desired) in HTB's particular vision of a divinely mandated religiopolitical state. The Web allows HTB to bring multiple communicative modes together and to reach a wide audience at a trivial financial cost. This dissertation examines the core question of what difference it makes that HTB uses the Web.

1.3 Case Study: 7/7 and the Proposed Ban

HT's vision of the caliphate creates deep suspicion and raises the specter of radicalization, particularly now in this age of an open-ended War on Terror. In speeches, former President George W. Bush has mentioned the caliphate—albeit al-Qaeda's vision of it—as a threat to Western notions of freedom. Even in countries where HT is not banned, its transformative Islamic political rhetoric gives rise to scrutiny and suspicion. For example, in 2004, the Nixon Center hosted a conference in Turkey on “The Challenge of Hizb ut-Tahrir” and published twenty brief papers, some of which argue that HT provides ideological training for future Islamist terrorists. That conference's organizer, Zeyno Baran, published an article in *Foreign Affairs* in December 2005 entitled “Fighting the War of Ideas,” contending that HT is an ideological “conveyor belt” for creating terrorists (68).⁶

⁶In her writings, media appearances, letters to newspapers, articles, and posts on counter-terrorism blogs, Baran is an outspoken critic of HT. HTB spokesperson Dr. Imran Waheed has denied the “conveyor belt” label and has attempted to turn it back on Baran, contending, “the biggest conveyor belt for radicalization is American and British foreign policy.” (qtd in Power n.pag.).

While always controversial, HTB has enjoyed the protection of British free-speech rights and access to British media outlets, such as the BBC and the letters to the editor pages of major newspapers. HTB's *Khilafah Publications* is based in London. Several prominent HTB members live and work in London. In July 2005, though, London faced an Islamist terrorist threat that came to HTB's doorstep. On July 7, 2005, Islamist terrorists Mohammed Sidique Khan, Shehzad Tanweer, Abdullah Shaheed Jamal, and Hasib Hussain bombed three London Underground trains and one bus, killing over fifty people and creating 7/7 as Britain's metonym of loss and fear similar to the U.S.'s 9/11. On July 21, 2005, a similar plot almost succeeded, thwarted only by the failure of the explosive material to ignite. Consistent with its stated mission of non-violent political struggle and change through intellectual work, HTB condemned the attacks, but perhaps not in terms as unequivocal as many Britons would like.

On August 5, 2005, British Prime Minister Tony Blair announced that, along with another Islamist group, HTB was to be banned in Britain. HTB's uses of the Web to oppose the ban and to blend rhetorical appeals in its online and offline movement activities comprise the primary source material for this dissertation. The proposed ban on HTB was not implemented, which may be due in part to how effectively HTB used rhetoric to respond to the threat and in part to the dissemination of British government documents concluding that HTB, while ideologically hostile to the West, does not necessarily condone terrorism. By late December 2006, governmental and law enforcement concerns about the legal and

evidentiary basis (as well as pragmatic effects) of a proposed ban again carried the day. For now, HTB is not banned in Britain though its status will probably remain precarious.⁷

As I show in Chapter 2, the published scholarship calling for Burkean methods to be refigured in general is long on calls for new approaches and short on case studies. Similarly, the published scholarship about Burkean approaches to social movement rhetoric in particular is often preoccupied with definitions and theoretical concerns. Leading movement scholars such as Herbert W. Simons have called for more case studies, a call I answer here. My study is a case study of HTB's online rhetoric about the *khilafah* state in the context of the post-7/7 proposed ban. The proposed ban was a crucial moment for HTB's continued survival in Britain, and HTB made maximum use of Web affordances to resist the proposed ban and reach English-speaking audiences. Thus, the proposed ban is a particularly rich event for understanding how HTB used the Web to work for the *khilafah* state and provides the best materials for understanding why the qualitative differences between "old" media and "new" media truly matter in movement rhetoric.

Moreover, Warnick argues that there is a particularly acute need for case studies of online discourse because "the challenges involved in archiving the political Web are nearly insuperable" (124). As Warnick explains, Web content is modular (separated into units, such as sound files and graphics files), distributed across multiple servers in different locations, mutable, prone to obsolescence because of formatting and software changes,

⁷For example, in May 2007, Ed Husain (Mohammed Mahbub Hussain) published his autobiography entitled *The Islamist*. Husain claims to have been a member of HTB (and other Islamist groups) during the early 1990s and is now highly critical of radicals' calls for an Islamic caliphate. For its part, HTB has denied that Husain was ever officially a member of HTB and has denounced *The Islamist* (Mustafa, "The 'Islamist' Bogeyman" n.pag.). Moreover, during British Prime Minister Gordon Brown's first Prime Minister's Questions in the House of Commons on July 4, 2007, Conservative leader David Cameron confronted Brown about why the British government had not banned HTB ("Hansard" n.pag.).

and not systematically or comprehensively archived (38-39). In light of these difficulties, Warnick calls for rhetorical scholars to act as archivists by providing rich descriptions and analyses of Web artifacts:

When cross-site links, multimedia downloads, and other dynamic content can no longer be reproduced, critics' accounts of the historical situation, rhetors' motivations, and audience efforts can furnish a relatively enduring record of the nature and functions of public persuasion in its context. As they have in the past, rhetorical critics can thus provide a record of rhetorical action and its historical effects. (39-40)⁸

Through both selected screenshot images and close description and analysis, my study aims to preserve and to furnish a record of some of the most important ways HTB used the Web in the context of the proposed ban.

A rhetorical case study provides the scholar with the best means of deep analysis and preservation of important evidence. As Moya Ann Ball puts it in her chapter on Vietnam War rhetoric in the collection *Doing Rhetorical History: Concepts and Cases*, "Case studies cannot attain prediction and control, but they can provide explanations of relationships and an understanding of the meanings that actors ascribe to their behaviors" (71). Indeed, this study examines how HTB, in the context of the proposed ban after 7/7, built and sustained a vision of a divinely mandated counterpublic using the Web

⁸Warnick explains that the Internet Archive, an online library that attempts to archive online content at intervals and make that content available to users, holds billions of snapshots of web pages, but it really only preserves snapshots of what is publicly available (39). The Internet Archive excludes content that requires registration, does not always preserve website formatting, and may or may not capture images or linked content on a website if those images or linked content are stored on a different server (39).

and blending online and offline movement activities. Ultimately, this study examines and preserves a selected portion of HTB's rhetorical artifacts produced in the context of a significant challenge to its continued existence in Britain. Thus, I aim to answer two sets of calls for case studies: one coming from within Burkean approaches to social movement rhetorics and one coming from within rhetorical criticism of online discourse.

1.4 Scope

Because HT has existed since 1953 in many countries and is a prolific rhetor (not only in Britain, but also wherever it has a physical or Web presence), no study of this length could hope to have the last word on this movement. Case studies aim for knowledge that can only be gathered by in-depth analysis of a corpus of data that is both narrow enough (in terms of both time and volume) to yield valuable insights within the constraints of the project, yet broad enough so that meaningful generalizations can be supported. In other words, a case study must balance breadth and depth. I focus on the period of July 7, 2005 (date of the bombings) through August 2007 (when various HT branches worldwide, including HTB, held a series of caliphate conferences). This selected period balances breadth and depth in examining HTB's uses of the Web and helps me to make a new contribution to "technologizing" Burkean approaches to social movement rhetoric.

1.5 Roadmap to Remaining Chapters

In Chapter 2, “Social Movement Rhetoric Online: How Form is Formed,” I conceptualize a means for meeting the challenge I describe above: the challenge of updating Burkean methods to better understand social movement rhetorics created, disseminated, and received online. I examine the Web on its own terms. I trace the Web’s origins and explain how its rise depended upon the development of search engines and web browsers. I blend insights from new media scholarship and rhetorical scholarship. I then introduce and examine relevant Burkean rhetorical concepts, including symbolic action/nonsymbolic motion and rhetorical form. In particular, Burke’s examination of rhetorical form brings out the psychological, value-laden, emotional, and strategic ways in which form affects human attitudes and identities. Yet, Burke’s strict separation between the symbolic and the nonsymbolic realms (at the heart of his skepticism about machinic views of communication and about the propriety of using the computer as a metaphor for the human mind) need rethinking. I argue that, where technology blurs the boundaries between agent and agency—and the Web is a particularly clear example of such blurring—a rigid separation of the symbolic from the nonsymbolic is no longer possible or perhaps even desirable. Moreover, previous rhetorical scholarship on social movements, while valuable, has omitted the media-specific analysis necessary to take the Web seriously on its own terms as a rhetorical event. Thus, there is a need both for a media-specific rhetorical

analysis of online movement rhetoric and for a folding in of such analysis with Burkean movement studies.

In Chapter 3, “Rewiring Kenneth Burke,” I map a rhetorical understanding of the Web as a vast global hypertext. Because the Web operates on more levels besides what is on the screen, I develop a critical tool, a three-layered heuristic, to blend the material specificities of the Web with rhetorical form. That tool, “Behind the Screen, Off the Screen, and On the Screen,” attempts to do justice to the Web as an inescapably mediated experience in which users must first find and access web pages and in which users’ behavior can shape content. This three-layered heuristic complicates our rhetorical readings of websites as *websites*, as mediated human drama. I argue that rhetorical critics must understand the basics of markup, scripting, and modularity—in other words, what is “Behind the Screen.” Moreover, the realm of “Off the Screen,” I contend, is essential because that second layer of the heuristic captures the Web’s nature as a environment marked by association, intertextuality, movement, and Burkean “gratification,” including linkages between online and offline rhetoric. Finally, I argue, the heuristic’s third layer, “On the Screen,” retains close description of visual and verbal experiences, the sort of close reading at the heart of all rhetorical analysis, including a “rewired” Burkean movement studies.

In Chapter 4, “The Change Needs to be *Khilafah*,” I apply the heuristics developed in the third chapter to examine a wide range of artifacts from HTB’s online rhetoric surrounding the proposed ban. HTB made maximum use of the Web’s rhetorical potential to resist the proposed ban and reach out to English-speaking audiences. Unlike the social movements traditionally studied in rhetorical scholarship, HTB takes full advantage of the

Web's potential to engage in symbolic action tailored to 21st century Web audiences, even as its message is tailored to a fundamentalist view of Islam. I use the case study of HTB's online rhetoric resisting the proposed ban as an occasion to test the critical tool I develop and demonstrate its usefulness for maintaining the vitality and scope of Burkean methods for understanding social movement rhetoric online.

Finally, in Chapter 5, "Looking Back, Looking Forward," I draw out the overall contribution of this study and suggest some implications for future scholarship. Ultimately, this study contributes to knowledge by offering one answer to Warnick's call for rhetorical scholars to take the Web seriously, by preserving HTB's online rhetorical artifacts, and by refining Burkean understandings of social movement rhetorics. Though Burke himself might have resisted the rewiring that this study offers, opening the "black box" of the Web's material specificities leads to enhanced understandings of the nature and consequences of rhetorical form and audience psychology.

Chapter 2

Social Movement Rhetoric Online: How Form is Formed

2.1 Introduction

What difference does it make that a community of outsiders such as HTB seeks to bring about sweeping social change using the Web? How can Burkean rhetorical methods best be updated to understand movement rhetorics created, disseminated, and received online? This chapter begins the kind of work that Warnick calls us to do—that is, the work of taking the Web seriously on its own terms as a multimodal, inescapably mediated rhetorical event. On the Web, HTB can build a vision of the ideal religiopolitical state and perform its particular version of Muslim identity writ large in the caliphate. The Web provides multiple possibilities for HTB and its audiences to perform the identity HTB seeks to inculcate. That identity is one of Muslims taking action to use all available means of persuasion to bring about the theocracy God commands, to hold up a constant mirror of critique to ideological

enemies, and—in the case of the proposed ban—to argue for continued legal existence. The Web is a highly effective means for HTB to disperse its message across the globe; to collapse such barriers to communication as time, distance, cost, and social class; and mark out an *Us* as united in our differences from *Them*.

The Web is often casually called an instance of “new media.” However, it is important to understand the implications of such a definition if rhetorical scholars are going to accept Warnick’s challenge to preserve and analyze the Web as an important means by which human beings urge one another to action and through which a movement like HTB reaches worldwide audiences. The Web is a prime example of what the Digital Methods Initiative calls the “natively digital”; that is, the Web “could not survive outside of [its] digital environments” (Digital Methods Initiative, Home page, n.pag.).⁹ To understand the natively digital, I will examine three important works of new media and rhetorical scholarship that help frame my inquiries. These three works investigate the ways in which media forms interact and borrow from one another dialectically (Jay David Bolter and Richard Grusin’s *Remediation: Understanding New Media*), how the Web is qualitatively different from older media forms (Lev Manovich’s *The Language of New Media*), and how the Web should be studied from the particular perspectives of rhetorical scholarship (Barbara Warnick’s *Rhetoric Online: Politics and Persuasion on the World Wide Web*). The first two of these works—*Remediation* and *The Language of New Media*—date from 1999 and 2001, respectively. They are influential, now-canonical works of new media

⁹The Digital Methods Initiative is a group of new media scholars affiliated with Amsterdam-based GovCom.Org Foundation. The Initiative has two aims: finding out whether new media research methods “can stake claim to taking into account the differences that new media make” and publicizing, on the Web, the results of research about the Web (DMI Home, n.pag.).

scholarship. Warnick's *Rhetoric Online* dates from 2007 and is too new to have become canonical; however, Warnick's work not only provides a much-needed bridge between new media studies and rhetorical scholarship but also blends productive aspects of both.

After examining each of these works and drawing out what each has to offer this study, I bring two more sets of scholars to the conversation: first, Burke himself, for his examination of rhetorical form and, second, those who have theorized and examined movements from a Burkean perspective. As a result of this chapter's analysis, I locate the means for my "rewiring" of Burkean methods of movement criticism in Burke's extensive treatment of form as symbolic action and to build the tools for my case study by putting new media theory and rhetorical theory into better conversation. The best way to understand movement rhetoric on the Web is to use Burke's exploration of form blended with my three-layered analyses of *Behind the Screen* (taking online artifacts seriously as the digital artifacts they are), *Off the Screen* (examining intertextual linkages among different HTB rhetorical artifacts and offline movement activities), and *On the Screen* (close reading and analysis of the mediated experience of HTB artifacts).

This multi-layered approach illuminates the meaning that movement actors and participants invest in collective identity, shaped and performed through mediated experiences. It also illuminates how those experiences are created and experienced in the movement's dialectical progression toward a vision of a just society that, in HTB's case, is positioned as deriving its mandate from God. This three-layered heuristic builds on the insights of previous scholarship to offer a more sensitive reading of Web-based rhetoric. It more fully accounts for the Web as a persuasive event particularly suited to

forming audience appetites and desires and involving audiences in co-creating identity and meaning. Like Burke's dramatic methods, these three sets of inquiries act as heuristics to enrich rhetorical readings of websites *as websites*, which will be the focus of my case study in Chapter 4.

But first, to understand the Web on its own terms, it is important to trace its genealogy.

2.2 The Web's Origins

The Internet and the Web are not the same; they are related though different in important ways. The Internet, a term first coined in 1974, is a vast network of smaller computer networks that grew out of Defense Department-commissioned efforts in the 1960s to connect computers at universities and other research sites (Kahn and Cerf, "What Is the Internet [And What Makes It Work]" n.pag.; Berners-Lee, "Frequently Asked Questions" n.pag.). The Internet was, and still is, an excellent system of sending and receiving packets of digital information using various protocols (for example, email and electronic file transfers). However, in its earliest incarnations, the Internet did not allow for easy sharing of information between computers on different networks.

Enter Tim Berners-Lee. While working as a particle physicist at the CERN laboratory in the 1980s, Berners-Lee became frustrated with the incompatibility of researchers' various computer networks, incompatibilities that harmed the sharing of important information (Berners-Lee, "The World Wide Web: A Very Short Personal History" n.pag.). Berners-

Lee sought to build on two 1960s inventions: hypertext, invented by Ted Nelson, and the mouse, invented by Doug Engelbart (O'Regan 186). Berners-Lee imagined a “global hypertext space,” built on the existing base of the Internet (Berners-Lee, “The World Wide Web” n.pag.). In that space, any information (document, image, search results) that could be accessed over a computer network could be located by “a single ‘Universal Document Identifier’” (Berners-Lee, “The World Wide Web” n.pag.). In 1990, Berners-Lee wrote a program called “World Wide Web,” which allowed users to make and edit hypertext links between different kinds of digital information stored on the Internet (“The World Wide Web” n.pag.).¹⁰ It is this ability to associate and use disparate kinds of digital information readily that makes the Web so useful for different rhetorical aims.

Even after Berners-Lee refused to claim intellectual property rights to his invention and after he disseminated knowledge about the Web through scholarly publications, it took two other developments to bring the Web to the general public: the Web browser and the search engine. A Web browser is the software that allows a user to access Web content and, depending on the particular browser and the choices of the particular user, to modify how that content is displayed.¹¹ Kevin Kelly, one of the founders of the magazine *Wired*, points

¹⁰In a decision that now seems incredible, the organizers of a conference on hypertext rejected Berners-Lee’s 1991 paper about the Web, relegating him to a poster session to announce what has now grown into a worldwide social, economic, and cultural phenomenon (Montfort and Wardrip-Fruin 791).

¹¹Most Web browsers, such as the popular Internet Explorer, Firefox, Opera, and Google Chrome (to name just a few) are graphical browsers. They display text and images and can use “add-ons” or “plugins” to play audio and video files. Some non-graphical browsers, such as Lynx, display only text and hyperlinks. Many browsers, such as Opera, can “read” Web content aloud for the sight-impaired. In my study, I will examine HT and HTB websites as they appear in graphical web browsers such as Firefox and Google Chrome. I choose graphical browsers for my analysis because, as I show in Chapter 4, HT and HTB websites are rich with multimodal features and content accessible with up-to-date browsers.

out that before the Netscape Navigator browser was launched in May 1995, “the Internet did not exist for most people” (“We are the Web”).

Accessing Web content with a browser requires some way to search for information scattered across the Web’s vast repositories. While Internet search programs predated Berners-Lee’s invention of the Web, the Web required a new approach. As mathematician David Austin puts it:

Imagine a library containing 25 billion documents but with no centralized organization and no librarians. In addition, anyone may add a document at any time without telling anyone. You may feel sure that one of the documents contained in the collection has a piece of information that is vitally important to you, and, being impatient like most of us, you’d like to find it in a matter of seconds. How would you go about doing it? (Austin, “How Google Finds Your Needle in the Web’s Haystack” n.pag.)

Web search engines manage this difficult challenge. The first full-text search engine, Web Crawler, was released in 1994, allowing users to search not only web page titles, but also the content on those pages (“About Web Crawler” n.pag.). But searching all web page content every time would paralyze users’ ability to find information. Web search engines manage the task of balancing speed and coverage by using a three-stage approach (Mostafa, “Seeking Better Web Searches” n.pag.). First, software called a “crawler” probes the Web to find web pages, along with their linked content, and to put them in one place

(Mostafa). Then, using complex mathematical and statistical calculations, the web crawler counts and ranks key terms (Mostafa).¹² Finally, the crawler generates a “highly efficient data structure, or tree” using these terms (Mostafa). When you search the Web, the search engine does not search all the individual pages that might be relevant (that would take far too long); instead, it searches these trees, following or eliminating paths to achieve maximally relevant results in minimal time (Mostafa).¹³

Before the Web became popular and accessible through graphical Web browsers and full-text search engines, not all foresaw its eventual explosion. *Wired*'s Kevin Kelly relates a 1989 anecdote in which an ABC executive sneered that the Internet would amount to nothing more than “the CB radio of the 90s” (qtd. in “We are the Web” n.pag.)—in other words, a fad limited to a small cadre of geeks, a mere pop culture blip. Kelly goes on to note a February 1995 *Newsweek* article whose headline reads, “THE INTERNET? BAH!” and which characterizes the possibility of e-commerce and online communities as “baloney” (qtd. in “We are the Web” n.pag.). Now, just twenty years later, Web access, authoring, and use are common; online communities are growing every day; and the Web is big business. The Web, at least in the English-speaking world, is a pervasive and consequential rhetorical agon where practically anyone with the time, access, and will can act as audience, rhetor, or both in an endless variety of social dramas.

¹²Key terms are weighted; for example, common words such as *or* carry little weight, whereas unusual words (such as *Hizb ut-Tahrir*) carry more (Mostafa).

¹³Popular search engines, especially in the hands of most users, only retrieve the so-called “visible Web”; this excludes the “invisible Web” (sometimes called “deep Web”) of pages generated in response to an on-site search such as in a database query (Raghavan and Garcia-Molina n.pag.). This “deep Web” is about 500 times larger (if “generated HTML pages” is the measure) than the visible Web (Raghavan and Garcia-Molina n.pag.). In this study, I will confine myself to analyzing relevant aspects of just the visible Web. HTB's websites are intended to be found easily by those searching the visible Web and indeed (as I explain in later chapters), are optimized to appear at the top of search results.

Just a few examples will suffice: Several 2008 U.S. presidential candidates used the Web to announce their candidacies while thousands of websites and blogs reported and archived those same announcements, nearly instantaneously. The social networking site *Facebook* has over 200 million active users. There is now a professional interdisciplinary Association of Internet Researchers. The National Science Foundation is funding research into the Internet Archive's billions of snapshots of web pages gathered over the last decade. Ad-supported "free" Web hosting, open-source web-authoring software, and the proliferation of templates available for downloading and modification make it possible for almost anyone to create and publish a blog or website in as little as a few minutes. No wonder, then, that as of May 2009, there were over 235 million Web sites worldwide (Netcraft, "May 2009 Web Server Survey" n.pag.). Finally, more and more universities (TCU among them) provide ready wireless access to the Web, as do many public libraries, coffee shops, and even fast-food outlets.¹⁴ In Berners-Lee's memorable description of his "dream" for the Web:

The dream behind the Web is of a common information space in which we communicate by sharing information. Its universality is essential: the fact that a hypertext link can point to anything, be it personal, local or global, be it draft or highly polished [*sic*]. There was a second part of the dream, too, dependent on the Web being so generally used that it became a realistic mirror (or in fact the primary embodiment) of the ways in which we work and play and socialize.

(Berners-Lee, "Frequently Asked Questions" n.pag.)

¹⁴For instance, the McDonald's nearest my home in Austin, Texas offers all-day wireless Web access to its customers for a nominal fee.

Arguably, the English-speaking world has realized both parts of Berners-Lee's dream, at least for sophisticated Web authors like HTB and relatively sophisticated Web users. The Web does link disparate kinds of content all over the world, and it is so widely used, at least in the developed world, that it reflects—and shapes—how human beings interact. To go from outright dismissal in some quarters to the widespread everyday use, investment in infrastructure, and well-funded scholarly study of the Web in twenty years shows that something significant is surely going on.

This brief genealogy of the Web's birth and rapid rise helps answer where the Web came from and where it is going. To more fully understand how the Web is qualitatively different from the other media that have been used to reach audiences for political change, it is necessary to move from history to theory. I begin with Manovich, whose explanation of the “newness” of new media provides a vocabulary for understanding what new media is and what difference that “newness” makes.

2.3 Manovich's Five Principles of New Media

Manovich begins *The Language of New Media* by wishing that when the new medium of cinema first emerged in the late 19th century, systematic attention had been paid to accounting for its development and its dialectic with other forms of media (6). Instead, he complains, “we are left with newspaper reports, diaries of cinema's inventors, programs of

film showings, and other bits and pieces,” a situation that hampers knowledge (6). Although the computer’s effects on contemporary culture are widespread, Manovich warns that, just as with cinema, scholars might again miss the chance to engage an emerging medium comprehensively and contemporaneously (6). Manovich worries that “future researchers will wonder why the theoreticians, who had plenty of experience analyzing older cultural forms, did not try to describe computer media’s semiotic codes, modes of address, and audience reception patterns” (7).

To help remedy this potential missed opportunity, Manovich proposes to study the “various conventions used by designers of new media objects to organize data and structure the user’s experience” (7). To understand how designers structure experience, Manovich examines a wide range of media, including films, video games, digital art installations, and websites. From this examination, Manovich derives his now-canonical five principles of new media, which he is careful to note “should be considered not as absolute laws but rather as general tendencies of a culture undergoing computerization” (27). These five principles are:

Numerical Representation. *Numerical representation* means that every new media object, whether created initially on a computer (for example, this dissertation or HTB’s websites) or digitized from older media (for example, recording one’s LP records onto a hard drive) is made of bits of digital code (27). This code is “programmable”; that is, it can be manipulated and changed, as when, for example, one uses applications such as Photoshop® or GIMP to manipulate digital photographs (27).

Modularity. The second of Manovich’s principles, *modularity*, is particularly

applicable to the Web. Modularity means that different media elements, including sound, video, and text (among other elements) are composed of collections of samples (pixels, characters, scripts) that can be put together to make “larger-scale objects,” but which always “continue to maintain their separate identities” (30).

For example, a digital film might incorporate many digital photographs, sounds, camera behaviors, and texts, each of which retains its separate identity, ready for manipulation or incorporation into other media objects (30). The Web, Manovich notes, “is . . . completely modular” (31). A website consists of many discrete elements such as structural markup, video clips, style sheets, and image files. For example, my own deliberately simple website, www.drewloewe.com, as of October 10, 2007, was made up of 25 separate files, including page markup, images, and 2 style sheets. HTB’s websites take modularity much further. Just the home page of Hizb.org, as of October 10, 2007, was made up of 6 style sheets, 32 images, 55 separate `<div>` tags that define different sections of the page, 6 scripts, and links to other pages on the site that make downloadable audio and video files available.¹⁵

¹⁵Some definitions are needed here. *Markup* refers to the layout or structural elements that a Web browser reads to display a web page as the designer intends. Markup is performed using a *markup language*, such as the Web’s venerable HTML (Hypertext Markup Language) or the new standard of (X)HTML (Extensible Hypertext Markup Language). Because the Web was developed originally as a text-only environment, markup is better at structuring data than at presenting it. One solution to separate data from its presentation is the *cascading style sheet*. Style sheets are small text files that use a particular machine-readable language to describe how data is to be presented in a document written in a markup language, such as HTML. Style sheets can be written once and attached to an endless variety of web pages, allowing for global changes across all pages on a site if desired. Style sheets also eliminate a lot of the presentation markup from an (X)HTML page, improving page loading times and reducing the bandwidth necessary to meet users’ demands to access a web page. Lastly, *scripts* are small programs that make a web page dynamic by, for example, loading different pages according to a user’s Web browser or changing page behaviors based on where the user clicks his or her mouse. Chapter 3 will examine selected elements of modularity, including markup, style sheets, and scripts in depth. My reading of web pages as modular is greatly aided by Chris Pederick’s powerful open-source Web Developer Toolbar, a Firefox extension. An extension, also known as an add-on, is a small program that allows a user to modify the settings and behaviors of a Web browser. The nonprofit Mozilla Foundation’s Firefox browser is particularly well-suited to the development of extensions because it is open

Automation. Manovich argues that his first two principles (*numerical representation* and *modularity*), result in a third principle, *automation*, which means that the computer and its software can play a role in inventing and revising content (32). Common digital image software can be set to correct images, word-processing programs can generate the layout for a wide range of documents using “wizards,” and software for digital films can generate everything from realistic-looking creatures to vast crowds of people (32).¹⁶

As Manovich goes on to explain, the Web, which can be characterized as “one huge distributed media database,” relies on automation to structure users’ experiences (35). Certainly, this is the case with search engine Web indexing as explained above. The web crawlers at Google (or whichever search engine the user chooses) play a role in what constitutes “the Web” as presented to the user. Not every Web user searches the Web with the same search engine, and different engines index the Web differently. For example, a 2006 study found that Google and Yahoo! shared only a 45% overlap on indexed pages (Bar-Yossef and Gurevich 54). As Michael Truschello points out, anyone who has used Amazon.com and experienced how the site recommends products similar to those already viewed has experienced “on-the-fly manipulation by the algorithms of ‘intelligent’ software, an automated process that mediates between the user and the data” (“The Birth of Software Studies: Lev Manovich and Digital Materialism” n.pag.).

Variability. Because new media objects are modular, exist in an easily manipulated source. Pederick’s toolbar allows a user running the Firefox browser to view comprehensive data about a page’s elements, styles, markup, link structure, and dozens of other features.

¹⁶Another example of automation is a digital animation program, such as Macromedia® Flash®. Flash uses a process called “tweening,” which generates all the intermediate frames between specified points, thus not only saving the human animator tedious detail work, but also making the program a kind of “co-author” of the finished piece.

digital form, and are affected by automation, they can also be changed, repurposed, and replicated over and over. The fourth of Manovich's principles, *variability*, explains that designers can easily produce multiple versions of a media object for different purposes and incorporate different modular objects to change how users interact with the object (36-37). On the Web, sites detect users' hardware, software, and Internet addresses to vary how the sites are presented (37).

Transcoding. Finally, Manovich argues that new media can be defined by *transcoding*, which means that new media objects must follow the conventions of "the computer's own cosmogony," which includes how computers organize and present information with file names, extensions, and other information that allows modules to function (45-46). For Manovich, transcoding is "the most substantial consequence of the computerization of media," such that it is helpful to conceptualize new media as "two distinct layers – the 'cultural layer' and the 'computer layer'" (46).

While Manovich offers his five characteristics of new media to highlight what Truschello calls "the most fundamental fact of the network society: the computational logic of its constituent parts" (n.pag.), Cheryl Ball sees *The Language of New Media* as limited for use in rhetorical interpretation or criticism. In an essay entitled "Designerly \approx Readerly: Re-Assessing Multimodal and New Media Rubrics for Writing Studies," Ball argues that Manovich's five principles of new media assume that new media must always be digital (an assumption that, as Ball points out, Anne Wysocki has challenged), and adds that Manovich's five principles do not provide tools for interpretation or criticism unless one is already familiar with how computer-coded artifacts are built (402).

Instead of focusing on just the “designerly” aspects of new media (that is, on how new media artifacts are produced given what’s possible with a computer), Ball contends that rhetorical analysis must also use “generative, multi-angled,” “readerly” strategies focusing on purpose—that is, on design choices as intended to communicate with an audience (409-10).

I do not take up the question of whether new media must always be digital, not because it is unimportant, but because it is extraneous to my purposes here. It is undisputed that there can be no Web *without* digital media. Thus, my focus is on a particular type of *inherently digital* media that everyone agrees is “new media” and not on settling definitively what counts as “new media.” However, I agree with Ball that the “readerly” has, to date, been given less than its due share of attention in academic fields (Ball’s concern is with Writing Studies) that have borrowed scholarship from new media studies. I meld the designerly and readerly aspects of how HTB uses the Web as an important part of its efforts to form identification around the *khilafah* state and develop a three-layered heuristic that takes the Web’s digital “embodiment,” so to speak, seriously. The designerly and the readerly each enrich the other and must both be parts of rhetorical analysis of new media objects. The designerly and readerly both constitute facets of a fuller conception of human symbol use toward a collective goal, a conception that Burkean methods—which are outside the scope of Ball’s essay—enable. This fuller conception blends, as Jay David Bolter and Richard Grusin argue, a computer layer and a cultural layer. That is, new media are not only technologies useful or interesting in themselves, but are also part of

the dialectic between the past and the present, and how human beings represent the real to one another.

2.4 Interplay Between Computer and Cultural Layers: Remediation and Software Culture

In their influential 1999 monograph, *Remediation: Understanding New Media*, Jay David Bolter and Richard Grusin set out to examine what differences it makes that “digital technologies are proliferating faster than our cultural, legal, and educational institutions can keep up with them” (4-5). Bolter and Grusin contend that this proliferation of digital technologies results in two competing and contradictory “logics”: the logic of *immediacy* and the logic of *hypermediacy* (5). Immediacy seeks to erase the user’s perception that the experience he or she is having is mediated by technology (22). Immediacy is, as Bolter puts it in a 2007 essay, a result of “the desire for presence” (“Remediation and the Language of New Media” 28). Examples of electronic media that participate in the logic of immediacy include virtual reality games, traditional television programs, Hollywood films, and “the desktop metaphor” of the graphical user interface (GUI) on personal computers.¹⁷

Hypermediacy participates in the opposite logic. Instead of attempting to hide the

¹⁷In a 2003 interview for the *Iowa Review*, Bolter suggested that *immediacy* might better be described as *transparency* (Silver, “Remediating War: An Interview with Jay David Bolter” n.pag.). *Transparency* is a term that is perhaps more useful than *immediacy*, as indeed Bolter seems to concede by using *transparency* (along with *immediacy*) in his 2007 essay “Remediation and the Language of New Media.” Nevertheless, *immediacy* is more common in discussions of Bolter and Grusin’s work, so I will use the common term.

fact that the user's experience is mediated, hypermediacy emphasizes it (31). Examples of hypermediacy include the ubiquitous "windowed style" of web pages and computer applications (think of multiple windows open on most users' monitors), non-linear arrangement, and the tension that Richard Lanham notes between looking *through* a putatively transparent medium and looking *at* a medium that calls attention to itself (31-33; 41).¹⁸ Bolter and Grusin go on to explain that electronic media participate in both immediacy and hypermediacy; in fact, they argue, the "two seemingly contradictory logics not only coexist in digital media today but are mutually dependent" (6; 44-45). That is, "each act of mediation depends on other acts of mediation. Media are continually commenting on, reproducing, and replacing each other" (55). On the Web, even a term such as a *page* or the Web designer's general mandate to place important content *above the fold* show the extent to which electronic media and earlier media engage in what Bolter and Grusin call a "constant dialectic" (50).

This dialectic among different media is what Bolter and Grusin dub *remediation*, that is, "the formal logic by which new media refashion prior media forms" (273). While digital media are not alone in remediating earlier media (for example, we still refer to "dialing" a telephone), Bolter and Grusin contend that what is new about new media "comes from the particular ways in which they refashion older media and the ways in which older media refashion themselves to answer the challenges of new media" (15). Or, as Bolter later describes it, "Remediation is meant above all to describe the competition among various

¹⁸After I first drew a connection between Lanham's observations and Bolter and Grusin's terms, I read Pat Brereton's review of *Remediation* in *Convergence: The International Journal of Research into New Media Technologies*, in which Brereton makes the same connection (120).

media forms over the construction of the real” (“Remediation and the Language of New Media” 26).¹⁹

One term capturing some of the dialectic between media forms and between the older and newer media is *metamedium*, a term coined by Xerox PARC researchers Alan Kay and Adele Goldberg in 1977. Kay and Goldberg took the then-radical position that computers could be designed for use by non-experts and that computers could be used to teach children creatively, not just used to compute large numbers (Montfort and Wardrip-Fruin, “Introduction: Personal Dynamic Media” 391). As Kay and Goldberg put it:

The essence of a medium is very much dependent on the way messages are embedded, changed, and viewed. Although digital computers were originally designed to do arithmetic computation, the ability to simulate the details of any descriptive model means that the computer, viewed as a medium itself, can be all other media if the embedding and viewing methods are sufficiently well provided. Moreover, this new “metamedium” is active—it can respond

¹⁹To demonstrate the effect of digital media on older media, Bolter and Grusin compare images of the front page of a print edition of *USA Today* and of the home page of the *USA Today* website (40-41). This comparison shows that designers of the print newspaper strive to “emulate in print the graphical user interface of a web site” (40-41). They go on to contrast an image from a CNN broadcast in 1980, which simply shows a news anchor seated at a desk holding a stack of papers against an image from a CNN broadcast in 1997, which divides the screen into windows and uses a graphical background akin to the desktop wallpaper on a personal computer (190-91). The remediation in 1997, contrasted against 1980 when personal computers were essentially unheard of, is unmistakable. As another example, the remediation of television by computer interfaces is even more pronounced. For example, ESPN’s SportsCenter often uses a tabbed “menu” running down the right side of the screen, much like a tabbed web browser, such as Firefox. Continuing the television-as-browsing remediation, the tab for the current topic on SportsCenter is greyed out, like a visited link on a website. An important difference between this remediated television interface and the web browser interface from which it borrows is that the viewer of SportsCenter cannot skip around the menu tabs. Yet, remediation is, as Bolter and Grusin note, a dialectic. Thus, remediation also results in computer programs such as Visual Typewriter, whose interface reproduces the look, feel, and sounds of a manual typewriter to help the user “experience the romantic writing of days long gone” (Visual Typewriter n.pag.) and Tobias Linegruber’s Time Machine Firefox add-on, which “warps you back to the amateur web of 1996” to make Firefox display websites as if they included now-denigrated design features such as vibrant starry backgrounds, scrolling marquees, and animated GIF files (Timemachine n.pag.).

to queries and experiments—so that the messages may involve the learner in a two-way conversation. This property has never been available before except through the medium of an individual teacher. We think the implications are vast and compelling. (393-94)

Manovich explains that the most important implication of the computer's position as a metamedium "is that the computer metamedium is simultaneously a set of different media and a system for generating new media tools and new types of media. In other words, a computer can be used to create new tools for working in the media it already provides, as well as to develop new not-yet-invented media" ("Alan Kay's Universal Media Machine" 53).

The rise of the computer as a metamedium has become particularly important as the Web—a linked, massive network of computers—has grown ever more ubiquitous in social, political, and rhetorical realms. Advances in hardware, bandwidth, server space, and storage have combined to make it relatively easy for Web authors to incorporate audio, video, image, and animation files into web pages. Just a few years ago, these files would have been unworkably large for most users to access. But why is that important? It is important because, as Manovich argues in his recent book *Software Takes Command*, we (in the affluent developed world, that is) "live in a software culture—that is, a culture where the production, distribution, and reception of most content and increasingly, experiences—is mediated by software" (19). Indeed, as Manovich puts it in a published debate with Bolter and three other scholars (originally occurring—perhaps fittingly—via Skype's Web-based telephony application), "People in the 1990s saw 'new media' as something separate,

a new strange world. . . [Yet,] [i]n this decade, the two realms became continuous,” in the sense that the online influences the offline, and vice versa (qtd. in Bolter, Manovich, et.al., “Online Debate” 150).

The Web is perhaps the best example of what Manovich calls our increasing interaction “with dynamic ‘software performances’” in which a particular document, text, or work (note the increasingly poor fit of such print-bound terms) we experience “is constructed by software in real time” instead of static (15).²⁰ Manovich offers a useful shorthand for Web artifacts as “a mix of other documents” in which different media and modes are brought together (201). Consequently, the Web is positioned as a particularly rich example of a metamedium. Just how should rhetorical scholars study this metamedium? Barbara Warnick takes up that question in *Rhetoric Online*.

2.5 Consequences of New Media for Rhetorical Scholarship:

Warnick’s Rhetoric Online

In *Rhetoric Online: Persuasion and Politics on the World Wide Web*, Barbara Warnick seeks to take seriously the possibilities that the Web offers for public discourse, including affordability, access to mass audiences, transformation of hierarchies of authority and

²⁰Manovich goes on to explain that “although some static documents may be involved, the final media experience constructed by software can’t be reduced to any single document stored in some media. In other words, in contrast to paintings, works of literature, music scores, films, or buildings, a critic can’t simply consult a single ‘file’ containing all of work’s content” (15).

authorship, and interactivity.²¹ Warnick calls for more case studies of online political mobilization and more “rhetorical criticism of positive instances of the use of new media technologies,” an area of criticism that she characterizes as “noticeably under-researched” (19). The particular characteristics of the Web on which Warnick focuses are “nonlinearity, differential access, instability, and dispersion” as manifested in five parts of the communication process (27). The five parts of the communication process and the rhetorical practices of the Web that Warnick examines are:

Reception. *Reception* highlights the ways in which reading practices and user experiences differ between print texts and Web-based artifacts. Although one can read a book by skipping around or by reading only indexed sections of interest, this type of reading resists the overall design of print texts, which generally have a clearly defined beginning, middle, and end (29). By contrast, the reading practices made possible (indeed, encouraged) by online reading challenge linearity as the principle structuring design and reception (31).

James Sosnoski makes much the same point in his essay “Hyper-Readers and Their Reading Engines.” Sosnoski defines “hyper-reading” as a complex blend of computer-mediated reading practices involving, among other practices, *filtering* (reader is highly selective), *skimming*, *pecking* (reader does not necessarily follow linear sequence), and *filming* (deriving more meaning from graphics than from text) (163). Such practices, argues Sosnoski, are not necessarily inferior to print-book reading practices based in (ideally, anyway) a sustained, linear, focused reading experience; instead, different reading practices

²¹Much of my examination of *Rhetoric Online* here is drawn from my review of it published in Volume 12, issue 2 of *KAIROS: An Online Journal of Rhetoric, Technology, and Pedagogy* (2007).

should be tied to different sorts of intellectual work (174). Putting Warnick and Sosnoski together, different media implicate and develop different literacies; thus, movement rhetoric using the Web, if it is to be effective, must build its appeals for audiences using the Web's particular literate events. Web literacy, while not entirely a revolution against the conventions of print (recall that Bolter and Grusin posit remediation as the dialectic among media forms), affords users greater opportunities to, as Warnick puts it, "construct individuated pathways" through online rhetorical artifacts (31).

Source. *Source* complicates authorship. If a Web user can create a (somewhat) individualized experience on a web page, then who is the author of that experience? When users can leave comments on websites or on blogs, who is the *source* of the persuasive message? As Warnick points out, many websites do not identify who stands behind the site and who vouches for its content (34). Warnick cites a study of Web user comments finding that users often judge site *ethos* by factors such as visual design and layout, information structure, and usefulness, and not by who wrote the site's content (34). Moreover, Warnick notes, the Web fosters collaborative writing and is presented to users through templates, browser settings, scripts, and programs that track user behavior (35). As I show later, HTB's websites are most likely the result of wide collaboration. HTB makes use of templates, scripts, and Web analytic software that can engage users in providing feedback on which kinds of content are most popular with audiences.

Message. By *message*, Warnick draws on Manovich's concept of modularity to highlight how the modular, repurposable nature of digital code disrupts the stability of images and texts, allowing for multiple modes of meaning (text, video, audio, animation)

to converge on the Web and to be manipulated and replicated freely (36-37). The message is no longer stable because even copyrighted images and text can be captured and manipulated.

Time. *Time* refers to not only *when* a user experiences a Web artifact, it also affects *how* she does so. Variations in computer processing power and bandwidth can radically alter how the user experiences all the potentials (such as Flash animation, streaming audio and video, images) that a Web site might have to offer (38). Time also—and this is its most important aspect from a researcher’s perspective—affects the permanence of Web artifacts. Even the highly useful and ambitious Internet Archive (IA), which holds billions of pages, is essentially a storehouse of incremental snapshots of certain elements of pages, with second- and third-level links and content stored on other servers missing (38-39). Warnick explains that the effect of this kind of snapshot archiving is that rhetorical critics are hard-pressed to have available the dynamics of page use as they existed for users on the date of the snapshot; as she later puts it, “the challenges in archiving the political Web are nearly insuperable” (124).

Space. The last of the five parts of the communication process that Warnick examines, *space*, has two related senses. First, the Web, through spatial metaphors such as “cyberspace,” “Web site,” “home page,” “Web address,” and others, is often imagined as a vast place in which physical distances and cultural differences separating users are rendered secondary to a larger sense of community (40-41). Second, as a result of the wide diversity of Web audiences, designers of Web artifacts must capture audience attention as soon as possible or the ever-wandering (note the metaphors) Web “surfer,” using his or her

“browser,” will soon be off to other places (41). Warnick explains that Web authors are obliged to devote much of their efforts simply to capturing the wanderer’s attention and keeping him or her involved long enough for persuasion to be possible. Indeed, in *The Economics of Attention: Style and Substance in the Age of Information*, Richard Lanham argues that the Web is “a pure case of an attention economy” (17).

In sum, Warnick argues for the importance of understanding the Web on its own terms. Such an understanding moves us beyond what Nick Monfort dubs “screen essentialism” (qtd. in Kirschenbaum, “Every Contact Leaves a Trace” n.pag.). Matthew Kirschenbaum unpacks Montfort’s “screen essentialism” as “the complacency that new media is coterminous with what we see, visually, on the screen eighteen inches in front of our nose” (“Every Contact” n.pag.). One way to move beyond screen essentialism is to examine interactivity, which Warnick characterizes in one of her chapter titles as “The Golden Fleece of the Internet” (69).

The term *interactivity* is highly contested. Warnick notes that while scholars agree that interactivity is important for understanding the Web, there is little agreement about what it is or where it resides (69). Some scholars locate interactivity mostly in the technological affordances of the Web itself, such as hyperlinking, the ability to download files, and other possibilities for user experience (69). For his part, Manovich cautions that simply equating interactivity with any computerized media is too literal because it

equat[es] [interactivity] with physical interaction between a user and a media object (pressing a button, choosing a link, moving the body), at the expense of psychological interaction. The psychological processes of filling-in,

hypothesis formation, recall, and identification, which are required for us to comprehend any text or image at all, are mistakenly identified with an objectively existing structure of interactive links (57).²²

Other researchers do not consider interactivity to be fully developed unless “messages sustain reciprocal exchanges between communicators,” as in, for example, a threaded discussion on a listserv (Warnick 69). Another line of research locates interactivity in the realm of “what users experience and perceive”; in other words, interactivity is a matter of user attention, consciousness, and action taken in response to an awareness of messages to respond to or possibilities to be explored (70).

Ron Eglash draws a distinction between shallow or “canned” interactivity and “deep” or true interactivity:

[O]ur interactions with websites can vary from “canned” interactions with a limited number of possible responses—pressing on various buttons resulting in various image or sound changes—to truly interactive experiences in which the user explores constructions in a design space or engages in other experiences with near-infinite variety. Such deep interactivity does not depend on the sophistication of the media. The 1970s video game...Pong, with its primitive...graphics, has far greater interactivity than a website in which a button press launches the most sophisticated... animation. (59)

²²Manovich goes on to point out that “to deal theoretically with users’ experiences of (interactive) structures... remains one of the most difficult theoretical questions raised by new media” (56).

From the standpoint of rhetorical studies, the suasive effects of the possibilities and potentials of new media—in other words, their symbolic action—are what matters. To find a way through the divergent lines of inquiry on interactivity and to connect interactivity to rhetoric (not just design or technique), Warnick cites Burke's emphasis (in *A Rhetoric of Motives*) on identification as crucial to persuasion (70). In particular, interactivity allows for congregation around shared values, bridging the division among different persons (70). What's more, interactivity allows for congregation around division, the marking out of *Us* versus *Them* (70). Warnick then draws on Sally McMillan's tripartite typology to examine how two websites from opposite ends of the American political spectrum—MoveOn.org and GeorgeWBush.com—used interactivity to persuade audiences during the 2004 presidential campaign. In brief, McMillan's typology, as Warnick presents it, classifies interactivity as:

1. user-to-system (such as clicking on hyperlinks, adjusting displays),
2. user-to-user (such as chat or comments on blogs), and
3. user-to-document (such as voting in online polls, submitting questions to be answered, and contributing content). (qtd. in Warnick 75-76)

Warnick establishes that MoveOn.org (at least during the period of her study) blended all three types of interactivity by allowing site users to express their political opinions, coordinate offline activities, and even to contribute site content such as 30-second digital films with anti-Bush messages (77-81). By contrast, on GeorgeWBush.com,

interactivity was used for different purposes, purposes that contextualize the rhetorical uses of interactivity on the site. Bush was the incumbent president, with a well-financed campaign. Thus, his campaign had both the desire and the means to disseminate a focused political message, with no need to solicit content from amateurs (83). Users could engage in user-to-system interactivity by streaming the same campaign ads that aired on broadcast television and in user-to-user interactivity such as organizing volunteer campaign activities, using the site as a clearinghouse for information (83-86).

From this analysis, Warnick concludes that the types of interactivity that a site affords bring audiences together around a common vision of their values and identities. Moreover, interactivity is not a fixed phenomenon that can be examined using a single lens; different types of interactivity provide experiences that rhetors can attempt to build for different users and different purposes. Some of these experiences involve the structure of content presented to a user while others enlist the user's own behavior, machine, and browser settings to build and modify content. While identification is always central to persuasion (as Burke argues) online or offline, the Web affords movements like HTB with a wide range of abilities to affect the kinds of experiences users have in getting constantly updated information, in connecting to others, in keeping tabs on ideological opponents, and in feeling connected to the movement's progress. As I show, HTB makes use of all three types of interactivity that McMillan describes and maximizes identification, centering on the construction of a worthy and pious *Us* and a corrupt and dangerous *Them*.

2.6 Manovich, Bolter and Grusin, and Warnick: What Emerges?

What emerges from examining Manovich's five characteristics of new media, Bolter and Grusin's concept of remediation, and Warnick's calls for rhetorical scholars to better understand the Web? Each of these theorists contributes a better understanding of what makes the Web different from other human persuasive events and thus contributes toward a richer understanding of how HTB uses the Web to call for the caliphate and to resist being banned. For instance, Manovich's five principles are useful because they allow meaningful questions to be asked about what the new media make possible in calling out to a wide-ranging audience and sustaining a movement that is bound to meet with resistance from the dominant culture. As I examine in Chapters 3 and 4, HTB takes full advantage of the characteristics of new media such as modularity and variability, using images and video over and over for different purposes and across different sites.

Among Bolter and Grusin's contributions is to frame inquiry about how media forms interact, which is especially important in a metamedium as complex as the Web. As Bolter and Grusin argue, the interaction among older and newer media forms is always more complicated than a series of revolutionary changes wherein the new comes in and sweeps away the old. Even as the fullest expression to date of the capabilities of digital media, the Web is in a constant tension between mediated communication as looking *at* (hypermediacy) or as looking *through* (immediacy).

As a result, even "immediate" Web experiences, such as streaming a long video of a

speaker at an HTB conference (immersing the user in much of the experience of physically attending the conference), are always complicated because the streamed video is framed by the kinds of hypermediated potential experiences that the Web offers, such as hyperlinks to other content and the ability to download, stop, start, pause, and fast-forward the video.

One caution concerning the possible implications of remediation as Bolter and Grusin develop the concept comes from David Blakesley. In his review of *Remediation*, Blakesley argues that, while Bolter and Grusin are careful to complicate teleological or utopian hopes of “cyber wonks who proclaim that digital media offer us a transcendent reality,” they may have unwittingly reduced mediation to “technique, rather than rhetorical action” (Blakesley n.pag.). Blakesley goes on to contend that:

when media is [*sic*] reduced to technique, it becomes hardly more than a simple delivery system, a process (not an act) of communication, that merely represents and shunts information, or as in *Remediation*, gives people what they have already decided they want. But media function rhetorically as well, as acts of communication, persuasion, and identification inscribed in wider cultural practices and attitudes. (Blakesley n.pag.)

Although I do not read *Remediation* as reducing media to technique, Blakesley’s point about the rhetorical function of media is significant. In HTB’s case, the Web is an efficient and wide-reaching means of delivering information to audiences. But, more importantly, the Web is a communicative and persuasive event because it provides HTB

with virtually unlimited opportunities to engage in a sustained performance of HTB's view of Muslim identity, performances that users are invited to witness and to emulate. Blending text (original and repurposed), images, video, audio, and associated content through hyperlinking on the Web, HTB members can argue for the caliphate, perform the identity of Muslims tirelessly advocating God's will, and create linkages between its online and offline activities in ways that were not available to movements whose constructions of community depended upon different technologies. The Web makes possible many such acts of performance, acts that are small in the sense that digital technology makes them relatively easy to perform, yet large in the sense that they carry potentially tremendous significance for forming attitudes and actions, day by day. The Web offers wide-ranging potential for argument as public ritual. The interaction among cultural and computer layers in performing that ritual are what Bolter and Grusin help us examine.

Warnick's examinations of the five parts of the communication process (*reception, source, message, time, and space*) and of interactivity provide ways of beginning to research the public ritual aspect of online rhetoric. While Warnick does not concentrate on movements and her brief citations to Burke are only for the purposes of positing a broad working definition of rhetoric, her work is valuable because it helps to better link new media studies and rhetorical studies, to the benefit of both.²³ In particular, Warnick argues that critics can preserve Web artifacts through close analysis that folds some of the

²³In the interplay between new media and rhetorical scholarship, the vast majority of citations I have seen are of rhetorical scholars citing new media scholars, not the other way around. Although the boundaries between disciplines and areas of inquiry are permeable, the scholarly influence seems one-sided at present. Perhaps this is because rhetorical studies, at least as measured by refereed articles in the leading journals, remain largely print-centric.

Web's specificities as digital media into the analysis. Those twin aims of preservation and media-specific analysis are at the heart of this study.

These theorists (Manovich, Bolter and Grusin, Warnick) provide valuable tools for examining the core inquiry of my study: namely, what difference it makes that HTB uses the Web. Yet, to go further in using Burkean methods to examine that core inquiry, it will of course be necessary to use relevant concepts developed and refined by Burke. These concepts include the distinction between symbolic action and nonsymbolic motion and form as symbolic action. It will also be necessary to analyze past scholarship on Burkean approaches to social movements. I will begin with core concepts from Burke himself.

2.7 Nonsymbolic Motion/Symbolic Action and Technology

One core Burkean concept is the distinction Burke draws between *nonsymbolic motion* and *symbolic action*. As with much of Burke, these two terms are coinages that Burke develops because he wishes to approach questions in new ways. In this case, the questions that Burke approaches in new ways are as easy to state as they are difficult to work out:

1. What makes human beings human?
2. What are the implications of understanding what makes human beings human?

Seeking to develop answers to these questions is central to Burke's body of work, which Angelo Bonadonna describes memorably as "Burke's lifelong. . . bemused, skeptical,

appreciative, and sometimes fearful investigation into the kind of things that happens when animals begin using symbols” (“The Burkean Legacy” n.pag.). Burke developed tools useful not only for understanding and critiquing how we use symbols but also for bringing out the implications of such use.

Perhaps the most direct route into Burke’s examinations of what makes human beings human is his “Definition of Man,” the title of which Burke scholars have amended to read more accurately as “Definition of Human.” As with many Burkean concepts, Burke refined and revised this definition over many years. Jerry Ross explains that Burke first published the definition in *A Rhetoric of Motives* in 1961 and continued to refine it up through the late 1980s (Ross, “Kenneth Burke’s Definition of Human” n.pag.). In its final form, the definition reads:

Being bodies that learn language

thereby becoming wordlings

humans are the symbol-making, symbol-using, symbol-misusing animal

inventor of the negative

separated from our natural condition by instruments of our own making

goaded by the spirit of hierarchy

acquiring foreknowledge of death

and rotten with perfection.

(“Kenneth Burke’s Definition of Human” n.pag., quoting Coe 332-333).

The first two clauses—“bodies that learn language” and “symbol-making animal”—foreground Burke’s distinction between symbolic action and nonsymbolic motion, calling this distinction “the basic polarity” of what it means to be human and central to the ontology of human symbol use as a drama (“Nonsymbolic” 809). Burke worked out three principles for explaining this polarity: “There can be motion without action. There cannot be action without motion. Action is not reducible to motion” (“The Rhetorical Situation” 267).

Burke emphasized that human meaning-making is always enabled and constrained by the physical world and the brute facts of animal existence. Yet, Burke was also doggedly opposed to determinist or materialist accounts that reduce human symbol use to the mere results of biological or historical-material conditions. As William Rueckert explains, Burke devoted his work to developing “accounts of the human condition that favored action, as dramatism does. To favor action is to favor freedom, some principle of authority, will, choice, the moral-ethical, language, and knowledge” (104). What’s more, as Bryan Crable argues, the difference between motion and action is one of human agency or will: motion is “impersonal”—it just *is*; action is “personal”—it is purposeful, value-laden, and transcends the realm of the material (124). Crable goes on to explain:

The difference between action and motion boils down to that between the ‘physicality’ of a thing and that ‘physicality’ *as it is symbolically delimited and entitled*. Motion is the vast realm of that which has not entered into symbols; by contrast, action involves symbolicity, the constructs which tell “about” the nonsymbolic. (125, emphasis in original)

Thus, while Burke acknowledges that nonsymbolic motion is inescapable, he creates a space for will, agency, and ethics because language and symbol use involve choice and exhortation of ourselves and others to see the world in particular ways (Cralle 127). Indeed, at their cores, dramatism and logology are theoretical orientations and practical methods to ask questions about these choices and exhortations, with language always situated as *used and addressed among human actors*, not positioned as a neutral conveyor of external meaning.

Moreover, Burke claims, symbolic action of the uniquely human kind (as opposed to the communication systems of animals) has “a second-level (or ‘reflexive’) aspect” in that it involves the possibility of meta-action whereby symbolic action is used to examine other symbolic action, or even itself (“Nonsymbolic” 810). Burke makes this point in a witty aphorism: “Cicero could both orate and write a treatise on oratory. A dog can bark but he can’t bark a tract on barking” (810). That is, animals may be able to communicate, but they cannot reflect on, critique, or imagine a better form of their communication.

As for the possibility of machinic communication complicating symbolic action, Burke is, to put it mildly, highly skeptical. To illustrate this skepticism, he gives an example of a movie theater. If a film is playing to an empty house, there is only the nonsymbolic motion of the mechanical processes of how the film is projected and how the soundtrack is played; in other words, absent an audience, “there would be no drama, that is, no symbolic action” (“Nonsymbolic” 833). The drama and hence the symbolic action lie in how the audience “interprets [the film] as a ‘story’” s(833).

Similarly, Burke claims to have read that, if the film being shown to an audience is a “thriller,” the audience’s physiological responses of “increased warmth and accelerated respiration” will tax the capabilities of theater air conditioning systems more than when “the plot is of a milder sort” (834). Of course, air conditioning systems attempt to maintain a desired temperature by sensing and adjusting to changing conditions. That sort of sensing and adjusting is purely within the realm of nonsymbolic motion: the air conditioning system is oblivious to the film as a story and to the audience members as interpreters of that story; it simply reacts to a set of physical conditions using its programmed processes (834). While the human bodies of the audience have a dual nature as nonsymbolic (physiological responses) and symbolic (interpreting the film’s plot), the film itself “sheerly as visible shapes and sounds” and the air conditioning system each have only a single, machinic, nonsymbolic nature (834).

In the same vein, Burke turned a jaundiced eye toward the computer. Burke was particularly opposed to using the computer as a metaphor or explanatory schema for understanding human beings because, while complex and capable of truly extraordinary tasks, a computer lacks embodiment, motives, consciousness, or goals. As Burke argues,

If man is the symbol-using animal, some motives must derive from his animality, some from his symbolicity, and some from mixtures of the two.

The computer can’t serve as our model (or “terministic screen”). For it is not an animal, but an artifact. And it can’t truly be said to “act.” Its operations are but a complex set of sheerly physical motions. Thus, we must if possible

distinguish between the symbolic action of a person and the behavior of such a mere thing. (“Mind, Body, and the Unconscious” 63)

I agree that a computer—and, by extension, the Web as a rhetorical event that cannot exist without computers—cannot *act* in the sense of purposefully using symbols in an hortatory fashion. However, as Mike Hübler argues, it would be a mistake to simply draw a neat binary that delimits the symbolic from the nonsymbolic without further understanding how technology brings the two terms into a complex dialectic, one in which ambiguity arises between agent and agency. In “The Drama of a Technological Society,” Hübler brings French philosopher and theologian Jacques Ellul’s concept of *la technique* (best thought of as the drive for maximum efficiency and the accompanying worldview that technology takes on a life of its own) together with Burke’s consistently admonitory writings about technology. Though Hübler’s aim is different from mine in that he seeks to bring Ellul and Burke into conversation (and he does not study any particular rhetorical artifact or movement), his insights about Burke’s views of technology and agency are instructive.

As Hübler contends, Burke’s many writings about technology give us tools “to look more closely and systematically at the way human symbols concede autonomy to technological artifacts, allowing the created to become the creator” (n.pag.). That is, Hübler finds in Burke’s body of work an admonitory theme: be wary of the drive to find solutions in technology, for one day, you may find it structuring your life.

Hübler points out that, while it is possible to label technology as any of the terms of Burke’s dramatisitic pentad of *Act*, *Agent*, *Scene*, *Agency*, and *Purpose* (and indeed the

genius of the pentad is that it is fluid enough to generate different questions were one to work through all its terms and ratios), Burke most often classes technology as an Agency, as instrumental (n.pag.). This seems a commonsensical and unremarkable observation. Yet (and this is crucial), the symbolic relationship of human beings to their technologies can be reversed if technology facilitates the handing over of human choice. For Burke, this handing over is all too often incipient. Thus, as Ian Hill argues, Burke's purpose in tracing the implications of "Big Technology" is to identify, critique, and correct technology's negative potentials ("The Human Barnyard" n.pag.).

Hübler cites an admission by Nicholas Negroponte, the director of MIT's Media Lab, that "when it comes to technological and regulatory changes, as well as new services, things are moving faster than even I can believe" (qtd. in Hübler n.pag.). Using that admission, Hübler argues that, even more so than in Burke's day, the pace of technological change makes what is cutting edge this year into what is common next year and into a museum piece the year after that, part of what Burke critiqued in "Toward Helhaven" as "the cult of new needs" (Hübler n.pag.; "Helhaven" 61). In an ever-changing technological milieu, "autonomy symbolically passes from agent to agency [and] the rise of the agency in the pentadic ratio leads to the lowering of agent" (Hübler n.pag.) As Burke puts it in a passage Hübler cites: "modern science is par excellence an accumulation of new agencies (means, instruments, methods). And this locus of new power... has called forth 'philosophies of science' that would raise agency to first place among our five terms" (*A Grammar of Motives* 275). As a result, a highly technological society is always in danger

of shifting technology's role from Agency to Agent to a Purpose in its own right, with motives clustering accordingly (n.pag.).

Swift change and technology's symbolic and rhetorical shifts accompanying technological changes are surely features of the Web. New technologies become more widespread, easier to use, and cheaper, and the realm of what is possible on the Web quickly becomes the realm of what is expected. As Burke quipped (quoting Thorstein Veblen), "Invention is the mother of necessity" (*Permanence and Change* 5). Negroponte's comment—coming from someone who is as much a new media "expert" as exists—illustrates this starkly. HTB's websites are a microcosm of the drive from possibility to expectation, a drive linked to a drama in which technology continually calls for and shapes new human action. I am not contending that HTB hands over autonomy to Web technologies, but I am contending that, in playing the role of theological, ideological, and rhetorical vanguard, HTB's uses of the Web are rotten with perfection. Part of HTB's vanguard *ethos* is the copious and proficient use of up-to-date Web technologies to perform the divine duty of calling for the caliphate. Consequently, the Web is a rhetorical event that is both particularly suited to how HTB frames its view of Muslim identity and a force in shaping that identity.

Hübler makes much the same point when he argues that, just as the Agent-Agency relationship can be inverted, so too does Burke suggest that the line between human action and machinic motion might become ambiguous. Burke contends that one way of looking at "technology itself [is] as an embodiment of human motives" (*A Grammar of Motives* 251), which Hübler takes as significant because machinic motion is "only made

possible by the creative human action of technical invention” (n.pag.). Put another way, Hübler sums it up thus: “things bear a resemblance to their creators” (n.pag.). The unique human genius—and, for Burke, troubling irony—of technology is that it yields still more technology, still more ways of ordering and structuring experience better, faster, cheaper, more multimodally, more readily. As the fourth and fifth clauses of Burke’s definition of human—“goaded by the spirit of hierarchy” and “rotten with perfection”—highlight, things and their creators participate in a dialectic.

In this dialectic, humans search for technological solutions in striving to order their world; this search might lead them to “attempt to reshape [their] psychological patterns in obedience to the patterns of [their] machines” (*Permanence and Change* 58). As Hübler puts it, relying on Burke’s notion of *entelechy* (a term borrowed from Aristotle, here meaning the human drive to push symbolic action to its ultimate conclusion), “the belief that whatever is technically possible must be technically explored” (n.pag.). Hübler, like Burke, sees this psychological patterning in negative terms; for example, Hübler points to the mind-numbing, alienating work that some technologies engender, such as “extensive paper filing and data entry” (n.pag.).

I want to retain the utility of Burke’s concept of “psychological patterning” relative to technology without necessarily labeling it as negative *per se*. The metamedium of the Web is a particularly fruitful means of revisiting Burke’s treatment of form as symbolic action. Although Burke did not consider media symbolic action, some seeds for my intended “rewiring” of Burkean approaches to movement rhetoric, as exemplified by a case study of HTB, appear in Burke’s extensive treatment of form as symbolic

action. Burke's examination of form as rhetorical (not merely aesthetic) brings out the psychological, value-laden, emotional, and strategic ways in which form builds, sustains, and adjusts human attitudes. Such an understanding of form is central to understanding the relationships between media, the communities they create, and what constitutes meaningful symbolic action within particular constraints and opportunities.

Though previous rhetorical scholarship on movements, particularly the work of Leland Griffin, has at times focused on the centrality of form to a movement's rhetorical construct of the better world it seeks to implement, folding in a media-specific analysis will be necessary if we are to take the Web seriously as a rhetorical event. But first, what does Burke argue about the rhetorical nature of form?

2.8 Burke on Form as Symbolic Action

For Burke, form is not merely incidental or marginal to a more central essence of content: form is indispensable for examinations of human motives. Indeed, Richard Gregg argues that "there is a sense in which all of Burke's work is devoted to the exploration of symbolic form" (118). Tracing the arc of Burke's developments and refinements of form as symbolic action reveals Burke's lifelong examination of how language does not simply convey information. For Burke, language cannot help but exhort, shape, create hierarchies, and form the realms of the possible, the good, the true. For this reason, Burke was at pains to correct the well-intentioned but mistaken aims of general semanticists and logical

positivists, who sought to purify language use by stepping outside the domain of rhetoric, a task that Burke saw as neither possible nor desirable (George and Selzer 192).²⁴

Burke's most important early analysis of form and its implications for symbolic action appears in *Counter-Statement*. In the first edition of *Counter-Statement* (1931), and later in "Lexicon Rhetoricae" in the second edition, Burke argues that form is not a static set of properties that a work of art "has." Instead, it is a dynamic relationship—a relationship that necessarily includes an audience. Burke sought to examine not literature's qualities or properties, but its "appeal" (123). Even this small but crucial step would have been enough to move Burke's ideas on form away from the aesthetic and into rhetoric, but Burke takes those gains and extends them. Using an detailed examination of the first scene of *Hamlet*, in which the audience's anticipation/dread of the arrival of Hamlet's father's ghost is built, shaped, and eventually fulfilled, Burke argues that form is wedded to psychology (30-31). But the psychology that Burke argues is important to understanding form is not "the psychology of the *hero*" (that is, the properties of the work itself, including the evidence the work provides about the characters), but instead "the psychology of the *audience*" (31, emphasis in original).

Building on this insight, Burke argues that "seen from another angle, form is the creation of an appetite in the mind of the auditor, and the adequate satisfying of that appetite" (31). Through an "arousing and fulfillment of desires," form "leads a reader"

²⁴For Burke, the aim of examining language is not to eliminate all ambiguity (a doomed and ultimately counter-productive project); instead, one aim is to develop methods and "*terms that clearly reveal the strategic spots at which ambiguities necessarily arise*" (*A Grammar of Motives* xviii, emphasis in original). Indeed, only the latter and not the former enables the socially ameliorative criticism that Burke spent a lifetime theorizing and writing.

[note the textual emphasis] “to anticipate” a meaningful movement from one part of a work to another and to be “gratified by the sequence” (35) in an “emotional curve” (123). The human propensity for creating and satisfying appetites is, for Burke, inherent even on the bodily level—the animal part of humans as the symbol-using animals—with neither *symbol-using* nor *animal* understood in isolation. For example, Burke argues that “the appeal of form as exemplified in rhythm” is “closely allied with ‘bodily’ processes” and “natural to the [human] organism” (140). Thus, for Burke, “the forms of art... are not exclusively ‘aesthetic’” (123; 143). Instead, they “parallel processes which characterize [audiences’] experiences outside of art” (143). As Gregg and Clancy Ratliff each argue, *form* for Burke is as much a verb as it is a noun (Gregg 126; Ratliff 14). Gregg puts it like this:

Basic to symbolic capacity are such processes as the fixing of similarities, the shaping of contrasts, the designating of attributes, and the combined analytic-synthesizing movement of the mind which creates ‘wholeness-partness’ understandings... To act is to form and to form is to act; the principles of forming are the principles of action, and they induce and modify future actions as they body forth attitudes and valuing. (126)

To describe how form—understood as participatory and persuasive and not merely a surface feature of discourse—shapes attitudes and expectations, Burke develops a four-part

taxonomy. This taxonomy of form maps how form and situated purpose interact. In brief, Burke explains that form can be *progressive*, *repetitive*, *conventional*, or *minor* (124-27).

In progressive form, one part of the work prepares the audience for the next part, either syllogistically (by clear implication) or qualitatively (a less overt preparation, often seen only in retrospect) (124-25). Repetitive form involves, as Burke puts it, “the constant maintaining of a principle under new guises” (125). Conventional form “involves to some degree the appeal of form as form” (126-27). For example, part of a sonnet’s appeal is that a reader probably has certain preexisting expectations about what a sonnet does, expectations that both the broad genre of *sonnet* and internal conventions such as a sonnet’s volta reinforce and gratify (127). Finally, Burke groups as “minor” or “incidental” forms such tropes and schemes as “metaphor, paradox, disclosure, reversal, contraction, expansion, bathos, apostrophe,” and others (127).

While Burke considers progressive and repetitive forms important, indeed vital, to the appeal of form as a creation and satisfaction of appetites, he singles out conventional form as a “shiftier” matter (139). For Burke, the large-scale appeals of progressive or repetitive form are fairly easy to understand, but conventional form adds another layer of judgments, “particularly since the conventional forms demanded by one age are as resolutely shunned by another” (139). In the case of the Web, it is apparent that many of its conventional forms, particularly web pages, blogs, and online videos, are shunned by some while others embrace them.²⁵

²⁵Witness the National Endowment for the Arts’s 2004 report *Reading at Risk* and its 2007 follow-up report *To Read or Not To Read: A Question of National Consequence*. These reports valorize literature and alphabetic literacy at the expense of other ways of engaging with meaning-making. They use a perceived decline in reading to argue that serious challenges to democratic society might be imminent. Both reports

distinction between the psychology of form and the psychology of information. For Burke, the psychology of form describes the audience's emotion-laden appetite for progression and fulfillment, whereas the psychology of information describes the audience's more cerebral appetite for facts or novelty (*Counter-Statement* 34-37). To illustrate this distinction, Burke argues that perhaps the paradigmatic case of the psychology of form is music because in music, "form cannot atrophy. Every dissonant chord cries for its solution, and whether the musician resolves or refuses to resolve this dissonance into the chord which the human body cries for, he is dealing in human appetites" (34). By contrast, the psychology of information focuses on subject matter; for example, plot-driven works relying on suspense and surprise do not bear repetition because once the information is known, the effect can never be experienced the same way again (34-35).

The Web involves both psychologies: form and information. Prolific, constantly updated websites such as HTB's provide fresh content to users many times each week or even each day. Richard Rogers, a Dutch new media scholar associated with the Digital Methods Initiative, coined the term *perceived freshness fetish* to describe the psychology of both Web authors and their audiences in producing and expecting fresh content on prolific websites (qtd. in Hellmond 1). A website does not have business hours or a long production cycle like a traditional print media outlet. Because of the characteristics of digital media that Manovich and Warnick describe, Web authoring can be dispersed and collaborative, drawing on the contributions of many authors. As a result, Web authors and audiences negotiate a psychology of information because new information is easy for Web authors to provide, whether by collaborative, dispersed authoring; by association through hyperlinks;

or simply by the outright copy-and-paste appropriation that modularity makes easy. Again, what *can* be done often becomes what is *expected*.

HTB uses the Web as a way of copiously and continually calling for the caliphate state, but the Web's flattening of the labor that goes into spreading the call so copiously means that audiences expect perceived fresh content, all the time. If HTB can provide this perceived fresh content and offer website users new experiences, the psychology of form is also satisfied. Users experience meaningful progression from ignorance to knowledge, from online to offline activities, from passive viewing to active participation, and, ultimately, from living in a political state that is unholy to imagining living in the caliphate state. Moreover, the mere act of repetition, greatly enabled by the Web, serves HTB's ideological ends. As Burke argues in *A Rhetoric of Motives*, rhetoric includes "a general body of identifications that owe their convincingness much more to trivial repetition and dull daily reinforcement than to exceptional rhetorical skill" (26).

Form and content are intertwined in shaping audience desires, both in composing an experience for an audience and in experiencing it. Thus, form and content cannot be separated. In *The Philosophy of Literary Form*, first published in 1941, Burke set out to understand "how critical and imaginative works are answers to questions posed by the situation in which they arose...[how] they are *strategic* answers, *stylized* answers" (1, emphasis in original). Ross Wolin describes the evolution of Burke's ideas about form from *Counter-Statement to The Philosophy of Literary Form* as a move "toward a more fully rhetorical sense of the psychological" (136). In other words, Burke moves from examining the effects of formal structures on audience psychology to examining the complexities of

composing as creating a vision of the world and experiencing a composition as a created vision.

As Burke puts it when discussing the relationship between content and form in poetry (a relationship not necessarily limited to poetry), a “pragmatic” criticism “assumes that a poem’s structure is to be described most accurately by thinking always of the poem’s function. It assumes that the poem is designed to ‘do something’ for the poet and his readers” (*The Philosophy of Literary Form* 89). To engage in rhetorical criticism of form and content, Burke argues that critics should examine how literary works are works of symbolic action for authors working out responses to situations (5-6). Burke devotes much of *The Philosophy of Literary Form* to showing this approach in action, most particularly in his famous essay on *Mein Kampf*, which tracks the clusters of terms and symbols that Hitler used to build a German jeremiad centering on identification around German character as against the scapegoat figure of the Jew.

Burke’s examination of form as rhetorical, psychological, value-laden, emotional, and strategic for building and adjusting human attitudes is central to understanding the relationships between media, the communities they create, and what constitutes meaningful symbolic action within particular constraints and opportunities. On the Web, the possibilities for groups to band together around a collective effort to effect social change are created by the forms the Web makes possible. On its websites, HTB, as a collective movement with a “larger curve” underwritten by God, attempts to build experiences and expectations for its audiences and to move audiences to accept not only the divine provenance of the caliphate state but also the obligation to work to bring it about. Collective

action to bring about social change has, of course, been the subject of rhetorical study in general, and Burkean scholarship in particular. To best position this study, and its efforts to fold media-specific analyses and Burkean notions of form into examination of HTB's online rhetoric, it is necessary to examine previous contributions to Burkean understandings of movements.

2.9 Movement Rhetorical Scholarship: Past Contributions and New Challenges

Rhetorical scholars have studied movements at least as early as Leland M. Griffin's widely reprinted 1952 article, "The Rhetoric of Historical Movements." That article is often seen as the Ur-text breathing life into new expansions in rhetorical theory and criticism. Griffin sought to move beyond the neo-Aristotelian method of criticism focusing on single orators making public addresses to immediately present audiences on single occasions (371). Instead, Griffin sought to dilate the range of rhetors, artifacts, occasions, and methods that critics study, all with the aim of illuminating rhetoric's role as having a "vital function as a shaping agent in human affairs" (371). In his own assault on the neo-Aristotelian method, Edwin Black further legitimized movement studies, though at the time (1965), Black could point to just three examples of published work besides Griffin's (19-22). However, movement studies flourished in the wake of the political and social turbulence of the 1960s and 1970s. As Herbert W. Simons, Elizabeth W. Mechling, and

Howard N. Schrier point out, academic journals in speech/communication published 175 articles on movements between 1965 and 1977 (802).

The contentious, unsettled nature of rhetorical scholarship on movements, along with the multiplicity of approaches that rhetorical scholars have argued for (and against), makes Mark Wright's description of a "hornet's nest of disciplinary argument" apt (Wright n.pag.). In 1982, J. Justin Gustainis observed that "a lot of people are out there doing rhetorical criticism of movements," yet "few of these people agree on the best way to go about it" (251). Finally, in describing battles over the possibility and desirability of normative definitions and methods, Simons, et al. put it this way: "Place two movement theorists in a room together and they are likely to emerge with at least three typologies" (794). Scholars have fought disciplinary battles on nearly all possible subjects of inquiry. Indeed, movement scholarship earned the dubious honor of being declared dead in the pages of one journal even as it was being brought to the fore in the pages of another.²⁶

Major rhetorical approaches to studying movements have included:

- Simons's sociologically based "Requirements, Problems, and Strategies" approach, which draws parallels between the often-conflicting rhetorical demands facing leaders of out-groups and leaders of more mainstream organizations;
- John Waite Bowers and Donovan J. Ochs's ²⁷ "agitation and control" approach,

²⁶Contrast Dan Hahn and Ruth Gonchar's "Social Movement Theory: a Dead End," published in 1980 by *Communication Quarterly* with the special issue of *Central States Speech Journal* devoted to rhetorical studies of movements, published that same year.

²⁷Bowers and Ochs are joined by Richard J. Jensen in a second edition of *The Rhetoric of Agitation and Control*; those three scholars are, in turn, joined by David P. Schulz in the third edition of that text.

which pays particular attention to non-verbal persuasion, demonstrations, and a vision of established social structures as resisting change;

- Charles J. Stewart’s “functional perspective,”²⁸ which defines movements as “uninstitutionalized collectivities” that seek to transform history and society even as they must build and sustain themselves as organizations;
- Michael C. McGee’s meaning-based approach, which points out that even the label of *social movement* is “a thrust in an argument and not an operational definition” and which aims to provide “an account of human consciousness, not an account of human organizational behavior” (131);
- Dramatistic, dialectical approaches first developed by Griffin and later expanded by Robert Cathcart, which examine how movements use symbolic action linked to a vision of progression through a moral drama; and
- Sociologically influenced approaches to what have been dubbed “New Social Movements” (NSMs), which attempt to draw qualitative distinctions between the types of movements studied in the past (such as the civil rights, workers’, or suffrage movements) and the dispersed, identity-driven, and electronically mediated movements arising in the waning decades of the 20th century.

Despite the lack of consensus on research goals and methods, the term “movement”

²⁸Stewart is joined by Craig Allen Smith and Robert E. Denton, Jr. in applying this approach throughout their popular textbook *Persuasion and Social Movements*.

continues to be used in lay and academic settings and, in the case of HTB, by the very group I am studying. Indeed, if we are to examine the motives that people ascribe to themselves and others about competing visions of a better society, examining terms such as “movement” in context, as used by the actors being studied, will yield more useful insights than attempting to derive abstract, Platonic criteria.

As Charles J.G. Griffin argues, the willingness of scholars and various collectives (such as HTB here) to use the label of *movement* shows that the label is invested with significance; thus, “[o]ne need not haggle over the ontological standing of social movements” to realize that movements have meaning in human consciousness (208). The name “movement” matters; indeed, as Burke argues in the “Antinomies of Definition” section of *A Grammar of Motives*, names cannot help but implicate motives: “An epithet assigns substance doubly, for in stating the character of the object it at the same times contains an implicit program of action with regard to the object, thus serving as a motive” (57). Taking on the claims of positivists that the non-empirical language of metaphysics, philosophy, theology, and the like are meaningless, Burke replies that, even if one were to stipulate that such words are indeed “nonsense,” those words would remain “real words, involving real tactics, having real...relationships, and... affecting relationships. [Thus],...a study of their opportunities, necessities, and embarrassments would be central to a study of human motives” (*A Grammar of Motives* 57-58). In other words, the situated and purposeful use of the term *movement* and the consequences of such use are far more important and productive than a term’s correspondence to an archetypal set of criteria.

What’s more, movement rhetorical scholarship has hardly been hamstrung by the lack

of consensus, with movement studies continuing to be published, even as recently as the March 2008 issue of *College English*.²⁹ Movement studies remain vital, particularly because scholars recognize the pervasiveness and importance of the Web. For example, in 2005, the Rhetoric Society of America sponsored a workshop devoted to “Reinventing the Rhetoric of Social Movements.” Among the questions the workshop participants were to examine were:

- How does the advent of new media technologies, especially the Internet, reorient our work?;
- What challenges does the contemporary emphasis on identity politics pose to established models of rhetorical movements?; and
- Are there new and productive methods that must now be deployed for movement studies? (Portnoy, “RSAI Social Movements Workshop” n.pag.).

Continuing those lines of inquiry, Richard Jensen notes that rhetorical scholars studying movements today “face interesting challenges,” centering on the need to

combine current theories of rhetoric with traditional theories used in previous movement studies, explain how new technologies such as the Internet have impacted the role of leaders and the organization of movements, and analyze significant recent . . . movements such as those challenging globalization and

²⁹See Stephen Schneider’s essay “Good, Clean, Fair: The Rhetoric of the Slow Food Movement.”

the World Trade Organization and online groups such as MoveOn.org... By combining the best ideas of the past with innovative approaches in the present, scholars should be able to produce intriguing studies of... movements in the future. (374-75)

Grand synthesis of the divergent approaches to studying the rhetoric of movements is not possible (nor perhaps even desirable). As Stephen E. Lucas puts it in “Coming to Terms with Movement Studies,” theory and methods are best judged by utility: what our tools help us to “describe, analyze, and interpret” should be the measure of their worth (151). Moreover, while it is relatively easy to set forth abstract principles and objectives for studying movements, it is much harder to put those principles and objectives to work; for that reason, Lucas argues, “What we need is less controversy about definitions, orientations, and presuppositions and more research” (151). Lucas goes on to recommend that rhetorical scholars develop case studies of particular movements because it is only through understanding how rhetoric works in particular circumstances that theories about movement rhetoric will be fully developed (153).³⁰ Similarly, in “Defining Movements Rhetorically: Casting the Widest Net,” Malcolm Sillars points out that, in studying a movement, the critic will “make a human choice” instead of “identifying a natural law or an existing phenomenon” because the choice will necessarily focus on some particulars at the expense of others (119-20). As a result, methodological unity is not necessarily

³⁰Ralph R. Smith makes a similar point when he notes that movement studies are inherently interdisciplinary and, thus, a failure to settle on prescriptive definitions and methods should not, by itself, be cause for alarm (290).

desirable; instead, rhetorical scholars should embrace methodological pluralism and aim for careful, useful scholarship, not normative definitions (122).

I agree. Indeed, the basis for this project rests in methodological pluralism and a choice about which movement studies have been particularly useful in illuminating what it means to inquire into the meanings that movements and their opponents ascribe to efforts to cause social change. As explained below, a Burkean approach to movements best fits the business of rhetorical studies: getting on with examining the implications of human symbol use within the context of a collective seeking to transform society. Thus, I will examine past scholarship that is useful to updating a Burkean approach to movements, especially as it bears on the questions of form as symbolic action and identity. However, Burkean movement scholarship has not yet folded media-specific analysis into its methods or examined new social movements in any sustained fashion. Scholarship on NSMs highlights, among other criteria, the role of movements in forming and *performing* collective identity, especially in potentially less hierarchical, potentially less time- and place-bound ways than previously used. The Web is a natural (if we, for the moment, overlook the irony of calling a metamedium inseparable from machine technologies “natural”) fit for this forming and performing of identity.

My analysis of past rhetorical scholarship on movements does not pretend to settle the perhaps-irresolvable conflicts among different approaches to studying movements, but it does begin to move forward with answering calls, such as Jensen’s, for studies that take seriously the difference that new media make in movement rhetoric.

2.10 Movements, Rhetorical Form, and Ideology

Any approach to understanding movements from a Burkean perspective must engage the work of Leland Griffin. Griffin taught in the Speech Communication department at Northwestern University from 1956 to 1989 (Wright) and authored germinal essays on movement rhetorical scholarship, including his widely reprinted 1952 article “The Rhetoric of Historical Movements” already mentioned. As an example of rhetoric’s vital role in a large-order shaping of human affairs, Griffin turns his attention to historical movements, positing a three-stage life cycle for what a movement is and what it does, which Griffin dubs “inception, crisis, and consummation” (367). These stages represent the impetus for aggrieved social actors to come together, the efforts to bring about change, and the ultimate result of the collective’s efforts to remake social reality (367). Rhetorical critics, argues Griffin, should focus on (the neo-Aristotelian standard of) effectiveness, but with “effectiveness” placed within the context of a rich understanding of the historical and cultural milieu in which movement rhetors address audiences on behalf of a cause (369).

To best draw out this milieu, critics should concentrate on signal moments such as debates, rallies, or influential writings by important figures (370). Griffin contends that, by blending case study and biography, but by maintaining a focus on rhetorical concerns, the critic can achieve the aims of both “pushing the movement forward and piercing it from many angles” (370). As part of this pushing and piercing, Griffin urges a dialogic sense of both “movement” and “movement rhetoric” as arenas in which those groups striving for

social change and those groups seeking to preserve the status quo engage as “aggressors” and “defendants” in a rhetorical agon (368).³¹

Griffin later demonstrated his dialogic method in action in his article entitled “The Rhetorical Structure of the Antimasonic Movement.” By examining key moments and artifacts of the 19th century campaign against Freemasons in America, Griffin shows how “aggressor” Antimasonic and “defendant” Masonic rhetors adopted their respective rhetorical strategies (377). Going a step beyond just examining effectiveness, Griffin argues that the Masons’ policy of silence was dangerous because democracy cannot flourish without citizens speaking out; on the other hand, the Antimasonic rhetors engaged in exaggerated, fear-based propaganda, which is also repugnant to democracy (378-79). Griffin’s step presages an explicit concern of Burkean criticism because Griffin ties his critical judgment to larger moral and social concerns beyond just judging the effectiveness of discourse. Movements of course entail moral and social concerns, and Burkean criticism does not have a monopoly on examining moral rhetoric. However, Griffin’s willingness to examine movements dialogically and with a wider critical lens is consistent with the kinds of multivariied examinations of symbolic action that Burke developed.³²

A concern for a functioning democracy was at the heart of the social and political

³¹This agon is a dialectical arena where rhetors seek to move the larger society to initiate or resist change. The agon continues to evolve through the second stage of “crisis” (when either the aggressors or defendants begin to win the larger societal audience) until the last stage of “consummation,” when the “pro” rhetors abandon their efforts to create the desired social change, whether because of success in changing society, because of failure, or because of other reasons (368).

³²Reexamining his article on the Antimasonic Movement some twenty years later, Griffin notes that if “I were to examine [that] movement today, I would . . . [avail myself of] . . . the delights of a dramatic perspective . . . Burke is fun to use—his generous approval of the use of ‘all that there is to use’ seems to offer the critic the broadest of ranges for getting at the essence as well as the accidents of movements” (“On Studying Movements” 228).

turbulence of the 1960s. In 1964, Griffin published the “Rhetorical Structure of the New Left.” There, Griffin shows the possibilities of a case study involving a wide range of rhetors, rhetorical artifacts, and occasions and focusing on how movements enact a moral drama with a particular rhetorical form. Opening his essay with an epigraph from Burke that “politics above all is drama,” Griffin argues that an inevitable result of the 1950’s New Right was to dialectically produce a New Left (113). Using the Cold War as the Scene shaping all political rhetoric of the time, Griffin points to the 1953 birth of “The *Dissent* project”—the founding of the socialist magazine *Dissent*—as a Burkean representative anecdote of the inception of a new collective stock-taking by the political left and a reconnection to the values of what one member of the project called ““a vision of the good”” (qtd. in Griffin 114).

Noting that the discourse of the New Left used clusters of key Devil terms (such as *alienation* and *conformity*) and God terms (such as *community* and *freedom*), Griffin argues that Burke offers particularly fruitful methods for examining New Left motives and the implications of New Left rhetoric (115). Griffin stresses how the discourse of New Left actors emphasizes a two-part plan for remaking political and social reality (121). First, peace would be made the new Scene, replacing the Cold War as the ground on which political action takes place (121). Second, after the shift in Scene, the United States would engage in “unilateral [benevolent] acts” within this new Scene, acts such as lessening military buildup and promoting justice in the world (121).

Griffin’s oft-cited 1969 article “A Dramatistic Theory of the Rhetoric of Movements,” in his characterization, “both supplements and complements” his earlier dialectical and

Burkean approach to movement rhetoric by adopting heuristics drawn—despite the essay’s “Dramatistic” title—from a wider survey of Burke’s work, including Burke’s later development of logology (199). Griffin’s goal in this essay is “to identify the dramatistic form of rhetorical movement with the dialectical movement of tragedy, poetic expression in general, and theological or political transformation and transcendence” (199). In other words, Griffin seeks to examine, in what he describes as a “frankly speculative” way (and without referring to or examining any particular movement) how political groups seek to bring about social and political change as part of their “strivings for salvation, perfection, the ‘good’” (200).

To engage in this speculative endeavor, Griffin borrows from Burke’s definition of human beings—a definition that, as explained above, emphasizes symbol use (and misuse), the linguistic negative, hierarchy, and the ever-present drive to perfection. Griffin argues that every system of social organization sows the seeds of its own negation or challenge (202-03). Maintaining the social order requires unequal and diverse actors to accept the grounding assumptions and understandings of that order (what Burke calls *Mystery*), yet the cooperation of these unequal and diverse actors is neither uniform nor guaranteed to last (202-03). Human beings are divided, both on a literal, physical level and on symbolic levels, such as class and competing interests (203).

This inescapable division, along with what Griffin describes as humanity’s “Faustian” ambition to test limits (reminding one of Burke’s “rotten with perfection”) and the inexhaustible power of negation built into language itself, can lead to abuses by those in power and an increasing lack of identification with the social order by those not in power

(204). In other words, the linguistic *No* can lead to rejection of the identification that holds societies together (204). Griffin contends that because human beings cannot live without a vision of order and cannot stand a separation between that vision and their current condition (Burkean *Guilt*), movements “rise up and cry *No* to the existing order—and prophesy the coming of the new” (205). This rising up and prophesying, this “rhetorical striving” or “becoming,” has a distinct form (206).

That form is a three-part journey from Guilt to Act to Redemption; as Burke sums it up, the journey is ““through the realms of the damned, the penitent, and the blessed”” (qtd. in Griffin 207). The journey is a drama in which the movement actors strive for transcendence and salvation; the purpose of studying such strivings “is to discover the motive, or motives—the ultimate meaning, or Purpose—of the movement” (207). Griffin maps this three-part journey onto his framework of “inception, crisis, and consummation” first set forth in his 1952 essay. For Griffin, inception encompasses the first announcement of a *No* to the existing order by the aggressor rhetors (207-08). This *No* always entails an implicit plan of action and an implicit line between good and bad (208). Thus, inception is, says Griffin, a Burkean “‘representative anecdote,’ a moment that embodies, implicitly or explicitly, the key terms and equations of the movement” (208). Inception both negates the existing hierarchy and provokes opposition, a dialectical counter-movement (208-09). Griffin sees development of counter-movements as crucial because dialectical engagement creates the conditions for struggle, gives shape to an outward enemy to be symbolically slain, and thus paves the way for “transformation and transcendence” (209).

HTB, as already mentioned, views its progress toward the caliphate—an instantiation

of God's will for earthly governance—as a three-stage journey. Seeking to transcend what it sees as the degradation of Islam's role as the substance of just political and social institutions, HTB's rhetoric clusters on overcoming guilt occasioned by the disjunction between present political reality and an Islamic state. By inculcating belief in the caliphate mission, gathering followers, and establishing Islam as a government, HTB takes action within the most significant of all contexts: God's will, seeking finally to bring government back into accord with God. By exploring the heuristics of Burke's dramatism and logology as they illuminate collective action to correct perceived social injustice, Griffin suggests that human symbol use lends itself to the inevitability of movements. In other words, if humankind is inherently symbol-using and if symbolic action cannot fail but to establish hierarchies, pieties, guilt, and the need for transcendence and redemption, then perhaps it is inescapable that societies (indeed, the basic idea of a "society") will always create aggrieved outsiders who have to make appeals to themselves and others to band together and seek change. When human beings band together to change society, they are seeking a kind of redemption—a journey that, in HTB's case, can be understood literally.^{33, 34}

³³Islamic theology rejects the notion of original sin and thus redemption in the Christian sense (Lazarus-Yafeh 48). Islamic eschatology in the Hadith (authenticated narratives of Muhammad's example), not in the Qur'an (God's revelation) involves the figure of the *Mahdi*, which means "Right-Guided One" (49). In some accounts in the Hadith, though again not in the Qur'an, this figure is Jesus (Arabic: *Isa*) (49; 51). Especially among Shi'a, the Mahdi is believed to be a figure who will return to earth to right injustices and dissolve all differences among religions, with Islam prevailing as the true path (49; 52).

³⁴In 1984, Griffin published "When Dreams Collide: Rhetorical Trajectories in the Assassination of President Kennedy." In this essay, Griffin tests the limits of what rhetorical movement studies can do by examining a single actor: Lee Harvey Oswald. Griffin argues that, while Oswald acted alone to carry out the crime, he was not acting alone in the sense of believing that he was acting just on his own behalf. Instead, Oswald wrote diary entries imagining himself at the vanguard of a "special party" of "fundamental radicals" leading to a "New Order" that would perfect the fallen state of the world by preventing the continued existence of the twin evils of capitalism and communism, forever fated to clash (qtd. in Griffin 119, 120, 121). Griffin argues that Oswald imagined himself the leader of a moral striving to change society, what Griffin calls an "imaginary movement" (123). "When Dreams Collide," read in concert with Griffin's other work on movement rhetoric, helps illuminate how the "larger curve" as Burke put it, of a movement operates on the micro-level of self-persuasion and identification necessary to sustain collective action.

Building on Griffin's work, especially with regard to movements as questioning a society's basis, Cathcart focuses on movements as dialectical and confrontational. Thus, Cathcart contends, "the key to defining a social movement lies in the perception that confrontation has taken place rather than in the mere existence of a non-institutionalized collective or in the act of mobilization" ("Defining Movements" 269). It is "the emergence of a rhetoric and counter-rhetoric raising the possibility that the system itself is in question and that a group can successfully challenge it that creates the perception of a social movement" (269). At the same time, though, established society reciprocates the remedying impulse from the other end—human symbol use is rotten with perfection, after all. Established society sees a movement's goals not as correctives but as "direct attacks on the foundations of the established order" ("New Approaches" 87).

Cathcart identifies "this reciprocity or dialectical engagement in the moral arena" as the center of gravity for rhetorical studies of movements (87). Cathcart is careful to distinguish this Burkean, dialectical approach to movement from historical or sociological approaches by noting that mere alienation or feelings that the social order is flawed are probably inevitable in any society and, by themselves, do not give rise to movements (87). Instead, "[I]t is the formulation of a rhetoric proclaiming that the new order, the more perfect order, the desired order, cannot come about through the established agencies of change" that creates a moral dialectic (87).

Cathcart argues that the core of a dialectical approach to movement studies is "agonistic ritual" that "dramatizes the symbolic separation of the individual from the existing order" ("Movements: Confrontation as Rhetorical Form" 103). Movements are "impious" in a

Burkean sense because they reject the social mystery and its attendant hierarchies (106). Thus, confrontation enacts a different drama from those enacted by organized calls for reform (106). In other words, a movement uses “a rhetoric of re-ordering rather than of reforming” (106). In this reordering, the guilt occasioned by living under a defective society must be purged and redeemed by bringing about a “new, more perfect order” (106-07).

Echoing Burke’s explanation of *mystery*, Cathcart explains that social order is produced through consensual investment in the symbols of hierarchy, a process that lends itself to the legitimation of certain rhetorical forms, which then in turn “help create the appearance of legitimacy and stability” (“A Confrontation Perspective” 71, 72). But, when an aggrieved group “employs a rhetoric which accesses experience in a different way—i.e., questions the old forms and creates new symbols—a rhetorical clash is produced” (72). As Cathcart puts it, examining movements involves examining “the dialectical enjoinment which ebbs and flows as the rhetoric of confrontation is countered by the establishment, by the movement members’ own consciousness of social reality, and by the perceptions of the general public” (73).

Burke’s linkages between the core human characteristics of symbolic action and rhetorical form reveal, as Griffin and Cathcart explain, that societies owe their existence and maintenance to visions of order, visions that perhaps inevitably sow the seeds of their own opposition. As Griffin and Cathcart have recognized, a Burkean approach centering on rhetorical form enables inquiry into the meanings that movement actors and their opponents negotiate in a moral drama. In this drama, collective and individual “strategic, stylized answers” (*The Philosophy of Literary Form* 1) to the problems of challenging or upholding

the social order compete to create and sustain audience expectations and to form and *perform* identity.

That forming and performing is ideological. *Ideology* is perhaps a term as overdetermined as any in the critical lexicon. After all, the term is freighted with Marxian connotations of false consciousness and is often used as an epithet (*I have truth; you have ideology*). However, HTB consistently refers to Islam as its ideology (not just a religion, an ideology). As just one example, in 2003, HTB wrote a letter to Jacques Chirac protesting French policy against religious symbols in public institutions, including the *hijaab*, or female headscarf (“An Open Letter” n.pag.). In that letter, as it does elsewhere, HTB describes itself as “a political party whose ideology is Islam” (“An Open Letter”). When applied to HTB’s rhetorical efforts to build and sustain appetites for messages of transformative and divinely mandated change, Burke’s examination of rhetorical form’s linkages with ideology are important and useful. As Greig Henderson points out, “In Burke’s lexicon, the term ‘ideology’ is used descriptively; it is not a synonym for ‘false consciousness’” (139). Instead, Burke uses ideology to name “the nodus of beliefs and judgments which the artist can exploit for his effects” (*Counter-Statement* 161).

In fact, Burke argues that “the artist”—a term that, for Burke, could just as easily be amended to “the rhetor”—affects his or her audience chiefly “by the exploitation of the current ideology” (192). Ideology, for Burke, is not a monolith tied solely to class status, but neither is it wholly idiosyncratic (161). As Burke puts it, ideology “varies from one person to another, and from one age to another—but in so far as its general acceptance and its stability are more stressed in particular variations from person to person and from age

to age, an ideology is a ‘culture’” (161). Where different groups share a common set of beliefs or judgments (even if they generally diverge on other beliefs and judgments), they “belong to the same culture” to the extent that those beliefs and judgments overlap (161).

Ideology, for Burke, “is not a harmonious structure of beliefs or assumptions”; in fact, it is “an aggregate of beliefs sufficiently at odds with one another to justify opposite kinds of conduct” (163). The major implication of ideology for rhetorical form is that the rhetor manipulates audience appetites by manipulating a dynamic complex of values, prejudices, self-conceptions, and experiences.³⁵ In short, a Burkean concept of ideology is like a Möbius strip, where the interior can be traced to the exterior without one’s finger ever leaving the paper’s surface. As a complex of beliefs and judgments, ideology contains the seeds of its own inconsistency, yet it circulates among rhetors and audiences as a way for individuals and groups to become, if only temporarily, part of the same “culture.”

We can now see that, Griffin and Cathcart’s studies, while important, have lacunae that require friendly amendment. Griffin’s only published studies of actual movements are his 1958 essay on the Antimasonic movement and his 1964 essay on the New Left.³⁶

Griffin’s 1969 “Dramatistic” essay, while highly suggestive and deservedly canonized in

³⁵Henderson points out that, while Burke stresses that the essence of rhetorical form is the psychology of the audience as manipulated by the rhetor, this manipulation is not a one-way street:

Though form is undoubtedly [audience psychology], the [rhetor’s] manipulation of ideological assumptions and . . . expectations—whether those assumptions and expectations be categorical or text-specific—is an inordinately complex business, and at the same time [rhetors] are manipulating others, they are inevitably manipulating themselves. . . . The rhetoric of form not only has a suasive impact upon the audience; it also has a suasive impact, conscious or unconscious, upon the author. While we are using the formal, rhetorical, and ideological resources of language . . . , they are using us. (140)

³⁶Griffin’s Oswald essay, while extremely thorough in its use of historical evidence and bold in its effort to test the boundaries of what a movement is, also does not study any actual collective, other than as may have existed in one man’s imagination.

rhetorical studies, is admittedly speculative and does not apply the theory developed to any actual movement. Similarly, Cathcart does not offer any sustained studies of particular movements although he does offer one- or two-paragraph examples of particular groups to illustrate the rhetoric of confrontation.³⁷ All of the movements that Griffin or Cathcart study or use as examples long predate the rise of the Web. Although he calls for the development of “a Burkean ‘Philosophy of Media Form’ to update [Burke’s] *Philosophy of Literary Form*” to better account for the persuasive “amalgamation of forms” in electronic media, Cathcart does not offer a sustained elaboration or application of such a philosophy (“Instruments” 304).³⁸ Not every piece of scholarship is obligated to blend theoretical and applied research, but the speculations of theory are best tested in applying them to data.

Before this study can build a multi-layered methodology for examining Web rhetoric (Chapter 3) and move from there to the case study of HTB’s online rhetoric in the wake of the proposed ban (Chapter 4), one last distinction must be drawn. This last distinction is between the kinds of movements rhetorical studies have examined in the past and the kind of movement that HTB is.

2.11 New Social Movements: New Rhetorical Inquiries

In 1997, Gerard Hauser and Susan Whalen surveyed the arc of movement rhetorical

³⁷Cathcart’s brief examples include the Black Panthers, the anti-Vietnam-War protesters dubbed the “Catonsville 9,” the Women’s Liberation Movement, (“Movements: Confrontation as Rhetorical Form 104), a Puerto Rican independence group, and the Esperanto society (“Defining Movements” 270-71).

³⁸This call appeared in 1993, before graphical web browsers brought the Web to larger segments of the public.

scholarship from the vantage point of some three decades of developments and controversies. In “New Rhetoric and New Social Movements,” Hauser and Whalen set out to distinguish between, on the one hand, the dominant view of rhetoric as persuasion and, on the other hand, a newer “constitutive” (116) view of rhetoric most fully developed by Burke. As Hauser and Whalen explain, for Burke, language and symbol use among human beings are inevitably hortatory, that is they direct the formation of attitudes and counter-attitudes (119). In other words, for Burke, language does not simply represent external realities; by contrast, language, in Burke’s view, forms “human reality... through discourse” represented in “choices of image, argument, and strategy” (119). Hauser and Whalen are careful to note that while it has always been useful to think of rhetoric as a “social practice,” the old rhetoric gained its force from assuming that the rhetor and audience were rational and that argument and invention were the means of achieving “a judgment that will meet at least cultural norms for rationality” (120).

The old rhetoric, they explain, “takes the audience to be pregiven”; thus, the rhetor’s task is to discover and make arguments that the audience could accept, given its values and the rhetor’s ends (122). By contrast, they argue, the new rhetoric “theorizes rhetoric... [without]... *a priori* criteria for rationality and envisions the rhetoricity of social practices as entailing the... deployment of symbolic resources to constitute the... world in which social actors find themselves and their identity in it” (120). The new rhetoric, in short, focuses on how discourse positions rhetors and audiences in social reality—what Hauser and Whalen characterize as “the inherent call of rhetoric to ‘be’ a subject of a certain type” (123).

Just as they distinguish between old and new rhetoric, Hauser and Whalen go on to draw a similar distinction between old and new social movements, a distinction arising out of the discipline of sociology. To frame new questions useful in studying movements arising in the late 20th century that centered less on class and economic issues than on identity, sociologist Alberto Melucci (in 1980) coined the term *new social movement* (Gilbert n.pag.). Examples of NSMs include new age religious movements, gender- and sexuality-based movements, and movements based on ethnicity (Hauser and Whalen 124). Hauser and Whalen contend that while rhetorical scholars have shown a keen interest in the rhetoric of movements and have produced many studies of particular movements, “there seems to be an abiding sense that the work has been unable to escape the indefinable point of theoretical and thus critical stall” (125-26). As a result, they claim:

lacking the...rich theoretical underpinning that might direct the critic of movements to more penetrating understandings of the phenomena and epiphenomena of the formation of social will, the consequent focus on strategy seems to have eventuated in catalogues of tactics and attendant midlevel theories, studies that are discretely useful and absorbing but leave an often maddeningly ambiguous picture of the distinctive rhetorical dimensions of social movements or, more precisely, the rhetorical consciousness of social movement actors. (126)

Consistent with the new rhetoric’s focus on identification rather than on persuasion,

Hauser and Whalen argue that NSMs have three particular features that distinguish them from the types of collective rhetorical actions that rhetorical scholars have examined in the past (127):

The Personal is Transformed into the Ideological. In NSMs, “the interests upon which social actors act are anchored in material conditions but do not preexist their expression through rhetoric”; in other words, in an NSM, the personal becomes “ideologized” (128). For example, “One who identifies as an environmentalist... buys into a worldview which specifies a complete set of practices infiltrating almost all aspects of personal life: which products to buy, what sort of transportation to use, how many children may be borne” (128). HTB positions the caliphate state as *the* answer to injustice, oppression, economic woes, and the more fundamental concern of living in accordance with God’s will. The state that HTB envisions is a highly ideologized view of Islam.

Negotiation Between Individual and Collective Meanings. Members of NSMs “must negotiate between discursively articulated sets of individual and collective meanings that are essentially unstable” (128). In other words, to be a member of a “movement” in the first place, individuals must at least accept that they are “acting out beliefs in a manner similar to those of distant members” (128). While old movements could be maintained in part through a built-in cohesive force of geographical proximity and class interests (to name just two factors), a dispersed, globalized world means that “a devotion to movement membership must of necessity be experienced as an individual practice” (128-29). Thus, NSM rhetoric must “work inventively and consistently to exercise moral control over individuals who may mightily believe but are not immediately accountable to the collective

for their practices” (129). The upshot of this, argue Hauser and Whalen, is that scholars who emphasize “the institutional or organizational components of movement activity” make a serious error by ignoring the personal and dispersed features of NSMs (130).

For HTB, the Web facilitates this negotiation between individual and collective meanings in the following ways:

- by providing opportunities for online and offline movement activities to be associated through cross-references;
- by making offline activities (television appearance, rallies, conferences), in Bolter and Grusin’s sense, “immediate” to Web users who can stream video to immerse themselves in a (re)experience of conferences and rallies;
- by allowing users to comment on some site content, creating (at least the perception of) a dialogic interactive exchange;
- by providing HTB content for immediate experience or downloading/archiving in a variety of formats; and
- by offering free subscriptions to RSS syndication feeds that deliver site content directly to users’ email accounts or feed readers (thus repurposing site content from a medium that users have to visit to one that visits them).

Relationship Precedes Rhetorical Situation. Finally, Hauser and Whalen contend that “[r]hetorical situations are the product of choices made by the social actor” and that

“rhetorical situations are changing and mercurial responses to actors’ conduct” (130). Put another way, “relationship precedes situation” (135). This has consequences for how rhetorical scholars study movements. Hauser and Whalen warn that there is a “gap that too often exists between the experience of political actors and the scholarly narratives developed to account for them” (131). As a result, Hauser and Whalen stress, “social facts, including those with a strongly rhetorical dimension, must be explained at their own level,” a level that takes seriously the perspectives of social actors in “what they are up to when engaging in movement activity” (131). Seeing NSMs primarily as highly moralized rhetorical “wars over language” (instead of over access to material resources, power, or wealth), Hauser and Whalen characterize NSMs as concerned with “the loss of identity and the need for engagement in redemptive discourses of self-discovery” (132, 133).

HTB seeks to regain a vision of Muslim identity rooted in an idealized past and its three-stage plan for the movement’s arc. While HTB’s rhetoric addresses a wide range of political, religious, and social problems, HTB’s rhetorical struggles during the proposed ban reveal the perspective that HTB members bring to their cause. Because HTB’s methods are directed toward persuasion and it rejects participation in the British political process from within, its cause is always a highly moralized war over language, with language being the high-stakes symbolic action of arguing for God and, in the context of this study, against the proposed ban.

2.12 Conclusion

I began this chapter by examining what insights can be gained by understanding the Web as “new media” and what difference it makes that HTB uses the Web as part of its persuasive campaigns to institute a religiopolitical state. I traced the origins of the Web and explained how the rise of the Web depended upon the development of search engines and web browsers. I then examined how the visible Web is organized so that search engines can index it.

Next, to move from history to theory, I turned to two important works of new media scholarship: Manovich’s *The Language of New Media* and Bolter and Grusin’s *Remediation: Understanding New Media* and to some of those authors’ later writings. I argued that Manovich’s five principles of new media (*numerical representation, modularity, automation, variability, and transcoding*) allow meaningful questions to be asked about the symbolic action that the Web, as a “born digital” event, makes possible for rhetors like HTB and how those forms of symbolic action are different from those available to past movements. I noted an important critique raised by Cheryl Ball: that Manovich’s theory, while important, does not, by itself, enable rhetorical criticism. Analyzing both the designerly and readerly aspects of how HTB uses the Web is best done through the nuanced examinations of human symbol use that Burkean methods enable, and using the three-layered heuristic, as I develop in Chapter 3. I went on to contend that Bolter and Grusin’s concepts of *immediacy* and *hypermediacy* frame inquiry about how media forms

interact, which is especially important in a metamedium as complex as the Web, which blends computer and cultural layers, offering wide-ranging potential for argument as public ritual.

Turning from new media scholarship itself to rhetorical scholarship about new media, I examined Warnick's *Rhetoric Online: Politics and Persuasion on the World Wide Web*. While Warnick does not concentrate on social movements and cites Burke only briefly, her work provides a bridge between new media scholarship and the particular aims of this study. Warnick's examinations of the five parts of the communication process (*reception, source, message, time, and space*) as well as *interactivity* provides useful terms to mark out and describe online rhetoric as public ritual. Moreover, Warnick provides both an example and an agenda for the media-specific rhetorical analysis—beyond just the level of the screen—that this study performs.

To go further in examining what difference it makes that HTB uses the Web as an integral part of its movement rhetoric, especially in the post-7/7 crisis, I continued by introducing and examining relevant Burkean rhetorical concepts: *symbolic action/nonsymbolic motion* and *rhetorical form*. I used Burke's "Definition of Human" as my point of entry into Burke's clear separation of symbolic action (personal, purposeful, value-laden, motive-laden) from nonsymbolic motion (physicality, material, deterministic).

As I explained, Burke's strict separation between the symbolic and the nonsymbolic realms was at the heart of his skepticism about technology, about machinic views of communication, and about the propriety of using the computer as a metaphor for the human mind. Yet, where technology blurs the boundaries between agent and agency—and the Web

is a particularly clear example of such blurring—a rigid separation of the symbolic from the nonsymbolic is no longer possible or, from the critic’s perspective, perhaps not even desirable.

Though Burke warned against human beings taking on the “psychological patterning” of their technologies, the Web, as a metamedium, demands that we revisit Burke’s treatment of form as symbolic action in creating, sustaining, and fulfillment of audience expectations and desires. Burke’s examination of rhetorical form brings out the psychological, value-laden, emotional, and strategic ways in which form affects human attitudes and identities. Such an understanding of form is central to understanding the relationships between media, the communities they create, and what constitutes meaningful symbolic action within particular constraints and opportunities. I showed that, although previous rhetorical scholarship on social movements has at times focused on the centrality of form, such scholarship focused on movements that predate the Web and which are not “new social movements” that center on moralized dramas concerning identity and language, such as HTB. Moreover, previous scholarship has omitted the media-specific analysis necessary to take the Web seriously on its own terms as a rhetorical event.

To take the Web seriously on its own terms in studying HTB, I argued that it is important to examine how HTB uses the Web to copiously and continually call for the caliphate state. Those calls offer both *content* (a meaningful progression from ignorance to knowledge, from online to offline activities, from passive viewing to active participation, and, ultimately, from living in an unholy political state to imagining living in the caliphate state) and *performance*, enabled by the material specificities of online media as readily

repurposable, easily archived, and widely distributed. I argued that, for HTB, *form* is as much a verb as a noun, with HTB negotiating between present political reality and a journey of transcendence and redemption of the Muslim *ummah*.

One way in which Burkean methods for examining movement rhetoric ought to be amended is to fold media-specific analysis into the traditional analyses of words, images, and contexts that rhetorical studies have always done. On the Web, rhetorical form is created at more than just the screen level. Developing a useful heuristic for asking new questions about the linkages among what's on, behind, and off the screen will retain the vitality of Burkean methods for examining collective and individual meanings in collective action for social change in the movements of the present day while making a step toward putting useful elements of media studies into better conversation with rhetorical methods. Developing such a heuristic and previewing it in action is the business of Chapter 3.

Chapter 3

Rewiring Kenneth Burke

3.1 Introduction

As I argued in Chapter 2, while Burke did not examine media themselves as part of symbolic action and did not have an opportunity to examine the Web as a rhetorical environment, his sustained examination of the rhetorical importance of form provides a crucial way for Burke studies to be “rewired” to consider how HTB uses the Web to build and sustain the caliphate movement. Other scholars have applied Burkean methods, particularly Burke’s examination of rhetorical form, to movements, but Burkean studies of online movement rhetoric need to examine the Web on its own terms as a natively digital, modular, dispersed, interactive metamedium.

If there is to be a maxim for studies of movement rhetoric online, perhaps it should be this: *Understand the whole experience*. The Web is a set of ways to share information

and create user experiences, built on the architecture of the Internet. As Warnick contends, rhetorical scholars who wish to examine rhetoric online must fold the “online” into their analyses. Only by understanding and accounting better for the Web as layers of mediated experience can rhetorical scholars shape useful inquiry into what sorts of experiences are being created, what cases are being built online for audiences.

My call to understand the whole experience echoes Matthew Kirschenbaum’s argument that the field of media studies concentrates too much on “a kind of romance of the digital” tied to “either the medium’s putative immateriality or its putative newness and uniqueness” (“Virtuality and VRML” n.pag.). Kirschenbaum quips, “If the devil is in the details, then much of what has been published under the rubric of new media studies has been positively angelic” (n.pag.). Works like Warnick’s have begun to banish this manner of being angelic from rhetorical studies, but there is much more to be done. Connecting the digital and the rhetorical, Michael Mateas argues that scholars in the humanities, while maintaining their traditional focus on how new media artifacts affect “human action and interpretation,” must understand the coding and programming layers of new media (“Procedural Literacy” n.pag.). If humanities scholars do not understand “how code operates as an expressive medium,” argues Mateas, they will be left “to treat the operation of the media artifacts they study as a black box” (n.pag.).

In this case, the Web allows HTB to spread and reinforce its call for the caliphate state to potentially global audiences relatively easily and cheaply. HTB certainly aims to affect human action and interpretation using the Web’s opportunities and genres. To engage with HTB’s uses of the Web as a rhetorical environment and to take seriously my

own maxim of attempting to examine and understand “the whole experience,” I introduce a three-layered set of analyses. The methodology I have developed for analyzing Web-based rhetoric is what I call “Behind the Screen, Off the Screen, and On the Screen,” listed in what most rhetorical scholars would probably consider the reverse order of familiarity. This reverse ordering is intentional because my task in unpacking relevant concepts will be proportionately greater when discussing unfamiliar concepts. This methodology is a process of examining Web-based rhetoric, not as a screen-based analogue to offline media such as television or print, but instead as a natively digital and qualitatively different rhetorical event.

I will begin with what is surely the least familiar concept to rhetorical scholars: what happens behind the screen. Behind the screen is a persuasive realm not seen by the average user, but no less important to building identity than what the screen displays. Looking behind the screen entails examining how Web authors attempt to control who visits a website and what sorts of experiences those users will have once on the site. As new media theorist, critic, and conservator Hans-Dieter Huber puts it (in the context of examining online artworks):

In principle, all...Internet-based works are based on the difference between code and surface. The source code represents a kind of notation or musical score that is interpreted by the computer when a page is called up by a specific browser...Like a virtual conductor or a symphony orchestra, the browser performs the score and displays it on the surface of the monitor. What we see is only the surface of a specific interpretation.

(qtd. in Raley, “Code.surface || Code.depth” n.pag.)

Whether an online experience takes the form of an artwork or an argument in favor of an Islamic caliphate, there is no “Web” without the machine. Creation, dissemination, access, and experience of online rhetoric cannot exist but for multiple machines, from a website developer’s computer to the servers hosting that site to the end user’s computer. To be able to understand what occurs on and off the screen, it is essential to understand how a Web author like HTB attempts to make its pages relevant to search engines; seeks to reach audiences with different browsers, monitors, and display preferences (or requirements); takes advantage of the digitized, modular nature of new media to automate authorial functions and provide different experiences to users in multiple outlets; and attempts to gather feedback about what users do on the site so that persuasive messages can be tested for effectiveness.

Second, we have the realm of Off the Screen. By this, I mean what is off the immediate screen the user sees at a particular moment. Off the screen includes the essence of the Web as a discursive environment marked by association and intertextuality. Hyperlinking, the Web’s core function, is one way of providing a measure of “meaningful movement” and “gratification” in Burke’s sense. What’s more, what’s off the screen can provide linkages between the online and offline worlds, enhancing a movement’s *ethos*. HTB, for example, is not a movement that exists only online—it stages demonstrations, writes letters to the editors of British newspapers, hosts conferences, and engages in debates on television and elsewhere. HTB blends its online and offline rhetoric in such a way that each reinforces the

other. HTB performs what it sees as duty to God and the corresponding identity centering on the caliphate in online and offline worlds, copiously and continuously.

Finally, we have *On the Screen*, the realm probably most familiar to rhetorical studies. This includes the words, images, video, and audio displayed in a Web browser and seen by a user at any one time. While “screen essentialism” in Montfort’s sense is limiting, and Kirschenbaum has called for new media studies to “move beyond its current 1.0 generation of scholarly discourse—a discourse which is still largely, though not exclusively, descriptive and explanatory,” (“Media, Genealogy, History” n. pag.), close description of visual and verbal elements is a bedrock rhetorical methodology, one well worth preserving here, once inflected by a grounded understanding of the Web as a particular rhetorical event. While understanding the whole experience of online movement rhetoric does not stop at the screen, neither should it exclude the screen.

These three sets of inquiries act as heuristics to complicate our rhetorical readings of websites as *websites*, as dynamic, mediated human drama experienced on the Web. These three sets of inquiries build the tools for my case study and for “rewiring” Burkean methods. To build these tools and “rewire” Burke, this chapter uses the following structure: First, I will introduce some core concepts necessary to understanding what a Web page is, how a Web page works, and how Web rhetors like HTB attempt to build and sustain machine “appetites” for meaningful, relevant content.

HTB uses the Web to reach audiences, to spread a message, to engage agonistically with ideological opponents, and to perform a collective identity in the public forum of the Web. But all of those purposes are thwarted if users never find HTB’s websites, if HTB

is unable to update them easily and cheaply, if it cannot stay at the forefront of what the Web as a metamedium makes possible in reaching audiences, or if it cannot gather detailed information about how users use its websites. Studies of online rhetoric must engage with some core concepts and material conditions necessary to creating mediated experiences for online audiences. Studies such as Warnick's are starting to move in this direction, and this dissertation contributes to the field's efforts to understand the "whole experience."

But what does understanding the whole experience entail? In the course of answering some blog-comment questions from me about the fundamentals of understanding new media artifacts on a grounded, material level, Kirschenbaum asks me an arresting question: "What does one need to know about new media in order to teach it?" (Kirschenbaum, "January Open Thread"). A related and no less arresting question is what one must know about new media in order to build rhetorical theory and analyses. I contend that one must at least know the core concepts I examine in this chapter because to fail to understand them is to be content with only partially developed rhetorical theory and criticism of a hugely influential and important metamedium.³⁹

The virtue of the three-layered heuristic I develop is that different layers allow for different kinds of questions to be asked about the significance of HTB's use of the Web.

³⁹Indeed, the entire thrust of Kirschenbaum's recent monograph *Mechanisms: New Media and the Forensic Imagination*, is that, as a field, new media studies needs to take seriously the materiality and genealogy of the artifacts it examines. Textual studies has long done that for literary artifacts, and now is the time, Kirschenbaum contends, for new media studies to follow suit. In a related line of inquiry, the emerging field of "software studies" (a coinage Manovich developed in *The Language of New Media*), is an attempt to fold the insights of computer science (new media is programmable, transcoded, etc.) into a richer understanding of new media as discrete from earlier media forms and as presenting new possibilities for human expression and action. Manovich now directs the Software Studies Initiative at the University of California at San Diego, which studies how software acts as "a layer that permeates all areas of contemporary societies" such that "if we want to understand contemporary techniques of control, communication, representation, simulation, analysis, decision-making, memory, vision, writing, and interaction, our analysis can't be complete until we consider this software layer" (Bristow, "What is Software Studies?" n.pag.).

These questions and answers help to illuminate how HTB uses the Web's possibilities to build and sustain human appetites for meaning and participation in Islamic identity and, as I examine in the next chapter, for resisting the proposed ban in the wake of the 7/7 bombings.

Another purpose of this chapter is to show a preliminary attempt, within the temporal and financial constraints of a dissertation, to demonstrate how particular research methods and tools enable rhetorical analysis of online rhetoric. If tools and methods do not exist that allow for at least a measure of ability to archive and track websites and to understand them readily as new media objects, websites are doomed to be exceptionally ephemeral⁴⁰ objects of study, the source of tremendously tedious downloading and archiving work, and/or the locus of "screen studies"-type theory that does not fully understand the Web as a mediated event.

This dissertation begins to demonstrate the possibilities of what N. Katherine Hayles calls "media-specific analysis." In "Print is Flat: Code is Deep: The Importance of Media-Specific Analysis," Hayles argues that while not every material aspect of a computer-mediated experience is equally important for humanistic interpretations, materiality "matters most to humanists and artists" (and, I would add, rhetorical scholars) "when considered in relation to the practices it embodies and enacts" (72). Similar to the inquiry that guides this study, Hayles asks scholars to consider "what difference the medium makes" (68). Understanding the practices the Web embodies and enacts ties in directly

⁴⁰To be clear, websites are *not* ephemeral in the same sense as, say, texts printed on cheap pulp paper that will disintegrate into dust. Even if taken down from the publicly viewable files on a server, website files will still exist, probably on multiple hard drives, until completely overwritten. Indeed, as Kirschenbaum points out, electronic artifacts in this respect are far more durable than paper artifacts (*Mechanisms* 30, 45, 46-47). However, as a practical matter, researchers often have little to no ability to access web pages (or particular files once linked to or embedded in those pages) that are not part of a search engine's cache or saved to electronic archives.

with the question that began this study: what difference does it make that HTB uses the Web?

3.2 Behind the Screen: What is a Web Page?

To begin to examine what difference it makes that HTB uses the Web, it is important to understand what a web page is and how it works. As website manager Ahmad Permessur explains, the Web is an experience that happens on the Internet, an experience that involves the interactions of three basic components: “client-side technologies, server-side technologies, and networks” (Permessur, “A Web Development Primer” n.pag.). The most fundamental client-side technology (beyond, of course, an operating system running on the user’s computer) is the web browser. A browser is a software application that is capable of requesting files from a server accessible over the Internet and then rendering those files in a way that the user can perceive them, most commonly by seeing them as an interpreted display (n.pag.). For a browser to access and display a server’s files, those files have to be written in a markup language that the browser can interpret.

Markup languages, as Hakòn Lie and Janne Saarela explain, “encode a document’s logical structure,” a structure that describes the functions and relationships of particular parts of the document (96). The prototypical markup language is SGML (Standardized General Markup Language) which became an ISO standard⁴¹ in 1986, thus predating the

⁴¹The International Standards Organization (ISO) is an international non-governmental entity that develops, refines, and publishes voluntary standards for a wide variety of commercial and technical products, and even air, soil, and water quality.

Web.⁴² While SGML is powerful and useful and has the benefit of long development and refinement, it is complex; as a result, simpler structured markup languages were developed (96). For the Web, the most important simplified markup language is HTML (HyperText Markup Language). Like the Web itself, HTML has its roots at CERN among Tim Berners-Lee and his colleagues (96). As explained earlier, the communicative problem that HTML (and, indeed, the Web itself) was designed to address in its infancy was the ability of physicists to share written work over a common platform. HTML encodes a document's logical structure using a limited number of markup elements, such as headings, lists, paragraphs, and titles (96). These elements are then requested by, served to, and displayed by browsers using HTML. Berners-Lee and his fellow physicists could then access and share work marked up with a simple, consistent logical structure that described the logical elements—the skeleton—of, say, a physics conference paper.⁴³

An HTML file is a simple text file that must, at a minimum, contain generic elements that describe the file's structure. While WYSIWYG (“What You See Is What You Get”) web authoring software makes it easy to author HTML content without having to see the underlying markup, text files are the Web's DNA.⁴⁴ Over the years, and despite HTML's origins in strictly structural markup, additional HTML markup tags, such as

⁴²SGML, an outgrowth of General Markup Language (GML), was developed at IBM by researchers concerned with creating a means of describing a document's structure that could be used across different software platforms, consume minimal storage resources, and remain usable for years (“A Brief History of the Development of SGML” n.pag.).

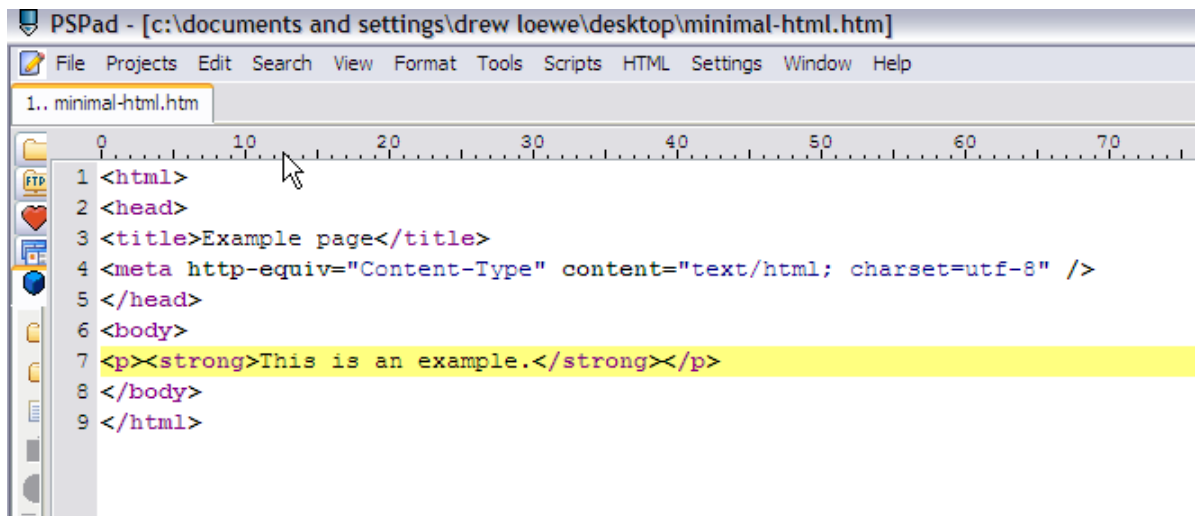
⁴³As discussed in Chapter 2, the earliest browsers were text-based browsers, not the post-Netscape graphical browsers that have contributed to the Web's explosion as a communicative medium for non-specialists.

⁴⁴Indeed, one can develop Web pages and entire websites using a simple text editor, such as Notepad, although such authoring is usually left to experts. Such experts often tout their “hand-coded” artisanship as a selling point for professional Web development services. However, the relevant point here is not that either hand-coding or WYSIWYG is inherently more significant, but simply that the Web relies heavily on small text files.

`...` for **strong (bold)** text and `...` for *emphasized (italic)* text, were developed to blend presentation elements with structure (Lie and Saarela 96-97). Different iterations of HTML resulted in a proliferation of markup tags. By 1997, for example, the W3C's⁴⁵ recommended standards for HTML 3.2 included some 55 tags (Engelfriet, "Overview of all HTML Elements" n. pag.). By 1999, with the development of HTML 4.0, there were some 80 tags (Lie and Saarela 97).

But the core of an HTML document, and thus the heart of the Web, is a text file with certain required elements that a Web browsers can display. It is important to understand what a browser accesses and interprets, if we are to go behind the screen and understand the Web as a mediated environment. A minimal HTML page containing one line of bold text reading, "**This is an example**" looks like this when viewed in a text editor:

Figure 3.1: Minimal HTML page, viewed in PSPad text editor



```

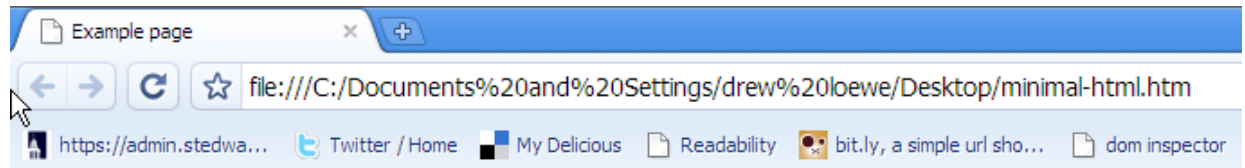
1 <html>
2 <head>
3 <title>Example page</title>
4 <meta http-equiv="Content-Type" content="text/html; charset=utf-8" />
5 </head>
6 <body>
7 <p><strong>This is an example.</strong></p>
8 </body>
9 </html>

```

⁴⁵The W3C is the shorthand brand name, as it were, of World Wide Web Consortium. Founded by Berners-Lee and others, the W3C is a body that promulgates Web open standards and guidelines intended to ensure that Web content remains accessible to users, regardless of their particular operating systems or machines.

That same minimal page, rendered in a browser (in this case, Google Chrome), looks like this:

Figure 3.2: Minimal HTML page, viewed in Google Chrome web browser



This is an example.

The difference here is between, on one hand, the language the browser interprets (it has to recognize the file as HTML and display the content according to the markup tags, like ` . . . ` for **bold text**) and, on the other hand, the screen output a user sees. Even in this deliberately rudimentary example, there is a double language use: the language displayed on the screen in a browser and the language behind the screen making the file accessible to a browser and telling it how to interpret the file. Going beyond this simple example, graphical browsers, server space, increased bandwidth, faster and faster computers with better display technologies, and widely available web authoring software converge not only to proliferate the number of websites, but also the number of pages on each site, and indeed what the basic experience of a website is expected to be.⁴⁶

⁴⁶The May 2009 results for the widely cited Netcraft Web Server Survey analyzed responses from 235,890,526 sites (“May 2009 Web Server Survey” n.pag.). Each of those sites can have one, or hundreds, of pages. According to one estimate, as of February 2007, the total number of web pages was somewhere in the tens of billions (“WWW FAQs: How Many Websites are There?” n.pag.). As Internet marketing veteran Steve Baldwin’s blog *Ghost Sites of the Web* documents, there are many websites still accessible on the Web which have not been updated since the 1990s. While it’s now tempting to snicker at such sites and their

Maintaining and changing web pages on larger sites is one reason why HTML is returning to its roots as a language concerned with structure and delegating presentation to other markup. As early as 1994, again at CERN, attempts were made to develop a way for Web authors to control presentation beyond (then-early) HTML by using a style sheet with its own encoding of what, for example, a `<p>...</p>` paragraph element should look like *on this particular page or site* (Lie and Saarela 98). With the advent of HTML 4, and now with XHTML,⁴⁷ the W3C “deprecated” certain HTML tags, chiefly to separate structural elements from presentation best left to one or more separate style sheets. A deprecated tag is considered outdated, and may one day be obsolete, but it will still display in browsers with backward compatibility (WC3, “Conformance: Requirements and Recommendations” n.pag.). Current Web design best practice is to control presentation by linking (within the page’s HTML) to one or more external style sheets, which are once again simple text files.

Style sheets, particularly CSS (Cascading Style Sheets—an approach that sets priorities

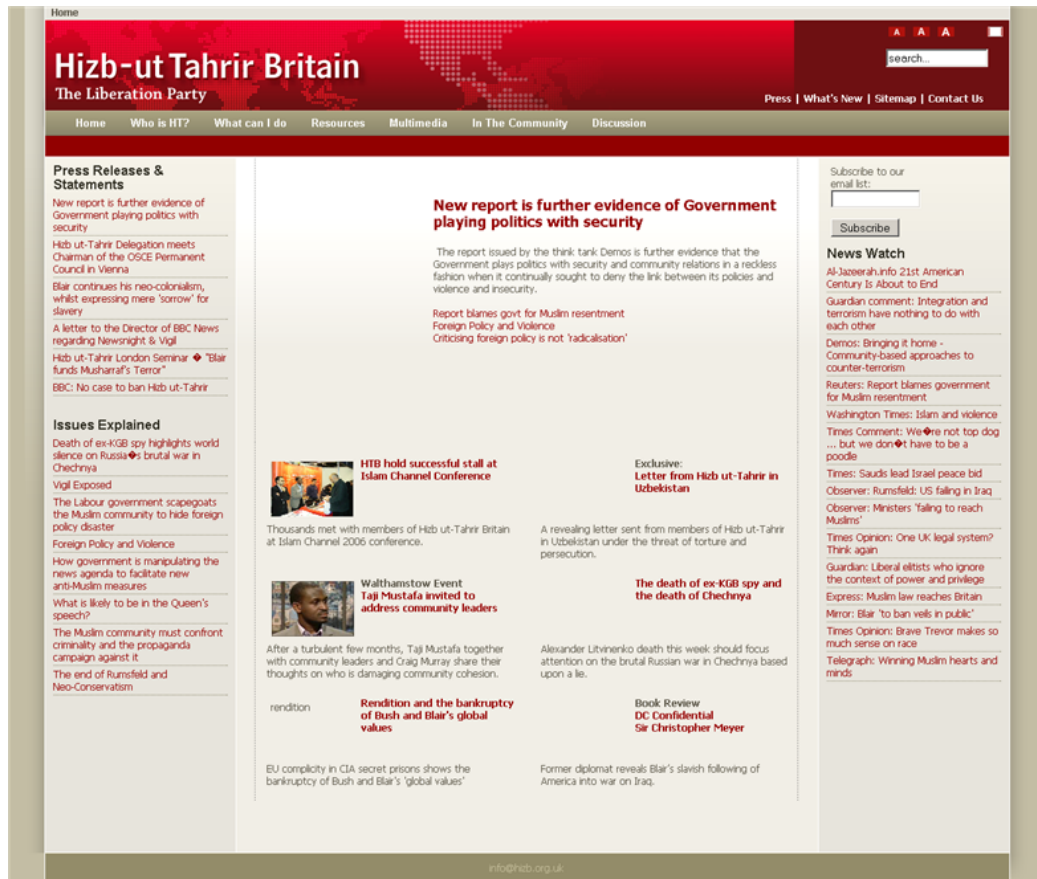
rhetorical failures (particularly businesses still touting their sales from, say, 1998 or stating explicitly that the site has not been updated in a ten years), ghost sites serve as working exemplars of what was possible with earlier technology and are the archaeological material for understanding Web rhetoric as inherently tied to coding, bandwidth, and other material issues beyond just what’s on the screen. In ten years, people will snicker at what is now considered cutting edge.

⁴⁷Hizb.org uses the markup designated “XHTML 1.0 Transitional.” XHTML is the markup currently recommended by the W3C. As the source code viewable in the Internet Archive’s repository of Hizb.org establishes, HTB switched from HTML 4.0 to XHTML 1.0 Transitional at least as of December 5, 2006. XHTML 1.0 is in essence HTML 4.0 with some additional specifications blending XML (Extensible Markup Language) with HTML (W3C, “XHTML 1.0: The Extensible HyperText Markup Language [Second Edition]” n.pag.). XML is, as described on the W3Schools website, a series of markup tags designed as “a software and hardware independent tool for carrying information” (“XML Introduction: What is XML?” n.pag.). XML is a highly flexible metalanguage: it allows data to be described with any tags the programmer desires; by contrast, HTML only works if predefined tags such as `<head>` are used (“XML Introduction: What is XML?” n.pag.). XHTML, then, is intended to blend the data presentation capabilities of HTML with the flexible description capabilities of XML (W3Schools, “XHTML—Why?” n.pag.). This is important because the Web is now accessible on a variety of devices, using many different browsers and operating systems; XHTML is intended to be a markup standard that will remain viable for the widest possible range of devices and browsers (W3Schools, “XHTML—Why?” n.pag.).

for which styles control presentation in the event of conflicts), offer tremendous advantages to a prolific Web rhetor with large sites, such as HTB. Not only do web pages load faster when the HTML is not stuffed full of presentation elements, but, more importantly, maintaining the appearance of each HTML or XHTML page on a site can be done simply by changing the style sheets to which particular pages link (Varese, “Understanding Cascading Stylesheets” n.pag.). If fifty pages on a site link to a particular style sheet, HTB can change elements of all fifty pages simply by altering a few lines of markup. Perhaps the best way to illustrate the effects of style sheets to separate content from presentation is to compare what a user sees on a page with all of the linked style sheets active versus with those style sheets disabled. This is a screen capture of the home page of Hizb.org as of December 5, 2006, showing what a browser displays.⁴⁸

⁴⁸The screen capture is from the Internet Archive and shows some of the limits of Web archiving because some images are now missing, particularly a picture of a London police officer outside Parliament at the top of the page near the “New Report” headline. It also shows difficulty displaying poorly-encoded characters for apostrophes, which are rendered here as question marks in red diamond shapes.

Figure 3.3: Screen capture of Hizb.org home page as of December 5, 2006, linked style sheets active



Disabling the linked style sheets, as Chris Pederick's Firefox Web Developer toolbar allows, shows the huge differences they make. This is what the same page looks like with the linked style sheets disabled:

Figure 3.4: Screen capture of Hizb.org home page as of December 5, 2006, linked style sheets disabled

Home

search.....

[Press](#) | [What's New](#) | [Sitemap](#) | [Contact Us](#)

- [Home](#)
- [Who is HT?](#)
 - [Prominent Members](#)
 - [A Global Party](#)
 - [Our Method](#)
 - [HTB National Events](#)
- [What can I do](#)
 - [Alerts](#)
 - [Arguments](#)
 - [News Watch](#)
 - [Feedback](#)
 - [Diary](#)
- [Resources](#)
 - [News Watch](#)
 - [Issues Explained](#)
 - [Islamic Knowledge](#)
 - [Leaflets](#)
 - [Book Reviews](#)
 - [HTB Publications](#)
- [Multimedia](#)
 - [Video](#)
 - [Audio](#)
 - [HTB Publications](#)
- [In The Community](#)
 - [Community Events](#)
 - [HTB National Events](#)
 - [Working Together](#)
- [Discussion](#)

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- [New report is further evidence of Government playing politics with security](#)
- [Hizb ut-Tahrir Delegation meets Chairman of the OSCE Permanent Council in Vienna](#)
- [Blair continues his neo-colonialism, whilst expressing mere 'sorrow' for slavery](#)
- [A letter to the Director of BBC News regarding Newsnight & Vigil](#)
- [Hizb ut-Tahrir London Seminar](#)
- [BBC: No case to ban Hizb ut-Tahrir](#)

Issues Explained

- [Death of ex-KGB spy highlights world silence on Russia's brutal war in Chechnya](#)
- [Vigil Exposed](#)
- [The Labour government scapegoats the Muslim community to hide foreign policy disaster](#)
- [Foreign Policy and Violence](#)
- [How government is manipulating the news agenda to facilitate new anti-Muslim measures](#)
- [What is likely to be in the Queen's speech?](#)
- [The Muslim community must confront criminality and the propaganda campaign against it](#)
- [The end of Rumsfeld and Neo-Conservatism](#)

info@hizb.org.uk

New report is further evidence of Government playing politics with security

The report issued by the think tank Demos is further evidence that the Government plays politics with security and community relations in a reckless fashion when it continually sought to deny the link between its policies and violence and insecurity.

[Report blames govt for Muslim resentment](#)
[Foreign Policy and Violence](#)
[Critiquing foreign policy is not 'radicalisation'](#)

HTB hold successful stall at Islam Channel Conference

Thousands met with members of Hizb ut-Tahrir Britain at Islam Channel 2006 conference.

Exclusive: Letter from Hizb ut-Tahrir in Uzbekistan

A revealing letter sent from members of Hizb ut-Tahrir in Uzbekistan under the threat of torture and persecution.

The death of ex-KGB spy and the death of Chechnya

Alexander Litvinenko death this week should focus attention on the brutal Russian war in Chechnya based upon a lie.

Book Review DC Confidential Sir Christopher Meyer

Former diplomat reveals Blair's slavish following of America into war on Iraq.

Walthamstow Event Taji Mustafa invited to address community leaders

After a turbulent few months, Taji Mustafa together with community leaders and Craig Murray share their thoughts on who is damaging community cohesion.

Rendition and the bankruptcy of Bush and Blair's global values

EU complicity in CIA secret prisons shows the bankruptcy of Bush and Blair's 'global values'

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- [Times Comment: 'We're not top dog... but we don't have to be a poodle'](#)
- [Times: Saudis lead Israel peace bid](#)
- [Observer: Rumsfeld, US failing in Iraq](#)
- [Observer: Ministers 'failing to reach Muslims'](#)
- [Times Opinion: One UK legal system? Think again](#)
- [Guardian: Liberal elitists who ignore the context of power and privilege](#)
- [Express: Muslim law reaches Britain](#)
- [Mirror: Blair 'to ban veils in public'](#)
- [Times Opinion: Brave Trevor makes so much sense on race](#)
- [Telegraph: Winning Muslim hearts and minds](#)

Linking multiple pages to the same style sheets allows HTB to maintain and alter a

consistent look and feel across those pages with minimal effort. Moreover, style sheets allow HTB to make its sites accessible to a range of audiences with varying preferences or requirements about how site content is displayed, including increasing or decreasing text sizes, widening or narrowing the display width, and stripping out graphic-heavy displays to speed up access on handheld devices.

As the screenshots below demonstrate, the upper right section of the head banner on the Hizb.org and K.com pages (built using different versions of the same template, starting in late 2006) allow users to change the width of the display and the size of displayed text by clicking on graphics of different text sizes and monitor widths:

Figure 3.5: Hizb.org style switcher



Figure 3.6: K.com style switcher



The effect of clicking these graphics is to choose a different style sheet to present the pages' content: wider or narrower monitor width, larger or smaller text. This flexibility, adapting to users' differing technologies and requirements to reach a wider audience, is enabled by a clear separation between structure and presentation. Yet, enabling audiences

to find one's pages in the first place remains one of the core challenges of online rhetoric. A movement seeking to spread its message has to first attract the attention of search engines. One way for a Web rhetor to enable audiences to find its pages from among the billions of possibilities is to understand how search engines work and to optimize search results using meta tags.

3.3 Behind the Screen: Meta Tags

HTB uses meta tags in its pages' markup. Meta tags are another technology designed to help audiences reach web pages and vice versa. As Danny Sullivan of Search Engine Watch explains, meta tags are text entries in a page's `<head>` element intended to provide a means of classifying and indexing a page's content by `<title>`, `<description>`, and `<keywords>` tags (Sullivan, "How to Use HTML Meta Tags" n.pag.). As L. Jennette Banks, writing on IBM's developerWorks website, points out, search engines use programs or automated scripts called spiders (also known as robots or web crawlers) to index the Web. As is typical of explanations of web indexing, Banks endows web spiders with a sort of personality or agency when she writes that spiders are "sent out" to "crawl from link to link, organize data, and figure out exactly what the text is about on each page" (Banks, "Search Engine Optimization Basics, Part 1: Improve Your Standing in Search Engines" n.pag.). Meta tags are not displayed in a user's browser; they are intended for spiders, not humans.

Using the data generated from the crawls and a proprietary algorithm for analyzing the relevance and significance of the crawl's directory of results, search engines attempt to match searches with results (Banks, "Part 1" n.pag.). Once again, text is vitally important to the Web. Search engine spiders follow text in HTML files, and knowing how to make one's site relevant to searches by manipulating text is important.⁴⁹

In the early days of popular search engines, unscrupulous Web authors attempted to game the spiders' reliance on text and following links by at least two means: link farms and keyword stuffing. A link farm is a page or site whose sole purpose is to provide inbound links to another site, whose relevance to search engine rankings is thereby made artificially high. Search engines have now adapted their algorithms to penalize link farms. Keyword stuffing is another strategy of so-called "black hat SEO"; as Banks explains, keyword stuffing involved cramming a page's HTML with multiple redundant or irrelevant tags intended to (over)maximize the relevance of a page to searches involving those keywords, whether the keywords have anything to do with the page's content or not (Banks, "Search Engine Optimization Basics, Part 2: SEO Keyword and Infrastructure Strategies" n.pag.).⁵⁰

⁴⁹One can defeat efforts by search engines and the Internet Archive (which also uses a spider) to index one's pages and/or scan it for links to then crawl. Among the meta tags a spider recognizes is the <robots> tag. Including <META NAME="ROBOTS" CONTENT="NOINDEX, NOFOLLOW"> will cause a spider not to index a page or follow its links. HTB, attempting to reach audiences, of course, does not defeat indexing on most of its pages. The <robots> tag on Hizb.org, K.com, and C2007.com all allow indexing, which is of course the choice a rhetor attempting to reach wide audiences would make.

⁵⁰As Matt Cutts, the head of Google's Webspam team, documents on his blog, keyword stuffing in its most brazen form even involves embedding tiny text onto the visible portion of a page, text that is often utterly irrelevant to the page's ostensible purpose and simply intended to try to capture users searching for just about anything. For a nonpareil example of such shenanigans, see Cutts's July 25, 2007 entry on Alex Chiu's "Immortality Device," a product whose page Google banned (Cutts, "SEO Tip: Avoid Keyword Stuffing" n.pag.). As Banks notes, yet another advantage to separating content from presentation by using external style sheets arises from the fact that spiders index just the first 100,000 characters on a page; if some of that valuable real estate is eaten up with presentation elements best delegated to a style sheet, it can affect the spider's ability to build an accurate picture of the page (Banks, "Search Engine Optimization Basics, Part 3: Get Your Web Pages Into Search Indexes" n.pag.).

Just as with link farms, search engines have penalized keyword stuffing and lowered the importance of what appears in a page's `<keywords>` tag to search engine directories (Sullivan n.pag.). However, keywords retain some importance to the core rhetorical task of making sure one's web pages are found and indexed as relevant to searches. Sullivan goes on to explain that the `<keywords>` tag still can sometimes help reinforce the relevance of content in a page's `<body>` element to search results (Sullivan n.pag.). For her part, Banks argues that while keyword stuffing will now actually harm a page's ranking in search engines, it is important for sites to choose 3-5 core keywords to help spiders index their pages (Banks, "Part 2" n.pag.).

In 2007, SEOMoz, a company that claims some 60,000 registered users in its professional community, surveyed 37 leading professionals about the impact of various SEO strategies. The survey focused on Google and attempted to pool collective wisdom practices in ranking sites for relevance. Among respondents, the consensus was that the `<keywords>` tag was of "slight importance" (Seomoz.org, "Search Engine Ranking Factors, V. 2" n.pag.). However, the same survey participants concluded that the `<title>` meta tag was of "exceptional importance," and that the `<description>` meta tag was of "moderate importance" in Google's methods of finding and indexing Web content ("Search Engine Ranking Factors, V. 2" n.pag.).

In short, meta tags remain an important way for Web rhetors to make page content identifiable and relevant to user's searches and, thus, more likely to be presented to users. HTB knows this and tries to get its pages ranked highly in searches for particular content. For example, below is a screenshot of the source code in the `<head>` section of

Hizb.org (in this case, marked up in HTML 4.0 Transitional) entitled “Blair concedes to the Caliphate’s past glories, whilst rubbishing its imminent arrival.” The page can be found under the Opinion section of Hizb.org as captured by the Internet Archive on April 24, 2006. Its <head> element reads:

Figure 3.7: Screenshot of <head> element of “Blair Concedes” page on Hizb.org as of April 24, 2006 showing meta tags

```

<!DOCTYPE HTML PUBLIC "-//W3C//DTD HTML 4.0 Transitional//EN">
<HTML lang=en-US dir=ltr><HEAD><TITLE>Hizb ut-Tahrir Britain - Blair concedes to the Caliphate's past glories,
whilst rubbishing its imminent arrival</TITLE>
<META http-equiv=Content-Type content="text/html; charset=iso-8859-1"><BASE
href=http://www.hizb.org.uk/opinions/>
<META
content="Hizb ut Tahrir Islamic Political Party Seeking to Establish the Caliphate (Khilafah)"
name=description>
<META
content="Hizb ut-
Tahrir,hizb,Tahrir,tahreer,Islam,Ummah,ummah,liberation,khilafah,khaleefah,Caliphate,caliphate,Caliph,caliph,imam
,Islamic State,politics,islamic government,anti terror
legislation,colonialism,imperialism,religion,God,economics,society,rulin
g,social,system,education,Mohammed,Muhammad,messenger,messengers,prophet,prophets,quran,Qur'an,qur'an
,state,policy,dawah,da'awa,dai,hamala,invite,call,carry,message,risala,constitution,rule,by what Allah has
revealed,tehrir,tehreer,muslim,command,maroof,ma'rouf,amr,munkar,thought
,enlightened,revival,ideology,mabda,ideological,fikra,tarika,mosque"
name=keywords>
<META content=index,follow name=robots>
<META content=1 name=revisit-after><LINK href="http://www.hizb.org.uk/images/homepage.css"
type=text/css rel=stylesheet><LINK href="http://www.hizb.org.uk/images/style.css" type=text/css
rel=stylesheet>
<META content="MSHTML 6.00.6000.16481" name=GENERATOR>
<STYLE type=text/css>
<!--
.style1 {font-size: 14px}
.style3 {font-size: 12px}
-->
</STYLE>
</HEAD>

```

In the <head> element of this page appears a <title> tag where the page’s title, “Blair concedes to the Caliphate’s past glories, whilst rubbishing its imminent arrival,” is repeated. This is a crucial step, as the respondents to the SEOMoz survey point out, in increasing the chances that a particular page will be relevant to a search. That HTB

takes the time to establish individual titles for the many pages on its constantly updated websites shows that HTB recognizes how search engines find relevant pages and takes action intended to maximize the chances that its persuasive messages (in this case, a message that Blair is a hypocrite and that “opposition to the Caliphate has been at the core of Britain’s Foreign Policy for centuries”) are presented to audiences. Contemporary Web authoring software makes generating individual page titles easy, but one must still take the time to do it. This easy task is important rhetorically because HTB optimizes its web pages for search engines, evidencing substantial awareness of how search engines are “persuaded” to consider content relevant. HTB acts to fulfill the search engines’ algorithmic “expectations,” which increase its chances of fulfilling human expectations for information and arguments about the caliphate, Islam, and HTB itself.

In the `<description>` tag, HTB characterizes itself as “Hizb ut Tahrir Islamic Political Party Seeking to Establish the Caliphate (Khilafah).” The words in a `<description>` tag are important to online rhetors’ persuasive efforts. As Sally Falkow, a Senior Fellow of the Society for New Communication Research contends, a `<title>` tag functions as a sort of “headline,” on a page of search results, while a `<description>` tag functions as a “blurb” below that headline, explaining why a user should click the title link (Falkow, “Meta Tags As Persuasive Content” n.pag.). As Falkow puts it, good `<title>` and `<description>` tags “are vital pieces of persuasive content” that “could... be the very first touch point[s]” with a potential site visitor and “could be the deciding factor[s] as to whether this person ever visits your site” (Falkow n.pag.). HTB’s self-description as an “Islamic political party” and its use of both the English and Arabic

words for the caliphate are its own self-summarizing blurb, a kind of self-branding effort blending religion and politics for English-speaking audiences.⁵¹

The <keywords> tag on this page contains 84 keywords, ranging from general terms such as “Islam” and various spellings of “caliphate” to specific terms such as “islamic government,” “anti terror legislation,” and “by what Allah has revealed.” Although by 2006, most search engines did not give much weight to scores of words in a page’s <keywords> tag, the keywords here are significant for what they reveal about HTB’s *efforts* to use search engine indexing for common and specific terms to drive this page higher in search results for these topics.

After all, as Banks argues, SEO is not as much about attracting audiences who already know about a website (such audiences could simply type the exact name of the site or organization into their browsers or type the site’s URL, if known to them) as it is about reaching audiences who are, in Web usability expert Jakob Nielsen’s phrase, “foraging for information” (qtd. in Banks, “Part 1” n.pag. and “Part 2” n.pag.). HTB, like a business or traditional political party, tries to determine, as Banks puts it, “who isn’t finding your page, but should be” (“Part 2” n.pag.). HTB uses what the Web makes possible and recognizes that spreading the call for the caliphate online requires persuasive use of markup software to reach online “foragers” and regular site users alike. We have seen how HTB uses meta tags, but its persuasive uses of software do not stop there: HTB also uses scripting.

⁵¹Of course, individual words from the <description> tag can (and, for SEO purposes, should), appear in the page’s content when displayed in a browser. However, the tag’s phrasing as a persuasive “blurb” will probably only appear on-screen in search results, underneath the display of the <title> element.

3.4 Behind the Screen: Dynamic Pages and Scripting

HTB, like many Web rhetors, uses scripting on its websites. Scripts are small programs (again, written in text) that make the difference between a web page being static or dynamic. Static web pages (which are all that HTML and XHTML can structure by themselves without assistance from other code) are not personalized to different users or different user behaviors. They offer no interactivity beyond hyperlinking. For example, my simple website, `www.drewloewe.com`, is static. I make changes to my website only by uploading changed versions of the page files or style sheets. Dynamic web pages, by contrast, can change content based on the user's browser settings, keyboard/mouse actions, particular times and dates, and other variables. Dynamic web pages are made dynamic by two kinds of scripting: server-side scripting and client-side (browser) scripting. As the names imply, in server-side scripting, the web page's host server uses the script to output the page that a browser interprets, whereas in client-side scripting, the page is made dynamic by a scripting language interpreted by the user's browser.

Sophisticated websites often blend server-side and client-side scripting as, indeed, HTB's sites do. For example, at least as of December 5, 2006 (as documented in the Internet Archive), `Hizb.org` underwent a major redesign. HTB accomplished a similar redesign to `K.com` (using a different version of the same template) by at least April 25, 2007. Part of that redesign included switching from HTML to XHTML markup and included server-side scripting in the form of incorporating the free, open-source scripting language known

by the recursive acronym PHP, which stands for PHP Hypertext Preprocessor.⁵² PHP has some 700 functions, which can be combined to control what appears in a user's browser and even to generate HTML (W3Schools, "Introduction to PHP" n.pag.)⁵³

Among the many benefits of PHP, especially to a prolific rhetor like HTB, are server-side includes (SSIs). SSIs allow one particular header, footer, menu, or other page element to be created and then included in what users see across as many of a site's pages as the site's developer wishes (W3 Schools, "PHP Include File" n.pag.). As the W3 Schools page on PHP SSIs explains, "[SSIs] can save the developer a considerable amount of time. . . When [for example] the header needs to be updated, you can only update this one . . . file, or when you add a new page to your site, you can simply change the menu file (instead of updating the links on all web pages)" (W3 Schools, "PHP Include File" n.pag.).

Another common use of PHP server-side scripting is to generate RSS (Really Simple Syndication)⁵⁴ feeds (Peterson, "PHP and RSS: Getting it Together" n.pag.). As HTB explains on Hizb.org, which offers RSS feeds, RSS "solves a problem for people who regularly use the web. It allows you to easily stay informed by retrieving the latest

⁵²PHP has other uses, but its chief function relevant to this study is its use in creating dynamic web pages. To determine whether a particular page is using PHP, examine its URL. If the page is running PHP, the URL will include this extension: .php. For example, the URL for the index (home) page of Hizb.org is, since the 2006 redesign, <http://www.hizb.org.uk/hizb/index.php> and the URL for the Arabic version of HT's Media Office site is <http://www.hizb-ut-tahrir.info/arabic/index.php/main/default>. PHP usually runs on Apache servers. Apache is an open source server that, according to the Apache website, has enjoyed the widest use among all Web servers since 1996 (*Apache HTTP Server Project* n.pag.).

⁵³As Permessur explains, large dynamic websites rely on server-side scripting because using static HTML would defeat many of their purposes. To illustrate this, Permessur reminds Amazon.com users that, when one reviews a product on Amazon.com, the review appears immediately upon submission. Permessur asks, "Do you think that there's someone behind the screen to paste your review and save it as an HTML page for you to view on your browser? No!" (Permessur, "A Web Development Primer" n.pag.). Instead, Permessur points out, "the task of generating HTML pages is left to the server" (n.pag.).

⁵⁴HTB unpacks the RSS acronym, as some do, "Rich Site Syndication." RSS can also be unpacked as "Rich Site Summary" (Zeldman 109).

content from the sites you are interested in. You save time by not needing to visit each site individually” (Hizb ut-Tahrir Britain, “RSS Feeds” n.pag.). RSS feeds use XML—Extensible Markup Language—the flexible metalanguage that allows web content (for RSS, typically a title, hyperlink, and short excerpt) to be repurposed and “pushed” directly to feed subscribers and aggregated in a feed reader, such as Google Reader.⁵⁵

Depending on the settings of one’s RSS subscription (Hizb.org offers several choices, ranging from the full site to news about particular events or themes), one can receive near-instantaneous updates to all aspects of Hizb.org without having to browse to the site to check for updates. RSS brings Hizb.org to users, often as many as eight to ten times per day, as content is placed on the site’s continually updated pages. RSS may not make browsers obsolete, but a website updated as frequently as Hizb.org is can be, in effect, a radio or television channel for subscribers to *receive*, not search for, HTB content.

HTB’s use of scripting to create dynamic pages does not stop at the server side. As is now common on the Web, HTB writes in one of the most important and popular client-side scripting languages: JavaScript. As Nathan J. Muller explains, JavaScript runs in the user’s browser and is intended “to allow web page authors to embed sophisticated functions in their [markup language] pages without programming expertise” (242). Such functions

⁵⁵XML is perhaps best understood by contrasting it with HTML. As Web designer and standards guru Jeffrey Zeldman explains, HTML was excellent for formatting content in the Web’s infancy; however, HTML is “strictly for the Web” and offers inconsistent rules for structuring data for purposes other than display on computer browsers, which themselves developed their own quirks based on competition to capture market share (84-86; 102-03). The contemporary Web, by contrast, is an environment in which “pages are frequently assembled by publishing tools and content must flow back and forth from database to web page to wireless device to print”; in such an environment, HTML’s inconsistent rules make repurposing of data difficult (103). XML has consistent, even stringently strict, rules for marking up data, but the payoff for this relative tightening of markup standards is that XML markup makes data “capable of traveling far beyond the Web” (103). The free, non-proprietary, cross-compatible nature of XML enables knowledgeable users to create custom markups and to customize and convert XML-based data from among different programs and applications (106).

include generating forms and validating form input (think credit card order forms with required information blanks) (242).⁵⁶ Important JavaScript functions include detecting a user's browser and screen size⁵⁷ and generating forms, such as the comment forms that appear underneath some of the pages on `Hizb.org` and `K.com`.

Those comment forms combine the advantages of JavaScript with those of XML; this combination is dubbed *Ajax*.⁵⁸ As Jesse James Garrett, who coined the term, explains, Ajax stands for "Asynchronous JavaScript and XML" (Garrett, "Ajax: A New Approach to Web Applications" n.pag.). Briefly, Ajax is yet another way to leverage the modular nature of Web pages as new media objects. Ajax blends structural and presentation markup in XHTML and style sheets with, among other technologies, the ability to manipulate data in XML and the DOM (Document Object Model). The DOM is a modular approach

⁵⁶Muller's point about JavaScript's ease of use is well-taken. The bar to becoming a proficient coder is high, not the least because, as Florian Cramer puts it, "writing in a computer programming language is phrasing instructions for an utter idiot" (171). Or, as Matthew Fuller puts it, "In order to program, you have to understand something so well that you can explain it to something as stonily stupid as a computer" (10). Although it would be helpful for a Web author to know how to code JavaScript functions from scratch, the Web's modularity and wide reach makes it easy for Web authors to simply copy JavaScript "snippets" of code posted on scores of open repository sites. Indeed, the source code comments on `K.com`, as captured by the Internet Archive on November 1, 2006, point those who might view the source code to one such repository: "`<!-- This script and many more are available free online at --> <!-- The JavaScript Source!! http://javascript.internet.com -->.`" (The exclamation marks and dashes here are conventions of HTML and XHTML coding. Such marks designate comments to be read by persons, not machines; a browser, for instance, will ignore anything appearing in the source code between the exclamation marks. Such comments do not appear on a user's screen unless the user decides to view the source code).

⁵⁷Browser detection is necessary because not every user uses the same browser or updates it faithfully, and the so-called "browser wars" over market share have resulted in differences among browsers; Web authors have to try to accommodate the differences.

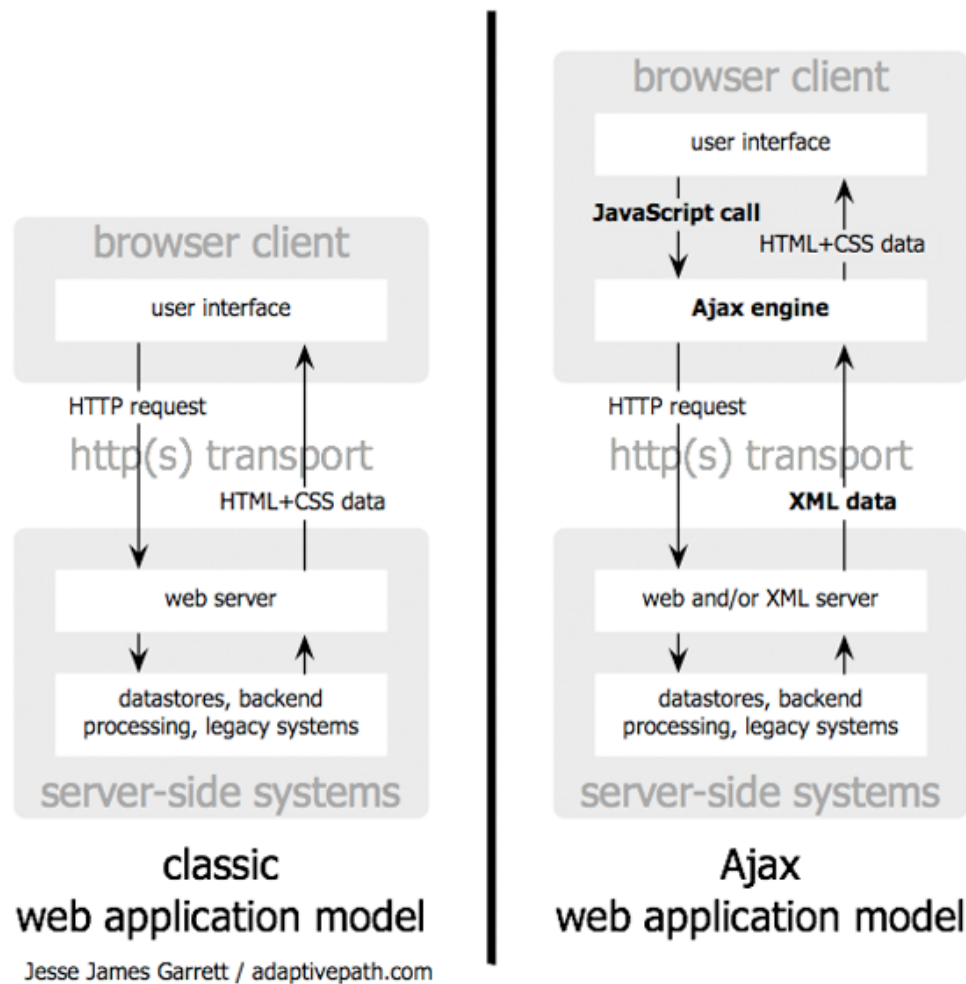
⁵⁸One can know that the comment forms are Ajax forms because viewing the generated source code (the source code that scripts generate) on pages with comment forms reveals the forms to be generated by scripts named "pcajaxcomment" and "jomcomment." Viewing the `<generator>` meta tag (which identifies the software that creates a web page) on both `Hizb.org` and `K.com` sites reveals that Joomla!, a popular provider of open source content management, made the site template, Versatility II, on which `Hizb.org` and `K.com` are both based after their 2006 redesigns. `Hizb.org` uses the sienna color scheme for Versatility II; `K.com` uses the blue one. A Google search for "jomcomment" and Joomla! yields the home page for Azrul Studio, maker of JomComment, a product it describes as "an advanced AJAX comment system for Joomla!" that "presents a slick finish to your website, feature-rich and compatible with your existing system, all packaged in an easy-to-use nifty component"(Azrul Studio, "What is JomComment?" n.pag.).

to describing the individual objects, relationships, and behaviors that make up each web document (Garrett, n.pag.; W3C, “What is the Document Object Model?” n.pag.). Perhaps Jeffrey Zeldman has the best explanation for how these technologies come together:

In simple English, the DOM makes other standard components of your page (style sheets, markup elements, and scripts) accessible to manipulation. If your web page were a movie, XHTML would be the screenwriter, CSS [Cascading Style Sheets] would be the art director, scripting languages would be the special effects, and the DOM would be the director who oversees the entire production (362).

Garrett offers this diagram, which depicts the differences between what he calls the “classic web application model” and a Web application model using Ajax:

Figure 3.8: Jesse James Garrett's diagram of classic web application model vs Ajax web application model (used by permission)



As Garrett explains, Ajax “eliminates the start-stop-start nature of interaction on the Web by introducing an intermediary—an Ajax engine—between the user and the server” (Garrett n.pag.). This “intermediary” runs scripts (typically JavaScript) to build what the user sees in his browser and communicates with the server (Garrett n.pag.). As the Ajax support page of InterAKT (a subsidiary of software giant Adobe) explains, Ajax allows small parts of a web page (split into separate files, such as HTML, script, style sheets) to be

served to a user's computer rather than having the entire page's content served all at once ("Why Use Ajax?: The Benefits of Ajax" n.pag.).

The payoff is that the user can interact with the page and any application on it (such as the comment forms on these HTB websites) without having to interact with the server; thus, the page is rendered and available for interaction "asynchronously," which is much faster than the synchronous, "classic" model (Garrett n.pag.). Visitors submitting comments on `Hizb.org` and `K.com` enjoy the benefits of Ajax because, as InterAKT puts it, "they do not have to wait for the entire page to be rebuilt and re-transmitted to the server" when they submit a comment" ("Why Use Ajax?" n.pag.). In short, with Ajax, "the user is never staring at a blank browser window and an hourglass icon, waiting around for the server to do something" (Garrett n.pag.).⁵⁹

In using scripting to generate and update pages from the server side, to push content to users via RSS, and to accommodate the ever-increasing demand for interactive, responsive web pages, HTB repurposes the modular, variable digital assets in its databases quickly, easily, and profusely. A typical user not interested in how HTB's web pages work never sees how HTB blends computerized nonsymbolic motion (executing instructions, following logical binaries according to programmed parameters and defined conditions) with the symbolic action of, say, generating multiple new pages or modifications to web pages every day (and thereby performing the duty to call for the caliphate and creating audience appetites for fresh content). However, just as Burke himself argued, nonsymbolic motion

⁵⁹As Garrett notes, the Ajax application with which almost any Web user is familiar is Google Maps (n.pag.). The ability to zoom and drag the map relies on Ajax; but for Ajax, the user would have to wait for the whole map to be re-rendered every time she moved or dragged it (n.pag.).

serves as ground for symbolic action. Here HTB's online efforts to build identification with audiences and perform the divine duty to call for the caliphate, unflaggingly and at every opportunity, are grounded in the material conditions and potentials of the Web—material conditions shaped by human action. To develop—or simply borrow—a Web technology like a snippet of script, a bit of markup, or a template is to create the possibilities for making online nonsymbolic motion (generating pages, displaying text according to a style sheet, etc.) into symbolic action.

The last element to my heuristic's Behind the Screen layer involves web analytics, the practice of tracking user behavior and thereby enlisting users in shaping a website's persuasive messages. While the technologies employed by earlier movements (paper-based writing, telephones, face-to-face oral communication) allowed for audience feedback, the Web has the potential, now exploited by HTB, to make *the typical interaction with the medium itself* (browsing, clicking links, viewing pages) a vehicle for measurable audience feedback. While I cannot establish that HTB used Web analytics during the period of my study, I want to examine its use of Web analytics on Hizb.org because such examination helps to illuminate the depth of HTB's investment in online rhetoric. For HTB, the Web is not just a nice addition to its offline activities; on the contrary, HTB treats the Web as a significant persuasive and performative event. Moreover, HTB's use of Web analytics helps to demonstrate how HTB adapts its websites over time, which helps to maintain its position as a vanguard group using up-to-date Web technologies. Part of HTB's vanguard stance is remaining consistent with current best practices for Web development and content, particularly on Hizb.org. Just as HTB has moved from HTML to XHTML and has added

RSS feeds (and downloadable audio, video, and podcasts), so now it seeks to engage users (without most of them knowing it) in providing feedback about which appeals resonate.

3.5 Behind the Screen: Web Analytics

An additional use of JavaScript, and an important one, is creating the small parcels of information called Web cookies. Netscape developed cookies; according to a definition on its Support Documentation website, “cookies are a general mechanism which server-side connections... can use to both store and retrieve information on the client side of the connection” (“Persistent Client State HTTP Cookies” n.pag.). As Lincoln Stein and John Stewart explain, cookies were developed to solve a problem: the fact that web servers using the HTTP protocol treat every request for a page’s unique URL “as a completely new interaction” even though a particular user’s multiple requests for pages to be served might take place within the same context, as in an online shopping transaction (“W3C World Wide Web Security FAQ, Question 10: Do Cookies Pose any Security Risks?” n.pag.). As Stein and Stewart explain, such common Web conveniences as online “shopping carts” would not be possible unless a server were able to use cookies to “remember the user and to maintain the illusion of a ‘session’ that spans multiple pages” (“W3C World Wide Web Security FAQ” n.pag.). Cookies also enable websites to “remember” a user’s registration and login information (“Persistent Client State HTTP Cookies” n.pag.). There are two different kinds of cookies: transient (or session) cookies and persistent (or stored). As their

names suggest, transient cookies operate only during one browser session while persistent cookies reside on a user's hard drive and can last for years.⁶⁰

While cookies make the Web convenient, they also provide Web authors with a wealth of information that they can use to tailor and develop their messages. Stein and Stewart's explanation of this wealth of information is worth quoting at length:

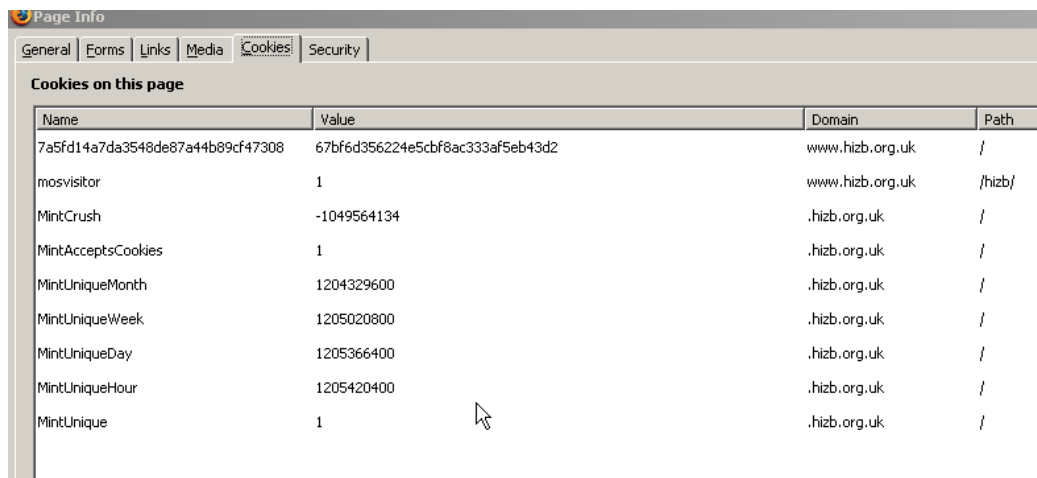
Each access your browser makes to a Web site leaves some information about you behind, creating a gossamer trail across the Internet. Among the tidbits of data left along this trail are the name and IP address of your computer, the brand of browser you're using, the operating system you're running, the URL of the Web page you accessed, and the URL of the page you were last viewing. Without cookies, it would be nearly impossible for anyone to follow this trail systematically to learn much about your Web browsing habits. They would have to reconstruct your path by correlating hundreds or thousands of individual server logs. With cookies, the situation changes considerably. ("W3C World Wide Web Security FAQ" n.pag.).

Understanding cookies is important to understanding the Web as a rhetorically rich persuasive environment because a sophisticated rhetor like HTB can use cookies to enlist site users in providing feedback about which of its pages are most popular, who links to them, and how many unique visitors its pages receive during different periods. Using

⁶⁰Persistent cookies enable sites to, for example, remember the contents of a shopper's online shopping cart across multiple browsing sessions and prompt her to complete unresolved transactions.

cookies in this way is an example of an effort at web analytics. On `Hizb.org`, HTB uses a particular suite of Web analytics software called Mint, developed by Shaun Inman.⁶¹ I determined this by using Pederick's Firefox Web Developer Toolbar. The toolbar has a View Page information function that provides, among other information, the name and other identifying features of a page's cookies. Here, for example, is what Pederick's toolbar reveals about the cookies on a `Hizb.org` page dated July 27, 2006, entitled "Who is Hizb ut-Tahrir?":

Figure 3.9: Screenshot of Chris Pederick's Web Developer Toolbar Page Information, identifying cookies on `Hizb.org` page "Who is Hizb ut-Tahrir?" dated July 27, 2006.



Name	Value	Domain	Path
7a5fd14a7da3548de87a44b89cf47308	67bf6d356224e5cbf8ac333af5eb43d2	www.hizb.org.uk	/
mosvisitor	1	www.hizb.org.uk	/hizb/
MintCrush	-1049564134	.hizb.org.uk	/
MintAcceptsCookies	1	.hizb.org.uk	/
MintUniqueMonth	1204329600	.hizb.org.uk	/
MintUniqueWeek	1205020800	.hizb.org.uk	/
MintUniqueDay	1205366400	.hizb.org.uk	/
MintUniqueHour	1205420400	.hizb.org.uk	/
MintUnique	1	.hizb.org.uk	/

In this case, learning the name of Mint's particular cookies allowed me to search in the OWASP (Open Web Application Security Project) Cookies Database, which identified Inman as the author of Mint. Using Inman's name and Mint's product name, I found Mint's website, which confirms Inman's authorship of Mint and describes what information Mint provides those who use it to monitor site traffic. Mint, as pitched to potential customers,

⁶¹I first became aware of HTB's use of Mint in October 2007. I cannot determine when HTB first began to use Mint. I believe that HTB first began using Mint in late 2007 and uses PHP to embed the code that Mint needs on each of the active pages on `Hizb.org`. PHP automates this process; HTB need not labor to retroactively modify each page.

“helps you identify where the most interest is being generated and over what” (“Mint: A Fresh Look at Your Site” n.pag.). Among Mint’s range of web analytics, aided by persistent cookies that provide information to HTB from its users’ browsers, are data about total pages viewed by users; each unique page viewed; referrers (URLs of previous web pages from which a user followed a link to an HTB site); search terms used to find HTB’s pages; RSS feed subscription patterns over time (and with information about which individual feed items receive clicks); statistics on users’ browsers (and particular versions of browsers) and screen resolutions; and identifying information for visitors who leave comments (Mint: A Fresh Look at Your Site: “Feature Highlights”; Mint Peppermill, “Secret Crush Pepper” n.pag.).

As a screencast video on Mint’s site establishes, Mint relies on PHP server-side scripting. Indeed, Mint suggests that site owners automate the process of placing Mint’s JavaScript code into site pages by using server-side includes or templates (“Screencast: Installing Mint”). The source code for the July 2, 2006 “Who is Hizb ut-Tahrir?” page reveals that Mint’s JavaScript is present in the `<head>` element of the page, working behind the screen to engage users in providing HTB with feedback about `Hizb.org`, including, as shown here, the “referrer” (how I found that page). See below:⁶²

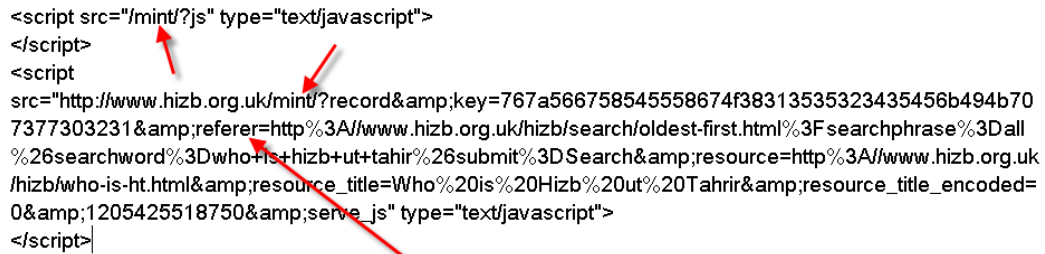
⁶²For reasons unknown, “referrer” is widely accepted as the correct spelling.

Figure 3.10: Mint's JavaScript for Hizb.org page "Who is Hizb ut-Tahrir?" dated July 27, 2006

```

<script src="/mint/?js" type="text/javascript">
</script>
<script
src="http://www.hizb.org.uk/mint/?record&key=767a566758545558674f38313535323435456b494b70
7377303231&referer=http%3A//www.hizb.org.uk/hizb/search/oldest-first.html%3Fsearchphrase%3Dall
%26searchword%3Dwho-is-hizb+ut-tahir%26submit%3DSearch&resource=http%3A//www.hizb.org.uk
/hizb/who-is-ht.html&resource_title=Who%20is%20Hizb%20ut%20Tahrir&resource_title_encoded=
0&1205425518750&serve_js" type="text/javascript">
</script>

```



Because I do not have access to Hizb.org's server logs or the reports Mint generates for HTB, I cannot know, for example, which of its pages are most popular, which of its RSS feed items receive the most clicks from users, which pages are referer pages to Hizb.org, or what information HTB has gathered about visitors who leave comments. However, HTB's attempt to gather this information using an automated means of enlisting users' behavior to modify what it presents to users as the kinds of experiences to be found on Hizb.org is significant. The interaction is symbiotic and recursive: the more popular certain pages are, the more HTB is likely to create content that makes arguments about similar issues or the more it will use the metamedial possibilities of its websites to present those arguments in text, audio, video, or subscription formats. The audience speaks back to HTB, whether they ever leave a comment on one of its pages or not. But for looking behind the screen, this generally unseen persuasion will escape the attention of rhetorical studies.

Now that some core behind the screen concepts are in place, it is time to fold in the next layer of analysis: Off the Screen.

3.6 Off the Screen: Hyperlinking and Online/Offline Connections

Looking off the screen—that is, beyond just what happens to be displayed on a user’s screen at any one time—requires us to ask how a Web rhetor like HTB uses hyperlinking and blending of online and offline content to create and sustain user appetites for additional and varied experiences. Recall that hyperlinking, associating different forms of digital media, is the core function of the Web—it’s what makes the Web a “web.” As Warnick notes when discussing online parodies, this association through hyperlinking is inherently intertextual because it has the potential to bring a storehouse of different digital content into conversation (94). Of course, not every user will use the full hyperlinked potential of every page on HTB’s sites or act on the connections between HTB’s online and offline activities that HTB uses its websites to help forge. But looking off the screen can help move rhetorical studies beyond “screen studies” because of the potential that the Web offers for creating conversations among different types of content and different experiences for different users. Moreover, given HTB’s recent efforts to track user behavior on Hizb.org, it is clear that HTB itself considers looking off the screen important to its persuasive efforts.

I will begin with hyperlinks. In a prescient paper entitled “Relationally Encoded Links and the Rhetoric of Hypertext” from 1987 (thus predating the Web), George Landow argued that hypertext⁶³, “like other forms of discourse. . . requires systems of conjunctive

⁶³*Hypertext*, as defined by the W3C, “is a concept, not a product,” denoting “text which is not constrained

and other relational devices” to be effective and useful (331). Landow’s exigence for the paper arose when his students found some hyperlinks (such as links pointing to portraits or photographs) in a hyperlinked Victorian studies database to be confusing or seemingly irrelevant (332). His students’ experiences prompted Landow to examine the basic audience assumption underlying the hyperlink as a communicative potential: that hyperlinked content is significant, relevant, and useful to the content a user is currently experiencing (332). In a later (2006) book-length work, *Hypertext 3.0*, Landow builds on his early insights and argues that “[h]ypertext... provides an infinitely recenterable system whose provisional point of focus depends on the reader, who becomes... truly active...” (56).

Rob Shields urges us to pay close attention to two competing models for conceptualizing the Web. The first of these models sees the Web as a set of more or less stable places (*home, page, site, address, superhighway, frontier, cyberspace*); by contrast, the second model sees the Web as “fundamentally concerned with links and motion” (*browse, jump, scroll, play, download, forward, back, link*) (145; 147).⁶⁴ Shields challenges us to cast aside assumptions about “the singular integrity of webpages and sites” and to instead focus on “the dynamic quality of the experiences of users,” even to the point of questioning “What is the ontology of a mouse click?” (149). In his 1987 paper, Landow began to pose similar questions, contending that “links and link-relations... influence the

to be linear” and which “contains links to other texts”(“What is HyperText?” n.pag.). The W3C defines a *link* as “a relationship between two anchors [destination nodes], stored in the same or different databases” (“Hypertext Terms” n.pag.). Thus, *hyperlink* means a way to navigate between sections of a document or between documents.

⁶⁴Some of the italicized example words are from Shields; others are my additions.

content they convey and thus exemplify the McLuhanesque principle that the medium is the message” (332).

Put another way, audiences (at least at first) assume that an association by media potential (move from *here* to *there*; move from *this text* to *that text* to *intertextuality*) is an association based on meaning and relevance. In short, argues Landow, “hypertext links condition the user to expect purposeful, important relationships between linked materials” (332). This associative process, Landow goes on to contend, “stimulates and encourages habits of relational thinking in the user” (333). Similarly, Shields borrows Steven Johnson’s assertion that “the link is the first significant new form of punctuation to emerge in centuries,” to help explain the link’s role as signifier of potential expansions and relationships among different content and experiences (qtd. in 152-53). Indeed, because the hyperlink is the fundamental way in which the Web is crafted and experienced as a mediated event, Shields emphasizes that “it is not texts—as stable or even cut-up, but still clearly identifiable entities—but the movement of browsing that characterizes the . . . Web, not the superficial stasis of the webpages themselves” (156).

Yet, to prevent users (like his Victorian studies students) from becoming perplexed or annoyed when the relationship they believe is signified by a hyperlink becomes unclear, Landow proposes a “rhetoric of arrival” and a “rhetoric of departure” (“Relationally Encoded” 333-36). That is, Landow is largely concerned with examining what the relationship is between linked content items (333-36). In *Hypertext 3.0*, Landow goes on to argue that the practice of hyperlinking signifies a meaningful move from here to there—the arrival, if constructed meaningfully, orients users and brings the *here* into conversation

with the *there* (15). What is perhaps most important about Landow's paper, and the reason it is still relevant today, is his contention that the medium's potentials become the user's expectations.

Relational thinking and how media potentials become user expectations are at the core of Burke's psychology of form. To perceive, anticipate, and derive meaning from a progression, tension, and resolution and to develop appetites for formal patterns is to relate one experience to another. Linking is symbolic action; the practice of linking brings different digital files, different arguments and experiences, into conversation, offering the potential for an experience of meaningful relationships among the disparate types of digital files that can be associated through hyperlinking, and indeed the potential for discovery, journey, new perspectives, and resolution. Burke's distinction between the psychology of form and the psychology of information is apt since hyperlinking offers the potential for associating so much content that "atrophy of form follows hypertrophy of information" (*Counter-Statement* 144). Atrophy of form—the lack of meaningful progression—describes what Landow's students experienced back in the 1980s. They did not understand just what kind of intertextual experience they were supposed to have if the hyperlinks they followed seemed to associate content arbitrarily or opaquely.

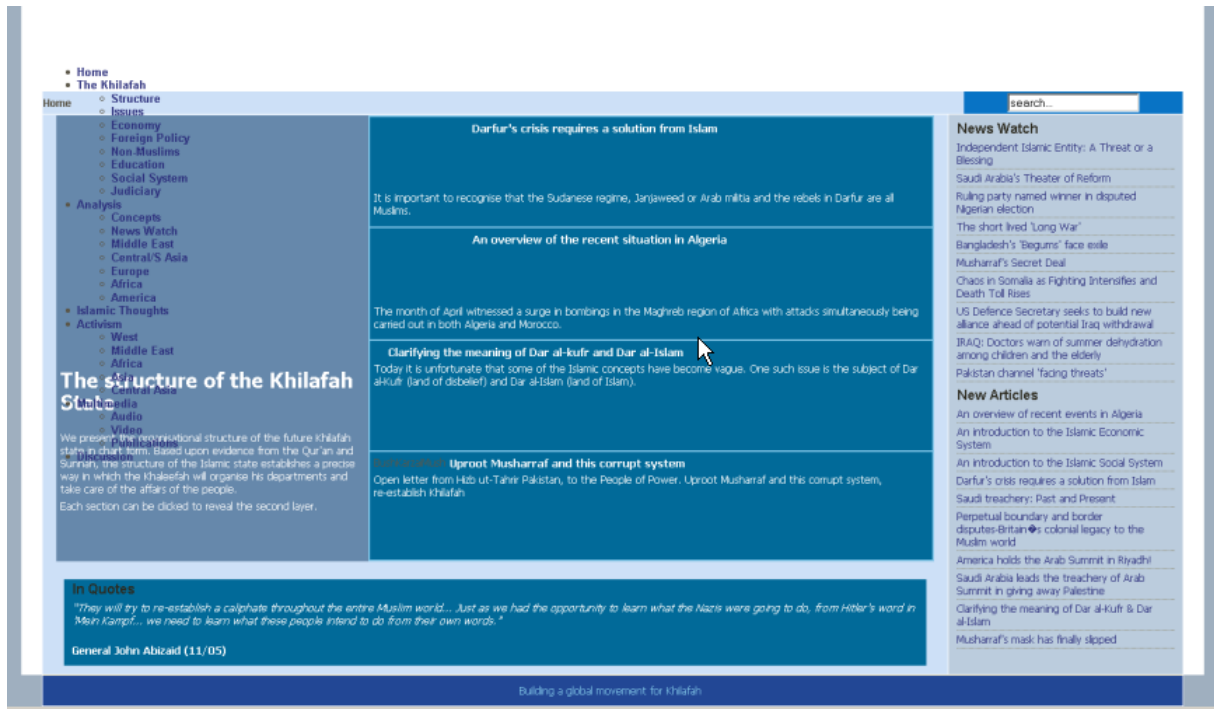
The type of association a hyperlink creates is a core rhetorical concern. Defining links as "the elemental structure that represents a semic web of meaningful relations" (105), Nicholas Burbules contends that it is important to examine how links are used so that "the tacit assumptions and values" of a web page's author can be examined (104). Burbules argues that hyperlinks alter a page's rhetorical effect, partially because of mere

juxtaposition of content that the link suggests and partially because the link implies some kind of connection (105). The exact nature of the connection audiences will draw is, of course, not entirely controllable (105). However, because links “establish pathways of possible movement within the Web space,” links not only “suggest relations,” they “also *control access to information*” in that they make audiences aware of other web pages that they might never have discovered (105, emphasis in original). Thus, explains Burbules, “a link from A to B... in one sense, *creates B* as a possibility” (105, emphasis in original).

Websites like HTB’s, even though they associate huge amounts of disparate digital content through hyperlinks, frame hyperlinks with meaningful text and segregate them both verbally and visually, encouraging users to experience the “jump” (what some call the experience of following a link) as meaningful. For example, here is a screenshot of the home page of HTB’s K.COM site, as of April 25, 2007, as captured by the Internet Archive:⁶⁵

⁶⁵The degraded appearance of this page is likely due to the vagaries of taking snapshots of web pages, where style sheets or images may not be preserved and server-side scripting is absent.

Figure 3.11: Screenshot of home page of K . com as of April 25, 2007 (Internet Archive)



The page's layout, generated dynamically, segregates different types of experiences (main content, sidebars with links to news articles, explanations of the caliphate state), and offers several-word previews or headlines giving users information about what they can expect to experience if they click on hyperlinks.⁶⁶ Because the page is generated dynamically (or, more accurately *was*, as of April 25, 2007), if a user at the time this page was live were to click, say, the link for “Independent Islamic Entity: A Threat or a Blessing,” that content would appear on screen, still framed by the same sidebars, offering the same list of potential hyperlinked experiences. Movement is meaningful, consistent, predictable, and always framed by what amounts to a branded presentation.

HTB also uses hyperlinking to control access to information by keeping users on its

⁶⁶The Web Developer Toolbar reveals that this page has 62 links. Of these 62 links, 6 are stylesheet or scripting links that present the page to users. The remaining 56 links associate different types of content.

websites, especially with news stories and videos. Much of this content is original to HTB; some is not. HTB's websites use links from one HTB site page to another HTB site page to provide content copied and pasted, with attribution, from such sources as British and American newspapers. Instead of externally linking to, for example, an online edition of the *New York Times*, HTB will copy and paste the content of a *Times* story onto a page on its own site, such as in this example from Hizb.org:

Figure 3.12: Screenshot of Hizb.org's copy&paste of *New York Times* article about London Khilafah Conference, 2007.

The screenshot shows the website for Hizb ut-Tahrir Britain, 'The Liberation Party'. The page features a red header with the party's name and a search bar. Below the header is a navigation menu with links to Home, Who is HT?, What can I do, Resources, Multimedia, In The Community, Rajab Conferences, RSS, News Watch, Issues Explained, Islamic Knowledge, Leaflets, Book Reviews, On Tv/Radio, HTB Publications, and Reports. The main content area displays a news item titled 'NYT: Khilafah Conference, London' dated Monday, 06 August 2007, attributed to the New York Times by Jane Perlez. The article text discusses an international radical Islamic party's conference in London and includes a quote from the party's chairman, Abdul Wahid. A sidebar on the left lists 'Press Releases & Statements' and 'Latest Events'. A sidebar on the right features a 'News Watch Categories' section with links to Caliphate, Cartoon Row, Hizb ut-Tahrir, Identity, Muslim Countries, Niqab Issue, New McCarthyism, Polls and Statistics, Pope Comments, and Propaganda War. A red banner with a portrait of a man and the text 'Stop Musharraf Destroying Pakistan' is also visible.

This shows part of a *New York Times* article about HTB's 2007 London Caliphate conference (examined in the next chapter). HTB has copied and pasted the article onto its own website, a task that the common digital code of online artifacts makes as easy as a few mouse clicks. The Web makes it easy for HTB to both provide the intertextuality that hyperlinking allows, yet also keep users on its own site, enhancing its *ethos*. All of the HTB content that appears on the screen serves to frame the *Times* article and to make other

associations to content not on the current screen possible, including making it possible for users to involve others by emailing the article (see the email icon at the top right of the story, just to the left of Pervez Musharraf's head).

That conference had its own website, `C2007.com`. Moreover, `Hizb.org` now contains a subsite (see Chapter 4) on the conference. While `C2007.com` is defunct, the subsite on `Hizb.org` is still active, containing (among other content) embedded videos related to the conference. Embedding videos, made possible with a few lines of code (YouTube, for example, provides code snippets to make this process easy) allows a video to be played on HTB's sites even though it is hosted elsewhere. This keeps users on HTB's sites rather than sending them elsewhere to see the videos. Moreover, uploading the videos to YouTube allows them to be seen by wider audiences and in effect makes YouTube a repository of HTB videos so that they are available even if HTB's websites should happen to be down.⁶⁷ By spreading videos of the conference, as well as HTB members' offline speeches, demonstrations, and television appearances⁶⁸ across the Web, HTB can bring its online and offline activities together in user's perceptions. Each set of activities enhances the other. As media studies scholar Lisa Gye puts it, "all media operate by virtue of presence—bringing one interlocutor into contact with another or many other interlocutors in a way that allows the participants to feel as though they are sharing the same space or time or both" ("What is Digital Media Studies?" n.pag.). As will be examined in the next

⁶⁷On YouTube, users can leave comments about the videos and tag them so that they are organized for searching. Widely available software applications, both open-source and commercial, allow users to download videos from YouTube or from HTB's own sites.

⁶⁸YouTube has several videos of HTB members' appearances on BBC programs, arguing against hostile portrayals of HTB and against the proposed ban.

chapter, HTB uses the Web to create experiences of space and time where it can resist the proposed ban and perform Muslim identity, blending on and offline presence.

Now that I have shown the importance of looking behind and off the screen to understand Web-based rhetoric as a mediated experience, I will turn, in this chapter's final section, to the layer of analysis that examines what occurs on the screen. This kind of analysis is probably most familiar to rhetorical scholars and is a key part, but not the only part, of a fully developed understanding of the Web as a mediated persuasive experience. I have saved it for last in this chapter for two reasons: because it is so familiar to rhetorical scholars and because I want the chapter organization to serve as counter-statement to prevailing methodologies.

3.7 On the Screen

On October 12, 2005, in the wake of the 7/7 bombings, Terrorism Bill 2005-06 was introduced in the British House of Commons. The bill's purpose was to "amend and extend previous counterterrorist legislation" by, among other acts, defining a list of actions that were to be considered unlawful, including a new crime of "encouragement or glorification of terrorism; and disseminating terrorist publications" ("House of Commons Research Paper 05/66" 1; 18).

In previous legislation dating from 2000, the British legislature had already defined terrorism broadly as including "the use or threat of action" that involves serious harm

to persons or property, endangers others, creates a serious risk to public safety or to “an electronic system,” and is designed to influence or intimidate the government or the public to further “a political, religious or ideological cause” (Terrorism Act 2000, Part I, section 1-2). The 2000 Act also allows the government to ban an organization if it “commits or participates,” “prepares for,” “promotes or encourages,” or is “otherwise concerned in” terrorism, with the tie-in provision that “action taken for the benefit of a proscribed organisation” is itself an act terrorism (Terrorism Act 2000, Part II, section 3, subsection 5). Thus, banning a group has enormous consequences; actions that are non-violent, even ordinary, can become terrorist acts if taken on behalf of a banned group.

As I explain in Chapter 4, HTB was among the groups that British PM Tony Blair and others contended should be banned in the wake of the 7/7 bombings. The bombings were shocking criminal acts that plainly meet the definition of terrorism from the 2000 bill as well as commonsense understandings of what “terrorism” is. Terrorism Bill 2005-06 was part of an effort to enhance the British government’s ability to fight terrorism and to crack down on terrorists’ ideological partners, arising out of the climate of fear and anger that the bombings created. The 2005-06 Bill sought to make it a crime, punishable by up to seven years’ incarceration, to publish direct or indirect encouragement or glorification of past, present, or future acts of terrorism, if one knows or reasonably believes that “members of the public to whom the statement is or is to be published”⁶⁹ will understand

⁶⁹This clause brings up interesting issues of audience: what if one’s audience does not understand particular communications as glorification of terrorism but instead as praise of, say, Islamic heroes?

such communication as encouragement or glorification of terrorism (“House of Commons Research Paper 05/66” 18).⁷⁰

At least as of November 24, 2005, as documented by the Internet Archive, HTB used Hizb.org to respond to proposed Terrorism Bill 2005-06. On the home (index) page of Hizb.org, a prominent hyperlinked headline, located prominently in the center of the top of the page’s content, announced that HTB had released a statement about the proposed legislation:

Figure 3.13: November 24, 2005 Hizb.org index page (Internet Archive)

That headline, with its accompanying “teaser” text below the headline, informs site users that not only had the British Home Secretary presented an anti-terror bill to Parliament, but also that HTB had its own response to the bill, countering its dangerous

⁷⁰The bill contains a number of defenses to the proposed crime, including disseminating publications only as part of an electronic service (such as, say, reportage), or under circumstances that make it clear the publisher does not endorse the views expressed in the publication (“House of Commons Research Paper” 05/66 18-19).

aspects and assumptions about Muslim dissent from government policies. The teaser text uses a common Web convention of presenting the first sentence or two from hyperlinked content, along with an ellipsis suggesting that more information will follow if the user clicks the link. This technique takes advantage of the reading practices of Web audiences accustomed to quickly scanning pages to determine whether to read a page or linked content more closely. It also creates a “rhetoric of arrival” in Landow’s sense because it associates that hyperlinked content with the main page, creating a sense of anticipation and meaningful progression from one state to another: from a state of knowing *that* HTB had responded to the bill to a state of knowing *what* the response was.

Once a user clicks on the hyperlink, the following page appears:

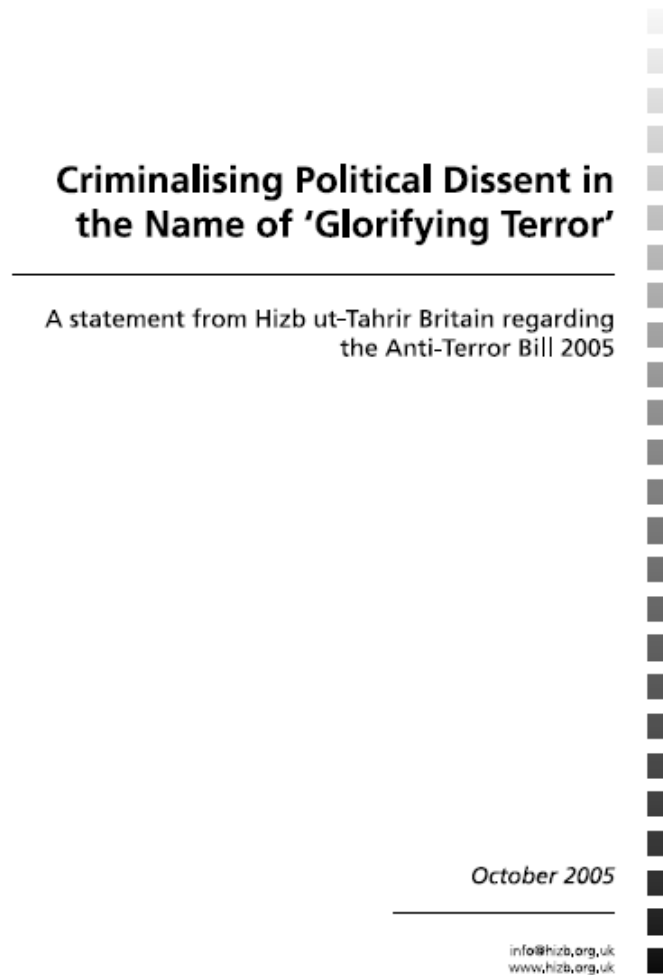
Figure 3.14: Hizb.org page for “Criminalizing Dissent” (Internet Archive)

The screenshot shows the Hizb ut-Tahrir Britain website. At the top left is the logo 'Hizb ut-Tahrir Britain'. To the right is a search bar and a language dropdown menu. Below these are navigation links: Home, Press, and Contact. A main navigation bar includes Home, HT Britain, International, Media (highlighted), Activities, News Focus, Opinion, and Campaigns. A secondary bar below it has links for Media Home, Representatives, Coverage, and Cross-Border Issues. The main content area features a large headline: 'Criminalising Political Dissent in the Name of "Glorifying Terror" : A Statement from Hizb ut-Tahrir Britain regarding the Anti-Terror Bill 2005'. Below the headline is a paragraph of text: 'On the 12th October 2005 the Home Secretary presented the government's proposed anti-terrorism bill to Parliament. Though rightly significant attention has been given to the proposed extension of questioning without charge from fourteen days to ninety days, other parts of the bill are equally chilling and coercive.' There are two links: 'Click Here To Read PDF' and 'Click Here To Download PDF (Right Click & Select "Save Target As")'. On the right side, there is a 'Latest Updates' section with several links: 'Andian Genocide – One Year On', 'Government's July 7 narrative avoids important questions', 'Britain calls on US to close jail on Guantanamo', 'Straw's departure strengthens Blair's agenda against Iran', 'Time to redefine the Middle East', 'Torture "Widespread" under U.S. Custody: Amnesty', 'Peddling democracy the US way', 'Uzbek State Holds Muslim Teaching in Check', 'Musharraf's 'Inspired Gambit'', and 'Islam Karimov met with Prime Minister of Pakistan'.

The teaser text from the index page is the first sentence of the textual content on this page and the headline is repeated. The page text goes on to describe the proposed bill as having provisions that are “chilling” and “coercive,” thus framing a user’s expectations about the nature of the arguments in HTB’s statement against the bill. Rather than put the text of the anti-terror-bill statement on the page here, such as with HTML or XHTML

markup, HTB packages the statement as an Adobe®PDF (Portable Document Format) file with a professional design and the look and feel of a white paper⁷¹:

Figure 3.15: Image of cover of “Criminalizing Dissent” PDF



PDF files, as “portable document format” suggests, are produced by an open standard and can be exchanged and displayed on virtually any computer, regardless of its operating system, hardware, or application software (beyond a free PDF reader application); moreover, PDFs can be optimized for viewing on the Web and secured against easy

⁷¹The PDF’s metadata, revealed in The Document Properties dialog on Adobe®Acrobat®, shows that it was authored using Adobe® InDesign®, a popular and powerful desktop publishing application.

alteration.⁷² In this case, HTB offers the PDF of its statement in two ways: first, as a file that can be opened and read online (its metadata reveals that it is indeed optimized for fast viewing on the Web) and second, as a downloadable file that one can print, save, or email. Moreover, because this particular PDF is not secured (as its metadata establishes), one may alter and repurpose its content, such as by cutting and pasting. Thus, the Web's technologies allow HTB to have it both ways: it can have a polished, professional-looking document on its website, keeping users there, and it can provide that document in a portable, reusable format for further dissemination of its message.

HTB's statement against the anti-terror-bill, signed by HTB's then-chairman Dr. Imran Waheed, aims to "show the absurdity of this proposed offence," namely, the offense of glorifying terrorism ("Criminalising" n.pag.). More specifically addressing HTB's right to remain off the list of proscribed groups, the statement denounces the proposed legislation as "essentially a political device dressed up in legal lexicon" intended to stifle dissent and create a climate of fear wherein Muslims will not speak out against injustices (n.pag.). HTB is careful to reiterate its professed commitment to bring about the caliphate state by "exclusively political and non-violent means" (n.pag.). Yet, that sentence is followed immediately by another reiteration—that of HTB's support for "legitimate resistance in the face of imperialistic and military occupation" in the specific situation of occupied lands (n.pag.).

While distancing itself from advocating violence for political ends, the statement contains an appendix collecting 32 quotations attributed to figures as diverse as Edward

⁷²If PDFs are not secured, users can change them in various ways, including extracting and changing the content. One can, however, download software that might unlock even some secured PDFs.

Said, Gandhi, British political figures, Muslim intellectuals, Nelson Mandela, and Ronald Reagan (Appendix to “Criminalizing” n.pag.). The quotations are all collected from Web sources and are cited in endnotes that give URL, date of access (all were accessed on October 23, 2005), and other bibliographic information. Some of these quotations attempt to contextualize, explain, or rationalize violence in the name of resistance.

HTB frames the quotations by arguing that “[i]n many cases we disagree with some of these quotes specifically when they espouse violence to justify political change, even when this occurs in totalitarian circumstances” (“Criminalizing” n.pag.). But still, HTB offers the quotations “to demonstrate how absurd the proposed new legislation will be,” presumably because “glorifying terrorism” is nebulous and subjective and at least some of the quotations might be crimes under the bill (“Criminalizing” n.pag.). The quotations are so diverse and their contexts so different that it would be fruitless to try to synthesize them as arguments in a rationalist sense. What is important about the quotations is not their evidentiary value in a chain of logic, but instead their use—as lending *ethos* by identification and association to HTB’s resistance to the anti-terror bill. Moreover, the quotations show what HTB is capable of gathering and repurposing from the Web by copy>paste methods quickly and capaciously, once again highlighting the importance of the Web as providing a metamedium in which to perform the particular kind of Muslim identity around which HTB is constituted.

Much of the statement is devoted to *tu quoque* claims that the British government is hypocritical because it has reached accommodations with the IRA, formerly labeled Afghan fighters as heroes (during the Soviet occupation), and has been complicit in using

force to bring about political change in World War II and in Iraq (“Criminalizing” n.pag.). The upshot of this, argues HTB, is that Britain “undermines its own core values” (n.pag.). Finally, the statement builds to a defiant crescendo, establishing the futility of the proposed legislation, even if it should be enacted. That crescendo is worth quoting in full:

Lastly, though it is of course possible to proscribe organisations, even non violent political parties (indeed what is not possible now under the War on Terror), it is absolutely impossible to proscribe a set of ideas and thoughts. In the globalised world we live in, the instant access to telecommunications, the ubiquitous nature of the internet make the attempt to censor opposing political views laughable. The British Government will join that growing paranoid and select list of regimes in Beijing, Tripoli, Tashkent, Riyadh and Singapore who seek not only to control the flow of information but also the ability to express dissent. (n.pag.)

HTB uses the Web itself to argue that the Web makes it impossible to ever effectively silence HTB’s message or thwart its efforts to bring about the divinely mandated caliphate. Though repressive governments can and have restricted access to the Web, Britain remains a relatively open society, giving HTB an effective base from which to reach out to the world. What’s more, Web technologies make it possible to, for example, copy the HTB website files from its server to a server in another country, over and over. HTB is clearly

aware of the qualitative differences between the Web and the technologies that rhetors used to build and sustain movements of the type studied in previous rhetorical scholarship.

This self-referential, Web-based rhetoric folds the medium into the message, making the case that the Web's vastness and relatively unpolicable nature (imagine the different challenges facing a government seeking to crack down on a movement that relies mostly on leaflets and public gatherings versus a movement that uses those technologies *plus* the Web) are themselves warrants for the inevitability of the movement's ideological message. With that inevitability of message comes not only opportunities for persuasion but also nearly limitless opportunities for performance of (HTB's version of) Islamic identity. Moreover, HTB argues here that the Web inevitably forms expectations and appetites for a progression and proliferation of its message, as indeed such technologies as RSS make possible. Technological and ideological vanguardism meet.

3.8 Conclusion

Because the Web operates on more levels than what is on the screen, I devoted this chapter to developing and using a three-layered heuristic to better examine the Web as a whole experience. That heuristic, "Behind the Screen, Off the Screen, and On the Screen," moves beyond rhetorical analysis that might treat Web artifacts merely as digital versions of print texts and provides the engine for my case study in the next chapter. In introducing the heuristic, I argued that because there is no "Web" without the mediation of many layers

of machines and because the Web is an inescapably mediated experience in which users must first find and access web pages and in which users' behavior can shape content, critics must understand the level of code, scripting, modularity—in other words, “Behind the Screen.” Moreover, the realm of “Off the Screen,” I asserted, is essential because that second layer of the heuristic captures the Web's nature as an environment marked by association, intertextuality, movement, and Burkean “gratification.” What's more, “Off the Screen” highlights linkages between online and offline rhetorics—particularly important for a prolific rhetor such as HTB. Finally, I argued, the heuristic's third layer, “On the Screen,” retains close description of visual and verbal elements, the sort of close reading that was, and should remain, a foundational rhetorical methodology—just not necessarily the sole one.

After introducing the heuristic, I demonstrated selected aspects of what a web page is, how a web page works, and why it is important for Web rhetors like HTB to build and sustain search engine “appetites” through “Behind the Screen” markup. I also examined HTB's uses of scripting to present and frame the modular, variable digital assets in its databases, to allow users to repurpose site content, and to shape its message by gathering data about users' behavior on its sites.

Transitioning from “Behind the Screen” to “Off the Screen,” I argued that the practice of hyperlinking, without which there would be no Web, is inherently relational and associative. Thus, hyperlinking inherently participates in Burke's psychology of form. I argued that linking is symbolic action; in other words, HTB builds and satisfies audience appetites for the association of different digital files, arguments, and experiences, within a

crafted experience of meaningful relationships, journeys, and resolution. In HTB's case, the meaningful movement from A to B that a link implies remains framed by the dynamically generated content framing its pages, such that a jump from A to B remains a jump that takes place within parameters that HTB attempts to control and contextualize.

Because close reading of Web artifacts as users experience them on the screen is indispensable (just not sufficient), I then moved to the layer of the heuristic most familiar to rhetorical scholars: the layer of "On the Screen." I performed a close reading of HTB's use of Hizb.org to respond to Britain's proposed Terrorism Bill 2005-06, including the content appearing on Hizb.org's pages and in a PDF "white paper" HTB published on Hizb.org. As I showed, HTB's self-referential, Web-based rhetoric folds the medium into the message, making the case that the Web's vastness and relatively unpoliceable nature are themselves warrants for the inevitability of HTB's ideological message. Coupled with the nearly limitless opportunities the Web provides HTB to perform its version of Islamic identity, the Web forms expectations and appetites for a progression and proliferation of HTB's message.

My intended "rewiring" of Burke can best be accomplished by fashioning new tools to ask new and different questions; indeed, my three-layered heuristic was intended to be one such tool. This tool blends the best of what rhetorical studies have always done with an understanding of what the material specifics of digital media and the psychology of rhetorical form provide. This chapter sets the stage for the next chapter, my case study. In that chapter, I use the tool I developed to illuminate not only the complexity and persuasive richness of HTB's blending of online and offline rhetoric but also to demonstrate the Web's

challenge to the rigid barrier between the realms of the symbolic and the nonsymbolic that Burke—absent the rewiring that I have called for and demonstrated one version of here—erected.

Burke must be rewired to allow rhetorical studies to continue to reap the benefits of Burkean methods that have been so fruitful when applied to other media or earlier social movements that did not use the Web. This rewiring is warranted because, on the Web, rhetorical form is created at more than just the screen level, as the next chapter shows. Thus, as Burke would have us do, I seek to use “all there is” to illuminate what differences the Web makes in HTB’s efforts to build and sustain collective, transformative action. On to the case study.

Chapter 4

“The Change Needs to be *Khilafah*”

4.1 Introduction

HT has existed in multiple countries since 1953, yet it has regularly been the subject of government crackdowns and legal bans, chiefly on the grounds of encouraging radicalism. In 2003, German Interior Minister Otto Schily banned HT from public activity in Germany; the impetus for the ban was a controversial HT event protesting the Iraq war (Lambroschini n.pag.).⁷³ One country where HT has enjoyed the protection of free speech and free association laws is Great Britain. Indeed, as Rand Corporation analyst Cheryl Bernard argues, many consider Britain “HT’s *de facto* headquarters” (347). However, HTB, the British branch of HT, would soon face a crisis in the form of a proposed legal ban. The

⁷³Some at the event claimed neo-Nazi groups made anti-Semitic statements and that the event brought two anti-Semitic forces together: neo-Nazis and radical Muslims (Lambroschini n.pag.) As his rationale, Schily used a provision of the German Constitution that proscribes political action violating “the concept of international understanding” (qtd. in Lambroschini n.pag.). HT denied the charges and appealed the ban (a rare political action taken “within the system”); however, the appeal was denied (Walter, von Ungern-Sternberg, and Verlage 13).

proposed ban was part of the British government's response to the 7/7 terrorist bombings perpetrated by Islamist radicals. How HTB used the Web in this moment of crisis—especially to perform its particular vision of Islamic identity—is what this chapter is about.

This chapter uses the following structure: First, I will explore briefly the relevant context, focusing on the 7/7 attacks and the British government's 12-point plan for fighting terrorism announced by Tony Blair on August 5, 2005, which included banning HTB. Then, understanding the Web on its own terms as an inherently digital metamedium that shapes a sustained performance of HTB's vision of Islamic identity and examining how HTB forms that identity on, behind, and off the screen, I will examine primary digital HTB rhetorical artifacts created from immediately after the bombings to August 2007.

That period is broad enough to demonstrate the wide range of HTB's uses of the Web in a moment of crisis, yet narrow enough to encompass just the crisis and its potential effect on HTB's viability in the UK. My examination will address the core question of this dissertation: namely, what is significant about HTB's uses of the Web to build and sustain its movement? Focusing on HTB's uses of the Web at a moment of crisis helps illuminate how, as Daniel Beunza and David Stark argue in their ethnography of an investment bank's recovery from the 9/11 attacks, "crisis reveals that any technology is always a *socio-technology*" (qtd. in Kirschenbaum, *Mechanisms* 241, emphasis original).⁷⁴ That is, HTB's use of the Web on, behind, and off the screen as refracted through the lens of the proposed ban shows the linkages between the material specificities of digital media

⁷⁴Beunza and Stark's ethnography concerned the investment firm's efforts to reconstruct system passwords known only to deceased staff. Survivors brainstormed information about their deceased colleagues' lives, including their families, hobbies, and pets, to gain information potentially useful to reconstructing the missing passwords.

and human symbolic action invested with identity, values, and (for HTB) God's will. This primary source examination not only applies the tools developed earlier in this dissertation for purposes of Burke scholarship, but it also serves some of the archival/preservation functions for which Warnick calls.

The artifacts I choose to form the basis of this case study can be grouped under the following general headings:

1. **(X)HTML pages from Hizb.org**

As examined earlier, Hizb.org has served as a central portal and platform for HTB's Web rhetoric in the UK. Because that website is updated continually, any examination of its past contents or the past experiences it offered audiences must proceed by way of "captures" or snapshots using a combination of screen-grabbing software, the Internet Archive, and downloads of individual pages. In this moment of crisis, HTB used Hizb.org as a means to disseminate and archive press releases, argue against the ban, exhort followers to mass public outcry, and interrogate Western policies. This particular group of artifacts embodies HTB's ever-evolving, well-produced use of what the Web makes possible on a site positioned as a central clearinghouse or news portal.

The sheer number of these pages means that I cannot examine them all in detail. Indeed, the volume of these pages is part of the point. As Burke reminds us, rhetoric's power often comes more from mere repetition and reinforcement than from soaring skill (*A Rhetoric of Motives* 26). To tell the story of the kinds of repetition and

reinforcement Hizb.org exemplifies, I have chosen two representative, particularly salient examples from among many possible artifacts to examine: those examples are a page archiving an August 6, 2005 Press Statement HTB issued at a live press conference and a page dated January 31, 2006 entitled “Banning the Hizb: the West and its Agents Come Together.” These pages show how the three-layered heuristic developed in this dissertation can illuminate Web-based rhetoric on its own terms as a mediated event without ignoring the connections between different Web-based social movement activities or the connections between online and offline movement events and discourses.

2. Online Petition

In August 2005, an online petition opposing the proposed ban appeared on the website Petition Online (www.petitiononline.com). The site hosts hundreds of online petitions on subjects great and small under the trademarked slogan “The Marketplace of Free Ideas™.” According to the petition, it “was created by and written by Hassan, Presenter on the Islam Channel’s Hassan and Habibah Show (HandHshow@islamchannel.tv)” (“Banning Non-Violent” n.pag.). Hassan is Hassan Saleemi; Habibah is his wife Habibah Ellahee (Blog.co.uk, “HassanandHabibah’s Profile” n.pag.). Together, the couple host a live talk show on the Islam Channel focusing on social issues (“Welcome to Hassan and Habibah’s Blog” n.pag.). I cannot establish whether Saleemi or Ellahee are HTB members; however, they obviously support HTB, as evidenced by the petition.⁷⁵ For the purpose of this study, what is

⁷⁵Moreover, Ellahee wrote at least one blog post where she praises HTB as an example of how “radical

important is not only how the online petition is an example of a non-HTB website used as a space for resisting the ban, but also how HTB incorporates and frames the petition on Petition Online on Hizb.org. This petition shows how HTB repurposes and reframes content from other websites for its own purposes and how its supporters can themselves take advantage of the Web's possibilities for symbolic action in a public show of solidarity with HTB.

3. **“Radicalisation, Extremism, and Islamism: Realities and Myths in the War on Terror”**

This is a 40-page PDF document that first appeared on Hizb.org on July 12, 2007.⁷⁶ Like the PDF “Criminalising Political Dissent” examined in the previous chapter, this document borrows the *ethos* of the printed “white paper.”⁷⁷ The document shows high production values enabled by desktop layout programs and is presented in a stable, cross-platform format viewable on essentially any user's computer. The document's four sections attempt to take on the underlying assumptions warranting the proposed ban through HTB's method of “preserving a strong Islamic identity” and working to “counter negative propaganda about Islam”

(3). “Radicalisation, Extremism, and Islamism” can be read online, printed in hard copy, downloaded, saved, manipulated by a `select>copy/cut>paste`

Islamists” (she uses the term in a laudatory fashion, contrasting it against “traditionalist or culturalist movements like the Taliban”) foster “most Muslim women's sense of Islamic empowerment or Islamic liberation” because of radicals' insistence on Quranic principles such as equality and fairness (“Islamic Feminism?” n.pag.).

⁷⁶The document is still available as of September 15, 2008.

⁷⁷HTB calls the document a “report,” complete with a bibliography.

operation or even made into a template for other documents.⁷⁸ This document is both an example of a new media artifact that borrows from and incorporates (remediates) earlier media, such as the white paper, and an example of HTB using the Web as part of a sustained, linear reading experience, a reading experience that is different from the chunked lexia typical of Web-based reading that Warnick explains. In other words, not only is the report important from a content standpoint as an example of HTB's arguments against the ban and against portraying political Islam as inherently dangerous, but it is also important for showing the range of mediated reading events that rhetors can make available on the Web.

4. Rajab Conferences: C2007.com and “Khilafah: The Need and the Method” (X)HTML Pages and Two Digital Videos

In the summer of 2007, during the Islamic month of Rajab and commemorating the month in which the Ottoman Caliphate was abolished, multiple HT branches (Britain, Indonesia, Kuwait, Lebanon, the Palestinian Territory, the Netherlands, Malaysia, and Pakistan) hosted large conferences. At the conferences, HT adherents gathered to discuss and (more importantly) to demonstrate support for HT's vision of the caliphate. Part of the need for these demonstrations of support arose from what HTB described, in a flyer promoting its London conference, as “Distortions of the Image of the Islamic Caliphate State Propogated by Western Governments through the War on Terror” (“International Caliphate Conference 2007, London”

⁷⁸The document's settings, viewable in any PDF reader application, show the extent to which it can be manipulated further.

n.pag.). While the conferences themselves are obvious examples of HT's offline social movement activities, I want to focus here on important connections between HTB's online and offline rhetoric.

HTB uses the Web not only to promote the conferences, but also to archive them and to connect different conferences occurring at different times and places, promoting unity, solidarity, and a sense of inevitability to the caliphate, constructed by emphasizing HT's global reach and large base of supporters. As part of its efforts to promote the London and Jakarta conferences, HTB created yet another site, `C2007.com`. Now that the conferences have passed, HTB archives conference content on `Hizb.org` using a *subsite*, which Jakob Nielsen defines as "a collection of Web pages within a larger site that have been given a common style and a shared navigation mechanism" ("The Rise of the Subsite" n.pag.). `Hizb.org` has a subsite entitled "Rajab Conferences" with design and layout similar to the main site, but with a different color scheme and its own local navigation, marking it as related to the main site yet organized around the specific situation of its 2007 mobilization of thousands of Muslims.

While I cannot examine all the content on `C2007.com` or the `Hizb.org` subsite, I will focus on selected artifacts illustrating how HTB used `C2007.com` to create audience expectations for the Rajab Conferences. I will also focus on how HTB uses the subsite on `Hizb.org` to fulfill (and, indeed, to keep fulfilling) those expectations. The Rajab Conferences subsite allows HTB to repurpose content whose specific exigence (in terms of the conference itself) has passed. HTB positions

that content as both a record of what has gone before and a sense of meaningful movement and audience expectations for what it calls its persuasive “campaigns.”

The artifacts I examine are:

- HTB’s flyer promoting the London conference
- Images of the London conference
- News coverage framing the presentation of video and text (coverage HTB copy>pasted from other Web sources)
- Two digital films, one entitled “Khilafah: The Need for Change” and the other entitled “Khilafah: A Global Call” that were both played at the conference and are archived on the subsite.

This case study yields not only an enhanced, rewired Burkean understanding of a significant period in the life of an important social movement, but also (in this dissertation’s final chapter) a set of implications for future research. These implications include new directions for Burkean rhetorical studies of social movements and the need for continued and different training and professional development in rhetorical studies to better meet the challenges of analyzing online rhetoric and to answer Burke’s mandate that critics “use all there is to use” (*The Philosophy of Literary Form* 23). Multimediated digital technologies, especially the Web as a born-digital metamedium, are particularly important examples of how, in Manovich’s words, “the production, distribution, and reception of most

content and increasingly, experiences—[are] mediated by software” to create “dynamic ‘software performances’” (*Software Takes Command* 19). Such performances are the result of symbolic action that folds in, at least partially, the technologies themselves as Agents shaping the realm of the possible, the expected, and the perfected.

A word here about critical method: I will not apply my three-layered heuristic of Behind the Screen, On the Screen, and Off the Screen mechanically and repetitively to each of the artifacts I examine. This is particularly the case with the (X)HTML captures, many of which use the same or similar meta tags and with the Rajab Conference subsite, which has a clear unified theme. Where appropriate, I will group like artifacts to bring out the most salient insights that the heuristic can provide. But first, before the case study can proceed, it is important to examine selected details of the 7/7 bombings as the event leading to the proposed ban on HTB.

4.2 The 7/7 Bombings

Just before nine o’clock on the morning of Thursday July 7, 2005, London’s busy city center was the target of a coordinated series of suicide bomb attacks on public transport systems. Nearly simultaneously, bombs exploded on three of London’s Underground trains: one at the Liverpool Street station, one at the Edgware Road station, and one traveling between King’s Cross and Russell Square. About an hour later, a fourth bomb exploded on one of the city’s iconic double-decker buses at Tavistock Square. The four bombs killed 52

and injured over 770. The attacks were carried out on an easy-to-remember date, 7/7, the first day of the G8 summit in Gleneagles, Scotland.

According to the House of Commons report, the first claims of responsibility for the bombings were posted on the Web as early as 1:00 that same afternoon, with a group calling itself “The Secret Organization Group of Al Qaida in Europe” coming forward with an unverifiable claim of responsibility (8). Evidence uncovered in the investigation, including documents found at the scenes and security films, established that the train attacks were carried out by Mohammad Sidique Khan, age 30; Germaine Lindsay (also known as Abdullah Shaheed Jamal), age 19; and Shehzad Tanweer, age 24 (9-12). The suicide bomber on the bus was 18-year-old Hasib Hussain (5-6). The bombers were homegrown terrorists. They all lived in Britain. Khan, Hussain, and Tanweer were born in Britain; Lindsay, born in Jamaica, moved to Britain at age 5 (13-14). Even before investigators determined that the four men were the bombers, the attacks were widely assumed to have been carried out by Islamist terrorists, either members of, or inspired by, al Qaeda. The assumed link between Islam and the bombings was part of HTB’s immediate response to the attacks.

4.3 HTB’s Response to the Bombings

As the screen capture below establishes, HTB took to the Web immediately on the day of the attacks, using its now-defunct website www.1924.org. 1924 is the year that Turkey, led by Mustafa Kemal (Ataturk) abolished the Ottoman Caliphate. HTB sees Kemal as

a “treacherous” figure whose actions brought “the Muslim ummah... to darkness and humiliation” for lack of a truly Islamic state (“Dark Days for the Ummah” n.pag.).

Figure 4.1: Screen Capture of 1924.org page re: “London Explosions” (Internet Archive)



Perhaps in anticipation of a ban—an anticipation with ample basis, given HT’s illegal status in other countries—HTB argues that G8 leaders use terrorist attacks opportunistically and cynically to “further their rhetoric to justify the ‘war on terror’” (“London Explosions” n.pag.). HTB calls on Muslims to withstand the test of increased scrutiny in the wake of the bombings because, as with all tests, God will serve as final judge (“London Explosions”

n.pag.). Even in the face of increased governmental interference, HTB exhorts Muslims to “collectively prepare the most appropriate arrangements” to protect themselves and their sacred buildings from possible backlash attacks, to continue to speak out against injustice, and to spread the call of Islam to non-Muslims “in order for them to sense the greatness of our *deen* and our solutions” (“London Explosions” n.pag.).⁷⁹

Concerning the 7/7 attacks themselves, HTB acknowledges that “Yes, the rules of Islam do not allow the harming of innocent civilians,” yet those same rules also “do not allow us to condemn Muslims with little evidence in order to remove the pressure from ourselves”—especially because Western leaders are sure to capitalize on fears of terrorism to oppress Muslims (“London Explosions” n.pag.). As always, HTB offers the *khilafah* as the solution, here calling for a “just Islamic state” that “will become a shining light in the darkness facing the world” (“London Explosions” n.pag.).

In this initial Web response to the bombings, HTB, as usual, seeks to forge connections between its Web appeals and its more traditional offline social movement activities. For example, the banner at the top of the 1924.org home page brings six images into conversation with one another: Muslim women wearing headscarves at an outdoor gathering (that image is also repurposed on Hizb.org); an HTB rally featuring a young boy holding a sign reading “Secularism has failed the world”; an adult male speaker⁸⁰ at an HTB rally addressing a large crowd that carries placards printed on HTB’s characteristic (in essence, branded) bright orange background; a conference speaker standing at a podium

⁷⁹*Deen* is an Arabic word that expresses the comprehensive way of life that Muslims believe God prescribes in Islam, contrasted against a view of religion as (merely) personal practice or belief as aspects of one’s life (Allawi 90).

⁸⁰The speaker appears to be HTB spokesperson Taji Mustapha.

before a large audience; and a bright, bold 1924.org logo (“London Explosions” n.pag.). Putting these images at the top of the page, where they have primacy, and putting them into conversation by placing them side by side frames the rest of the page content by reinforcing the message that HTB works on all persuasive fronts, and to diverse audiences, to advance and defend the interests of Muslims and to prepare the way for a more just society under the *khilafah* state. The page’s navigational links, located on the left side and indicated by bullets, also work to reinforce associations between what appears on that particular screen and further online or offline participation that can follow if a user clicks the links. For example, users can “Get Involved,” in HTB’s mission, can “Subscribe” to the site to receive updates, can offer comments, or can view/download further persuasive “Resources” (“London Explosions” n.pag.).

By July 31, 2005, as it became certain that the bombers were British Muslims, HTB again reached out to audiences, combining traditional offline activities—a press conference and a meeting of fellow Muslims—with an online advertisement for the meeting and a reprint of the prepared statement read by HTB’s representative to the press. HTB entitled the meeting “Speaking Against Bush and Blair’s Foreign Policy is not Terrorism,” thereby summing up in the meeting’s title a capsule argument resisting a potential ban (“London Muslim Emergency Meeting” n.pag.). In its online advertisement for the meeting, HTB bills the meeting as a chance for Muslims to remind their critics that “the vast majority of [Muslim] work against western imperialism comes through non-violent political struggle” (“London Muslim Emergency Meeting” n.pag.). Again, HTB returns to the core of its own particular struggle and promises that, at the meeting, it will “present a compelling model

for political change in the Islamic world,” which of course means the *khilafah* (“London Muslim Emergency Meeting” n.pag.).

At the press conference, an HTB spokesperson read a prepared statement, now archived on Hizb.org (“Statement to the Press” n.pag.). Probably anticipating a ban even more as of that date, HTB shifts how it discusses the bombings, stressing that “we would like to make it absolutely clear that we believe there was no justification whatsoever for the attacks on civilians in London on July 7th 2005. Islam does not allow the killing of innocent civilians as occurred in London” (“Statement to the Press” n.pag.). HTB goes on to argue, again as an instance of the power of repetition and reinforcement, that rulers in the Muslim world are corrupt and repressive and that peaceful political action calling for a new order should not be silenced (“Statement to the Press” n.pag.). HTB also continues to argue that dividing Muslims according to labels such as *extremist*, *violent*, or *terrorist* is merely a ploy dedicated to maintaining Western hegemony over the Muslim world (“Statement to the Press” n.pag.). HTB closes the statement by urging Muslims to remain united and to continue to speak out peacefully (“Statement to the Press” n.pag.).

Notwithstanding HTB’s efforts to prevent a legal ban, the British government soon announced that HTB would in fact be proscribed. In a press conference on August 5, 2005, Blair announced a 12-point plan for new security measures to be implemented in the wake of the 7/7 bombings. The plan included proposed revisions to British law concerning political asylum and revocation of citizenship, authority to close mosques or to ban particular clerics, and limits on freedoms of expression (“PM’s Press Conference 5 August 2005” n. pag.). Point nine of the plan was that the British government would ban

HTB, along with another group named al-Mujahiroun (“PM’s Press Conference 5 August 2005” n. pag.).⁸¹ How would HTB respond?

4.4 Selected Hizb.org Pages Resisting Proposed Ban

As I have pointed out, one advantage of using the World Wide Web to build and sustain appetites for a social movement’s appeals is the speed the Web offers for reaching a large audience quickly. On August 6, 2005, a day after Blair announced the ban, HTB published a press release arguing against the ban. There, HTB lashes out at Blair, accusing him of resorting to a “draconian” ban because HTB’s challenges to Western ideas cannot be met by the West “with intellectual debate” or a fair “battle of ideas” (“Press Statement” n.pag.).

Citing a record of non-violent political protest and debate, HTB takes the opportunity to “once again state in explicit terms that Islam forbids the killing of innocent civilians,” such as in the 7/7 bombings (“Press Statement” n.pag.). HTB also attempts to link the practice of banning controversial groups such as HTB to the oppressive tactics of authoritarian governments in the Middle East and Central Asia, particularly the regime in Uzbekistan (“Press Statement” n.pag.). HTB cites the former British ambassador to Uzbekistan as having “exposed the boiling alive of our members by the [Uzbek] regime” (“Press Statement” n.pag.).⁸² Thus, HTB draws an equivalency between the UK—which takes

⁸¹HTB consistently denies any connection with al-Mujahiroun or its controversial leader Omar Bakri Mohammed. Bakri, a Lebanese citizen, received political asylum from the UK in the 1980s, but that asylum was revoked on the grounds that his “presence is not conducive to the public good” (qtd. in BBC News, “Cleric Bakri Barred from Britain” n.pag.). Perhaps the best-known depiction of Bakri comes from Jon Ronson’s interviews and meetings with Bakri as part of Ronson’s book *Them: Adventures with Extremists*.

⁸²Murray endorses the claim that at least one HT prisoner was tortured and killed by the Uzbek regime in this gruesome fashion. Murray told a reporter for the *Guardian* that he saw photographs of the dead man that

pride in its tolerance of controversial political protest—and a regime that stifles political dissent in the most shockingly brutal and terrifying ways.⁸³

The content—the “on the screen” portion of HTB’s press statement—can be read as a performance of HTB’s identity of fearless, indefatigable Muslim advocacy, the intellectual and political vanguard that works to build new Muslims and, eventually, a new state, using the new media. HTB attacks the Blair government as unable to engage in fair and open examination of competing worldviews and unable to live up to its own professed values. Even in the face of persecution, of which the Uzbek boiling torture incident is a graphic instance, HTB remains defiant because God is, in its view, always on its side. The point to be emphasized here is not that HTB expects the Blair government, UK citizens in general, or even many of the users of its websites, to be swayed by its arguments in a genteel public sphere of open debate reminiscent of an 18th century London coffeehouse. Rather, HTB makes these arguments because these arguments challenge its foes, advance awareness of what it portrays as Muslims’ plight and, most importantly, these arguments provide, especially as mediated by the Web, a nearly endless wellspring of opportunities for HTB members to *be* the kind of person God calls them to be.

As is certainly apparent by now, HTB repeats its core messages, over and over. These messages can be abstracted as *we will not be stopped, God is on our side, we can reach large audiences in multiple ways, and the caliphate is the only answer*. Burke highlighted

pathologists had confirmed showed signs of torture by boiling (Walsh, “Uzbek Mother” n.pag., reprinted and linked at Murray’s own blog “February 13, 2004: The Guardian - Uzbek Mother” n.pag.).

⁸³Moreover, HTB argues that the ban is at least inconsistent with British values or, worse, a case of hypocrisy: “Placing a ban on a political party with a 50 year history of non-violence will lead many to question the talk of freedom of speech, tolerance, people power, human rights and democracy” (“Press Statement” n.pag.).

the importance of repetition to persuasion and identification, of course. But beyond repetition lies re-experience. As shown by the fact that the press release is still archived on Hizb.org over three years later, the Web provides HTB the opportunity to form audience expectations and appetites not only prospectively—with the expectation of fresh content day in and day out—but also retrospectively, with an archive of old content, the movement's past struggles and arguments, its battle scars, remaining evergreen.

While maintaining archives is nothing new to social movements, the ever-increasing capacity of abundant, cheap file storage coupled with the relatively trivial file size of archived pages, enables HTB to sustain a rich, multimediated sense of movement history and an accessible record of its copious performance of Islamic identity. Moreover, as will emerge below in the context of this study's other artifacts, the digital DNA of all Web content provides opportunities for audiences to become producers, if only by way of copying and repurposing. The Web is a multiply mediated event whose structures suggest, and become, possibilities for action. So, here is where Burke (and Hübler from Chapter 2) would warn of the dangers of the entelechial impulse warping human psychology to match the machine. In the case of a revolutionary movement using the Web to help bring about a religious state, such a warning seems appropriate. In essence, it is Baran's "conveyor belt" writ digital. And here is where the machine begins to have a kind of agency in symbolic action.

One example of the ways in which the machine structures and suggests copious performances of movement identity—thus, taking on part of an Agency role—is the otherwise mundane topic of storage. But storage is important because it is the limit of

the digitally possible. What cannot be stored cannot be experienced—or even created, for that matter. From HTB’s perspective, though, the Web is an event that need never lose any part, at least parts that HTB does not choose to lose. For example, the August 6, 2005 HTB press statement takes up just 328 kilobytes for 38 separate files of XHTML markup, style sheets, scripts, and images.⁸⁴ Storage and bandwidth offered by Web hosting services vary widely, but for websites larger than simple personal sites, hosts commonly provide hundreds of megabytes or even gigabytes of storage along with several or even hundreds of gigabytes of monthly data transfer, all for relatively affordable charges.⁸⁵ To put this in perspective, the 328 kilobyte August 6, 2005 HTB press statement is a mere 0.32031 megabytes or 0.00031 gigabytes—in other words, the statement poses a trivial burden on storage and traffic.

In light of ever-increasing, cheaper storage, HTB never needs to discard digital content, at least for reasons of storage. Content can be preserved, repurposed, and re-experienced. Thus, HTB’s websites act both as a metamedium for HTB’s current persuasive campaigns and as a means for HTB adherents or potential new members to experience connections between the movement’s past, present, and future. Recall that all HT branches, including HTB, posit a long-term, three-stage model for bringing about the *khilafah* state: 1. inculcate belief and gather followers, 2. establish Islam in worldly affairs, and 3. establish the *khilafah* and spread the call to Islam worldwide (*The Methodology of Hizb ut-Tahrir for*

⁸⁴Any modern web browser allows one to download a web page and save it as a complete web file, which includes the individual modular units making up the page. In this case, I used Firefox to capture both the markup and the other files. Then, using Windows Explorer, I viewed the file size of each modular piece of digital content in the web page.

⁸⁵Even if HTB leases a dedicated server—that is, a server on which only *its* files are stored and only *its* monthly data transfer occurs—the cost per month (according to my informal online search of UK web hosts conducted September 1, 2008) would be just a couple hundred British pounds.

Change 32-35). With an ever-increasing storehouse of digital text, images, and video, HTB can revisit and refine the same identifications and divisions that animate its performance of Muslim identity over and over. That digital abundance is particularly useful in the first stage—the first stage, after all, is ideological preparation for divinely mandated transformation. However, it can also be useful in the two latter stages. Arguments for the role of Islam in politics (really, the role of politics in Islam because Islam is the ground of all action) will still need to be made, and worldwide audiences will still need to be reached. HTB need never get rid of any persuasive resource stored digitally.

Just as importantly, archiving past persuasive campaigns means that HTB websites act as repository of the movement's cultural memory. Of course, HTB is not the first or only movement to maintain an archive; however, real distinctions can be drawn between a new social movement like HTB that uses the Web and earlier movements in this respect. Not only can HTB's digital archive be searched and accessed by larger potential audiences (and accessed far more easily), but it is, for all practical purposes, limitless and nearly impossible to repress. With digital content, as Manovich points out, each complete copy of an HTB web artifact is as much an "original" as any other, at least as it existed on the date it was copied. Once content is uploaded to the Web, the notion of originals and copies—more easily seized or controlled—is beside the point. As Lanham puts it in "The Implications of Electronic Information for the Sociology of Knowledge," with digital works, "you can eat your cake, give it away, and still have it too" (456). HTB's Web-based rhetorical artifacts are not precious in the sense of being irreplaceable. HTB's sites are hosted in the UK and could theoretically be shut down by the government; however, digital content

is easy to transfer, copy, upload to other servers outside UK jurisdiction,⁸⁶ or download onto individual hard drives. No one could ever round up all of HTB's digital content, even if HTB were made to stop producing content today. The machine structures possibilities for repetition, performance, and permanence.⁸⁷

Moreover, the archival function that the Web provides is more flexible than, say, that of a collection of papers held by a museum or organization. Since 2006, HTB has used scripting (dynamic pages) to serve new content that works in conjunction with old content, keeping the old content in some sense evergreen, linking past and present. For example, the August 6, 2005 press statement is framed by continually updated links and content on the left and right sides, as this screenshot makes clear:

⁸⁶Servers hosting gambling websites are often located on island nations, no doubt for jurisdictional reasons.

⁸⁷Recall that, as Kirschenbaum points out, electronic artifacts are, in important respects, are far more durable than paper artifacts (*Mechanisms* 30, 45, 46-47).

Figure 4.2: Partial Screenshot of August 6, 2005 Press Statement on Hizb.org Showing Updated Dynamic Content (Screenshot as of September 8, 2008)

Hizb ut-Tahrir
The Liberation Party
Britain

search...

Press | Media Pack | Sitemap | Contact Us

Home | About HT | Resources | Multimedia | In The Community | Campaigns | RSS | What's New

Press Centre Menu

- Press Releases
- A Global Party
- HTB National Events
- Leaflets
- Prominent Members
- Our Method
- Press Appearances
- Media Info Pack

Press Releases & Statements

President Zardari: Pakistan's Democracy delivers another disaster for the people

Rice's embrace of the tyrant
Gaddafi exposes the west's real colonial values

Islam Channel: New UK Muslim Marriage Contract controversy

PK Press Release: Democracy has miserably failed in providing security to the people

Press Statement from Hizb ut-Tahrir Britain

Saturday, 06 August 2005

We condemn outright the announcement by Prime Minister Tony Blair proposing a ban on Hizb ut-Tahrir, a well known non-violent Islamic political party. The banning of Hizb ut-Tahrir has as its aim the curtailment of legitimate Islamic political debate. Even though the party has been open to intellectual debate and even though the Prime Minister said that he wanted a battle of ideas, it became apparent that this government could not face the party through such avenues and resorted to such draconian measures.

Hizb ut-Tahrir has a record of over 50 years of following a method of non-violent political activity against the unelected dictators and despots who rule the Muslim world with the West's approval. In its work to establish the Islamic Caliphate, Hizb ut-Tahrir has never resorted to any sort of armed struggle and nor has it ever incited people to kill innocent civilians. It has throughout its history worked through intellectual and political means while its members have been tortured and killed in the thousands.

In Britain the party has attracted to its ranks men and women, young and old, from different walks of life and from different ethnicities. Its activities including conferences, seminars and roundtable discussions, have been attended by thousands of people. Annual conferences have been attended by in excess of 10,000 people. In recent times we have held panel discussions with non-Muslim politicians, thinkers and personalities including Roger Mosey, Edwina Currie, Peter Hitchens, Clive Crook and Michael Gove, amongst others.

In response to the proposal to ban our organisation, we have held face to face meetings with leading Islamic groups and personalities. They have expressed serious concerns about the banning of the party and intend to oppose this move as they feel this will hamper community relations rather than bringing

Frame content not displaye

News Watch

- Britain's FCO offers scholarships for Pakistanis to study democracy
- Cameron on Caliphate
- Zardari's likely foreign policy agenda
- Asif Ali Zardari: the godfather as president
- Another massive US attack in Pakistan: 20 feared killed in US drones attack in N Waziristan
- Hizb ut-Tahrir rally condemns US attacks on Pak soil
- Father hanged himself after being 'harassed' for failing to keep up with his mortgage
- Pakistan cuts supply lines to Nato forces

The scripts necessary to combine this content and keep the old in contact with the new consume minimal space. This kind of old-new dialectic is simply not possible with newspaper clippings, leaflets, posters, and other types of traditional movement artifacts. Just as HTB draws links between the glories of past Islamic societies and the future state it wishes to implement, so too does this old-new dialectic, made possible through scripting, link the past and present of a movement with “a 50 year history” of calling for a state consistent with God’s plan (“Press Statement” n.pag.).

The meta tags “behind the screen” of the August 6, 2005 Press Statement show how HTB attempts to create an appetite, so to speak, among search engine spiders for HTB’s arguments about subjects such as “Hizb ut Tahrir, ...Khilafah,

Caliphate, Political Islam, ...Islamic State, Muslims, Palestine, Middle East, Central Asia, Terrorism, Zionism, Israel, ...Muslim rulers, Iraq, Jordan, [and] Pakistan.” Moreover, as Sally Falkow argues (and as pointed out in Chapter 3) a web page’s <description>tag “could be the deciding factor[s] as to whether [a user] ever visits [a] site” (Falkow n.pag.). The <description>tag for the August 6, 2005 page describes HTB as “Hizb ut Tahrir the Global Islamic Political Party working for the reestablishment of Khilafah, Caliphate, Islamic state in the Muslim world through a peaceful political method.” Especially for those Web surfers who use search engines that display the text of <description>tags in lists of search results,⁸⁸ HTB is attempting to describe itself in a way that defangs its extremist image (“peaceful political method”). The translation and definition of “Khilafah, Caliphate, Islamic state” not only underscores HTB’s primary goal but also attempts to reach diverse audiences, only some of which can be counted on to know what *khilafah* (or even caliphate) means.

In a mix of “behind the screen” and “off the screen,” users can make the August 6, 2005 Press Statement “printer-friendly.” That is, the browser can be made to display the page with banners, images, and links removed, leaving only text that prints within typical page margins. Clicking an icon of a printer on the top right portion of the screen causes the browser to display the page using a style sheet designed for print, not screen display.

⁸⁸All search engines read <description>tags, though not all display them to users in search results (Ledford 100-01).

In addition, users can email the Press Statement easily by clicking an icon of an envelope, triggering a script to launch the user's email client.

Of course, a marginally sophisticated site user could simply copy&paste the text to print or email it, but the print style sheet and the email script are more likely to keep users on the site, for two reasons. First, they make printing and emailing easy. Second, and perhaps more importantly, they do not encourage the user to leave the page as a copy&paste operation might. What's more, most Web users are not particularly adept at such operations, as the popularity of Web design and usability texts such as Steve Krug's *Don't Make Me Think!: A Common Sense Approach to Web Usability* attests. If HTB can help make the experience of printing or forwarding content easy and controlled, users are more likely to return and to stay on the site.

But printing and emailing content are not the only ways that HTB makes Hizb.org a place for users to get involved in resisting the proposed ban. As this screenshot shows, since the 2006 redesign of Hizb.org and the move to dynamic web pages, site users have the option to leave comments on content such as the August 6, 2005 Press Statement and/or to share HTB content easily, with one or two clicks, using social bookmarking and social networking applications such as Reddit, StumbleUpon, Delicious, and Facebook:

Figure 4.3: Example of Comment and Social Bookmarking Feature of Hizb.org pages Since 2006 Redesign

The rightmost logo (a lowercase “jd”) under “Add this Article to your Bookmark site” signifies Joomla!digger. Joomla!digger embeds scripts and small image files with the logos of social bookmarking services. The point of making it easy to spread content is to leverage its visibility: HTB publishes content on its websites, and users can become creators of a sort by alerting their own online networks (friends, acquaintances) to HTB content. Most HTB pages with this feature do not display any comments, though a few do. The comment feature requires users to submit an email address, and perhaps this discourages commenting, especially when HTB’s legal status is precarious.⁸⁹

HTB no doubt moderates the comments, too, because those I have read on the small

⁸⁹In another illustration of the Web abhorring a vacuum and being the place where what Burke calls humankind’s “technological psychosis” (*Permanence & Change* 44) is played out in multiple media, several sites have arisen where one can obtain a “disposable” email address good for, say, ten minutes. Such sites include www.bugmenot.com and others.

number of pages that contain comments are overwhelmingly supportive. For HTB, the importance of offering the possibility or the appearance of comment may be more important than actually having any comments or using them as an ongoing dialectic. Surely, HTB is not going to allow comments on its main news portal, *Hizb.org*, to seriously question the message it repeats every day: the world is broken and the caliphate will fix it.

HTB's initial response to the proposed ban, as seen in the August 6, 2005 Press Statement, focused on the movement's non-violent tactics and what HTB argued was the Blair administration's inability to debate Islamic politics fairly. In a later article posted on *Hizb.org*, HTB expanded its rhetorical attacks to include among their targets the rulers of Muslim countries and "their masters," namely "the West" ("Banning the Hizb" n.pag.).

HTB's expanded attack was prompted by Martin Bright's article in the January 30, 2006 issue of the magazine *New Statesman*. In "Losing the Plot," Bright examines leaked emails, meeting minutes, and memoranda that circulated among British ministers and cabinet-level officials about the possibility of, and grounds for, banning HTB.⁹⁰ The leaked documents show that intelligence and cabinet officials harbored serious doubts about the evidentiary basis for banning HTB. For instance, Bright quotes the head of MI6, John Scarlett, who wrote that the intelligence agencies "do not oppose proscription but oppose reliance on their assessment to justify what they see as a change of policy, not fact," while another email quotes Home Secretary Charles Clarke's admission that British free speech rights had to

⁹⁰The Bright article contains a text box authored by Shiv Malik and captioned "Hizb ut-Tahrir: the Facts." Malik describes some of HT's history and principles and points out still more persuasive media that HTB members employ (but which are beyond the scope of this dissertation). For example, Malik claims that HTB members founded the Muslim rap group called Blakstone (which uses MySpace and Facebook pages to promote its ideology and its albums) as well as a magazine called *Salam* (13).

be legally redefined so that it would be “much easier to argue that [HTB] met the criteria of ‘justifying and glorifying violence,’” (qtd. in Bright 13). Bright sets these admissions in the context of a Foreign Office memorandum, also examined in the article, that admits there is no evidence that HTB engages in or condones violence (qtd. in Bright 13). Relying on minutes of a meeting involving Foreign Secretary Jack Straw in which Straw’s claim that the government should proceed with a ban on al-Mujahiroun because a ban would identify supporters of the group, Bright speculates that, by seeing who comes forward to resist the ban, HTB’s supporters—not just admitted members—could also be identified by the government and possibly tracked (13).

HTB seized on the Bright article immediately. On January 31, 2006, it posted an article on Hizb.org entitled “Banning the Hizb: The West and its Agents Come Together.” The article argues that the Home Office’s doubts about the basis for banning HTB mean that “the Foreign Secretary, the Foreign Office, and the Prime Minister have been the principle [*sic*] players in attempting to outlaw the Hizb” (“Banning the Hizb” n.pag.). The article goes on to argue that the special relationship between corrupt and repressive rulers in the Muslim world and their “masters” in the West is now changing (“Banning the Hizb” n.pag.). That change, a change for which HTB takes implicit credit, is “the realisation of the Muslim masses that secular values have brought corruption, exploitation, and injustice to the Muslim world” and that the caliphate will unite Muslims to finally shake off the legacy of colonialism (“Banning the Hizb” n.pag.). HTB concludes that the attempt to ban the movement in the UK is therefore an instrument of British foreign policy designed to squelch the call for reinstatement of the caliphate (“Banning the Hizb” n.pag.).

As with the August 6, 2005 Press Statement, HTB's "Banning the Hizb" article remains archived on Hizb.org years later (with a trivial storage and bandwidth burden), is framed by continually updated, dynamically generated links and content—keeping the past in conversation with the present—and can be printed or emailed using affordances that are convenient and that tend to keep users on Hizb.org, and is capable of being commented on and shared through social bookmarking. By contrast, the Bright article is not now easily accessible online, even by searching the *New Statesman's* own website. HTB's uses of Bright's article are easier to find and more resilient, at least online, than the article itself.

Thus far, the primary artifact I have examined in this case study is Hizb.org as exemplified by particularly important pages resisting the proposed ban and offering possibilities (or at least perceptions) of participation and action, all reframed by continually updated dynamic content keeping the old new and providing nearly limitless expectations for performance of movement identity. The connections between Hizb.org and other websites form the basis of this study's next artifact: the online petition against the proposed ban. On August 12, 2005, a week after the proposed ban was announced, HTB posted an article on Hizb.org entitled "HT Moves Swiftly Against Proposed Ban." That article describes HTB's resistance to the ban, points out the support of other Muslim groups and some student groups for HTB's continued legal status, and urges site users to sign a petition hosted on the site Petition Online.

4.5 Online Petition

The website Petition Online claims that it provides site registrants with “the ancient methods of grassroots democracy, combined with the latest digital networked communications, running live and free 24 hours a day” (“WWW.PetitionOnline.com - Free Online Petition Hosting,” n.pag.). PetitionOnline™ is a trademark of Artifice, Inc., which is a Web advertising company based in Oregon (“Advertise @ www.PetitionOnline.com” n.pag.). As is the norm among providers of free Web services, Petition Online is able to host the petitions for free because its site uses scripts (with minimal file sizes) to serve targeted⁹¹ ads along with the user-created site content. As Artifice, Inc. describes it, “precision targeting, audited circulation, and detailed performance statistics are a given. Our advertisers have access to complete campaign reporting in real time” to monitor which ads get the best response (“Advertising @ www.PetitionOnline.com” n.pag.). In an expression of the inbound link as Web *ethos*, the site goes on to tout its “high profile link-ins” such as “CNN, the BBC, the *New York Times*, *Scientific American*, and more” (“Advertise @ www.PetitionOnline.com” n.pag.).

Hundreds of petitions addressing scores of issues are housed on the site. Users can “sign” the petitions and leave brief comments by entering a name and an email address into a JavaScript form. The site provides advice to registrants, including admonitions to proofread petitions closely and tips on generating traffic by promoting the petition on one’s own web pages, by email and newsgroup postings, by submitting the petition URL

⁹¹For example, one of the ads served along with Hassan Saleemi and Habibah Ellahee’s petition resisting the proposed ban on HTB is for www.Muslima.com, a Muslim friendship and marriage networking site.

directly to search engines (instead of waiting for the next crawl), and by trying to secure as many inbound links as possible so that the petition is ranked higher in search results (“Free Petition Submission Form” n.pag.; “Frequently Asked Questions” n.pag.).

To help resist the proposed ban on HTB, Hassan Saleemi and Habibah Ellahee uploaded a petition to Petition Online entitled “BANNING NON-VIOLENT HIZB-UT-TAHRIR (HT), IS THE REAL THREAT TO THE BRITISH WAY OF LIFE” (“BANNING” n.pag.). Petitions on the site require a “target” to be specified; in this case, the targets that Saleemi and Ellahee chose are “Tony Blair, the British Government, British Government Officials, MPs, & the Media worldwide” (“BANNING” n.pag.). The lengthy (1900-word) petition consists of an introduction followed by a series of paragraphs with upper-case headings, chunked into scannable paragraphs with headings that lend themselves to some of the online reading practices Sosnoski describes, particularly *filtering* (reader is highly selective) and *skimming* and *pecking* (reader does not necessarily follow linear sequence) (163).

The introduction sets the stage for the petition’s arguments by placing the proposed ban within the context of British values of non-violent political dissent and freedom of opinion, contending that “any ban on any peaceful organisation that has been consistently against violence, is the exact opposite of what the Prime Minister claimed when he said we should not allow the British way of life to be changed [by the 7/7 attacks]” (“BANNING” n.pag.). In other words, Saleemi and Ellahee position the proposed ban of a group accused of undermining British society as itself an undermining of British society.

The petition’s introduction goes on to present two claims that share one underlying

assumption: that HTB has *already* reached and persuaded a large audience, especially a youth audience. As a result, banning HTB could result in a backlash that the British government would find even more unpalatable than HTB's continued open criticisms. The first of these claims is that if Blair truly wishes to engage with Britain's young Muslims, "he would be seriously misguided in banning HTB, as they have held some of the largest conferences of Muslim youth in Britain" ("BANNING" n.pag.). In other words, if HTB can move large numbers of young British Muslims to convene at conferences, then those same young Muslims will not simply acquiesce in the movement being driven underground.

The second of these claims is that banning HTB will itself foster violent extremism: "We cannot emphasise enough how [a ban] will damage community relations, alienate the Muslim Youth, and further encourage a dangerous feeling of being under siege already bubbling in the Muslim community" ("BANNING" n.pag.). In this way, Saleemi and Ellahee, in support of HTB, can borrow heavily from the fear that violent extremism entails while at the same time distancing HTB from direct involvement in encouraging violence.

After the introduction sets the stage, the chunked, skimmable paragraphs offer arguments intended to refute allegations that HTB is violent, anti-Semitic, totalitarian, or anti-British ("BANNING" n.pag.). The petition's arguments consist almost entirely of quotations from HTB websites (Hizb.org and www.1924.org), leaflets, and press releases.⁹² The petition helps to create an "off the screen" sense of meaningful movement

⁹²For example, in arguing that HTB is not anti-Semitic, the petition simply copies text from on www.1924.org:

HT IS NOT ANTI-SEMETIC [*sic*]

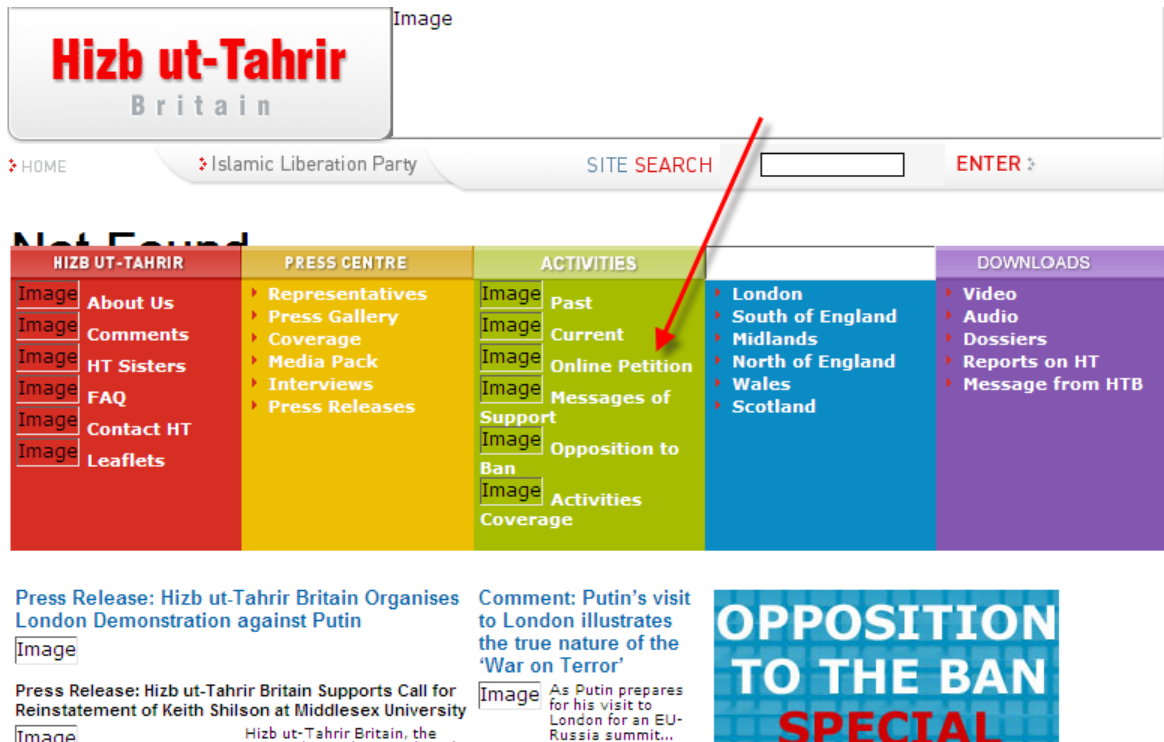
On their Website www.1924.org HT state:

"We reject decisively the charge of anti-Semitism because Islam is a message directed to all humankind. However, at the same time we decisively reject Zionism represented in the form

because a simple script allows signatories to email the petition to others and to add their own comments (“Send This Page to a Friend” n.pag.).

As of October 24, 2005, HTB featured an “off the screen” link to the petition on the home page of Hizb.org. As the following image shows, HTB placed a link to the petition in the center of Hizb.org home page navigation menus, featuring the link prominently as part of HTB’s campaign to oppose the ban.

Figure 4.4: Screenshot of Hizb.org index page as of October 24, 2005 (Internet Archive)



As examined previously, the relational thinking that hypertext suggests (perhaps

of Israel and Hizb ut-Tahrir, like the majority of other Muslim organisations, is opposed to the continued occupation of Palestine by the Israeli State. The state of Israel is founded upon a land that it took by force, after it drove out its people, both Muslim and Christian. This is injustice, which we will never accept from an Islamic perspective, regardless of the race of the perpetrators. In Palestine, Islam is in conflict with Israelis – not in their capacity as Jews who historically had lived alongside Muslims in peace and security for centuries – but in their capacity as occupiers and aggressors.”

(“BANNING” n.pag., quotation marks original)

demands) is at the core of Burke's psychology of form. As Landow and Burbules argue (see Chapter 3), linking helps create a sense of purposeful arrangement and movement, an arrival at a sense of possibilities and relationships. Of course, the link has a surface, literal meaning: *click here to read and sign a petition opposing the ban*. More importantly, though, relating an HTB website to a non-HTB website fosters a sense of meaningful progression from preaching to the choir to taking action in a larger rhetorical sphere. The movement, progression, and sharing of *ethos* that linking two sites affords can be had for the trifling price of a line of markup reading `[title]`. Indeed, the shared *ethos* of links is the heart of how search engines work and how pages find users in the first place. Link *ethos* is one of the chief ways in which the Web structures expectations and appetites, machinic and human.

Though HTB has not been banned, and thus the petition's exigence has passed, the petition is still available on Petition Online's site over three years later.⁹³ HTB paid nothing for the petition and pays nothing to have it live on, hosted by Petition Online and its parent company. The arguments presented in the petition are still relevant because HTB will always be a flash point of criticism, either for insufficient British patriotism or for radicalizing Muslims toward a theocratic goal. The petition, like the content HTB archives on its own site is, in a significant sense, evergreen.

The petition received over 900 signatures, although the anonymity provided by the Web complicates any potential conclusions about the petition's effectiveness or reach as measured solely by the number of signatures. First, HTB supporters could have signed

⁹³The latest date I reconfirmed that the petition is still accessible is December 22, 2008.

the petition multiple times using different names. Second, scores of obviously facetious signatures such as “Hannibal Lecter,” “Osama bin Laden,” and “Prophet Mohammed Was a Dick” attempt to make a travesty of the petition as meaningful political action. Third, some signatures purport to be from Muslims who disagree with what they believe is HTB’s vision of an Islamic state in which Muslims hold power, such as this entry, signed “dar al-islam”: “Not in my name! [HTB] is against democracy... Do not believe the lies told by these people. The umma will not prosper if they become powerful. Allah does not wish it” (“BANNING” n.pag., signature 925).

That last entry, either a genuine response from a Muslim opposed to HTB’s vision, or from someone attempting to undermine the petition by posing as a Muslim (and there is no way to prove which it is), underscores how HTB’s moderation of comments on its own web pages offers mostly just the *appearance* of a dialogue with site users. Because the petition is part of a site that HTB does not control, the Web’s speed, reach, and potential for responsiveness have also offered HTB opponents the chance to add and archive their contributions (both of the earnest and the “screw you” varieties) to the rhetorical agon of the proposed ban.

Yet, what remains important to this study is not an attempt to construct some yardstick by which the petition or its signatures could be measured as successful or genuine. What counts is the difference the Web makes in HTB’s (and its supporters’) attempts to reach audiences, to create a sense of anticipation and meaningful movement, and to perform the identity of Muslims working for the caliphate. Whether banning HTB would in fact alienate large groups of Muslim youth or give rise to violent extremism is far less important for the

purposes of this study than the petition's rhetorical efforts to portray HTB as powerful, important, able to move large groups of Muslims, and capable of building and sustaining passionate commitments to its cause.

In other words, what the petition *does* as symbolic action is central, just as it was to Burke, though he did not get the chance to examine the Web. The petition is yet another example of the Web providing a fast, convenient, easy, durable, widespread metamedium for the performance of the Muslim identity that HTB fosters: defiant, committed, unafraid, and taking all opportunities to spread the message of the caliphate. The petition provides another means of repurposing HTB content for a wide audience at no financial cost (the petition hosting is free) and minimal labor (`copy>paste` is easy when arguments share digital DNA). The Web makes a difference to the performance of HTB's view of Muslim identity in multiple forms for multiple potential audiences because it provides not only opportunity, but also a need, a pious, perfection-laden imperative, to use all of what the Web offers. God wills it, after all.

Thus far, I have examined HTB's uses of `Hizb.org` and Petition Online to resist the ban and to perform the role that HTB sets for itself: tireless vanguard offering a way of remaking the world to conform to God's mandate. The content I have examined so far consists mostly of (X)HTML markup and scripting to make web pages dynamic and keep them fresh. But HTB uses the Web as a metamedium in other ways, as my analysis of the next artifacts will show. I examine an extensive downloadable print document, a report that HTB created to offer sustained arguments against the proposed ban and setting forth a comprehensive statement of its movement identity.

4.6 “Radicalisation, Extremism, & ‘Islamism’: Realities and Myths in the War on Terror”

“Radicalisation, Extremism, & ‘Islamism’: Realities and Myths in the War on Terror” is a lengthy HTB report published on Hizb.org on July 12, 2007. The document is a forty-page, four-section 347 kilobyte PDF file, optimized for fast viewing on the Web,⁹⁴ and downloadable/printable from Hizb.org.

According to its viewable metadata, the document was designed and typeset using the Quark XPress®page-layout application. Quark is a professional-level application often used by magazines. The document is laid out in a three-column format with section headings on each page, internal subsection headings, pull quotes,⁹⁵ and the clean, contemporary typography available to users of programs like Quark. Specifically, “Radicalisation, Extremism, & ‘Islamism’” uses Minion-Pro for body text and subsection headings and uses UniversCondensed for pull quotes, titles, and section headings. The important point here for rhetorical purposes is that these fonts and this type of layout are typically available only to users of specialized layout software. This is not an amateurish or vernacular document produced using, say, a Microsoft®Publisher™ template. This document’s design and layout reinforce HTB’s *ethos* as an intellectual and cultural

⁹⁴PDF files can be optimized so that even lengthy documents like this one can be read online without causing users with slower connections or hardware to leave a site in frustration. “Fast web view” optimization alters a PDF file’s structure so that the Web server sends one page at a time, rather than the whole document (“Enable Fast Web View in a PDF” n.pag.)

⁹⁵A pull quote is a highlighted excerpt from a page’s text, typically set in a larger typeface, serving to highlight and reinforce key points from the body text.

vanguard, master of the rhetorical channels of the 21st century to spread the call for the caliphate.

As is the case with other HTB content on Hizb.org following the 2006 redesign, HTB frames the report (accessible via a text hyperlink and a thumbnail image of the report's cover that is also a clickable hyperlink) with continually updated links on the left and right sides of the page, keeping the report, in a sense, "fresh," while scripts running "behind the screen" allow users to leave comments and to add the page to social bookmarking or social media sites. In this case, as with every HT website I have read, the comments that appear on this page are all supportive. For example, a user named "Faarhan" commends the "Excellent Report!" for its analysis of difficult issues while "Shah" argues that "the whole worlds [*sic*] civilised people are looking for an alternative way of life that is not run by the CAPITALISTS.....The CALIPHATE is the only answer," and "Muzaffar Ahmad Dar" adds that the caliphate "is the ultimate way to get 1 (*sic*) world out of this hell" ("Report: Radicalisation, Extremism, & 'Islamism'" n.pag.).

Moving from context to text, a close reading of the content of "Radicalisation, Extremism, & 'Islamism'" shows how the document sets forth HTB's strivings to produce a particular Islamic ideology. As examined earlier, Burke's conception of ideology is not akin to false consciousness (Henderson 139), but instead centers on "the nodus of beliefs and judgments which the artist can exploit for his effects" (*Counter-Statement* 161). HTB uses "Radicalisation, Extremism, & 'Islamism'" to position its struggles as a striving for transcendence over oppression, division, and decline. Drawing on and performing HTB beliefs and judgments, the document opens with HTB's now-standard six paragraphs of

text constituting its self-description (also found verbatim on the web page framing the link to the report) as a non-violent “global Islamic party” seeking to “bring the Muslims back to” the glory and justice possible only under the caliphate, “preserving a strong Islamic identity” and countering the “propaganda aspect to the War on Terror” (3). A foreword to the report, signed by HTB’s Abdul Wahid, argues that the West (and its collaborators among corrupt, repressive governments in the Muslim world) have used the ill-defined concept of “terror” to justify three oppressive practices: an unending war based on “a reductionist Manichean dialectic,” crackdowns on dissenters (such as HTB), and arbitrary division of the Muslims faithful into *moderates* versus *extremists* (5). HTB aims to use the report not only to “expose” this motive but also to point to a transcendent “way forward, out of the mess and growing chaos” (5).

So it is not surprising that the report immediately positions HT as a global, powerful force in mapping that way forward, with appeals to HTB’s own self-fashioning as the voice of resistance “active in over 40 countries, touching all corners of the globe” (6). To move toward the caliphate and out from under the shadow of Western influence, HTB begins by drawing parallels between Western anti-Soviet propaganda from the Cold War era and what it describes as anti-Islamic propaganda (9). In the aftermath of waning support for funding wars with money and lives, HTB argues that what will one day prevail are “creedal principles and the yearning for a return to a civilization which led the world in tolerance and personal and societal development”—namely, the caliphate (9). As HTB maps it, the movement from Western influence to the growing unsustainability of that influence (because violence and corruption underpin it) to the triumph of Islam as a creed mean that

“[t]he Caliphate may soon become the defining debate of our age,” much as the Cold War was the defining debate of earlier generations (9).

To build a case for the cohesiveness and massive collective effort necessary to mobilize change on what it positions as the defining debate for the world to resolve, HTB devotes the first full section of the report to, as the section’s title highlights, “challenging the narrative” that divides Muslims along arbitrary labels such as *radical*, *moderate*, and *extremist*. First, HTB argues that applying Western notions and terminology to Islam is inappropriate because the Muslim tradition does not segregate life into separate spheres, such as the personal, the religious, and the public (10-11). Thus, contends HTB, using the suffix “-ism” to denote politicization of an idea (as in “Islamism”) misses the mark because Islam is “inherently political” and not merely a personal code of ethics or personal spiritual experience (11).

Next, HTB argues that (and this is consistent with its view of Islam as political through and through) British Muslims have only become *politicized* in the sense of waking up to injustice, governmental “double standards,” and attacks on their faith, rather than *radicalized*, a word that always carries connotations of incipient violence (12). HTB stresses that major factors in this growing politicization of British Muslims include globalized media, particularly “alternative and uncensored” news sources “that have challenged state sponsored and traditional news reporting” (12, 13). Though HTB does not refer to itself by name in making this particular point, anyone with a passing familiarity with HTB’s online and offline efforts to act as a news portal for reporting (and

framing and commenting on) the news of the day could see the connection between this means of politicization, positioned as crucial, and HTB itself.

Indeed, HTB appeals to the “huge networks of information made possible through the internet” as one reason why the West can no longer cover up its misdeeds and why Muslim political consciousness is growing (13). HTB goes on to contend that because previous attempts at integrating Islam into politics have not worked and because Muslims are starting to see that the problems facing them have particular Islamic importance, what is really happening with so-called *radicalization* is simply a move to the political/religious relationship that is “intrinsic to Islam” (13).

The report’s second section builds on HTB’s efforts to change the narrative that would divide Muslims and keep them weak and on the hope that HTB offers in the form of the caliphate rising to prominence as a global issue on par with the Cold War. Here, HTB seeks to uncouple what it argues is the too-easy association of political Islam with terrorism. Citing studies such as Robert Pape’s *Dying to Win: the Strategic Logic of Suicide Terrorism*—which argues that suicide terrorism is primarily based on political, not religious, reasons and is correlated strongly with foreign occupation (Pape 21)—HTB contends that calls to return to the caliphate are not only non-violent, but predate the 20th-century tactic of suicide terrorism (15). Once again, HTB works to position what has been portrayed as relatively recent, fringe, radical Islamic political thought as the new mainstream.

Moreover, HTB positions itself at the forefront of non-violent collective efforts to seek justice and a return to an Islamic political system by not only citing its long history and wide

global reach, but also taking on Baran's "conveyor belt" metaphor by arguing that potential militants have been converted by different HT branches into non-violent movement actors (15, 19). This is a reverse conveyor belt, if you will. Against the backdrop of the proposed ban, HTB emphasizes that its understanding of God's revelations make violence, even violence on behalf of the caliphate, "impossible, either in theory and [sic] practice," such that nobody can join HT without first adopting non-violent principles (15-16).

Juxtaposed against this stated commitment to non-violence is a series of arguments attempting to blur the West's terministic boundaries between terrorism and resistance, especially in the context of struggles for national autonomy or to overthrow oppression. Citing high-*ethos*, mostly Western sources as diverse as John Locke, Thomas Paine, Thomas Jefferson, Ronald Reagan, and Nelson Mandela, HTB argues that the selfsame arguments that have been used against creating an Islamic state could have been used against creating American independence, driving the Soviets out of Afghanistan, or overthrowing apartheid (19-20). HTB contends that just as the West and its Muslim-world puppets characterize Islamic political movements as threats to stability and order, so too could writings such as Paine's *Common Sense* have been considered a "conveyor belt" to violence (20). HTB thus appropriates some Western icons of resistance and freedom to make the case that the line between proper and improper resistance cannot be drawn by those in power.

After refashioning the question of what is mainstream and what is radical, HTB attempts to sever connections between the caliphate and fears of a violent, hyperreligious state. In essence, HTB attempts to reweave the narrative of what it would mean to Muslims

and non-Muslims if there were (finally, again) a state governed by Islamic law. Quoting George W. Bush's characterization of the caliphate as "a totalitarian empire" of "effectively Taliban states," (qtd. in "Radicalisation, Extremism & Islamism" 21) HTB argues that Western powers have used the values and starting points of liberal democratic political philosophy to willfully misread the caliphate (22). So long as the West uses its own political philosophy and looks to its own institutions as the universal standard for reforming the Muslim world (as Burke would have it, so long as the West uses its own ideals as the terministic screen), the caliphate will always be characterized as aberrant, alien, backward, and a threat to stability and order (22-23).

To, as HTB puts it, "reframe" the discourse surrounding the caliphate, the report returns to the past, citing the Qur'an and Islamic scholars who contend that the caliphate is central to Islam (23). For HTB, the caliphate is central to Islam because it makes it possible for Islam to flourish as a comprehensive way of life (not just as a private belief) (23). Far from being a creation of contemporary Islamist movements or a relic of the past, HTB emphasizes, the caliphate is the subject of an extensive body of scholarly writings through the ages, culminating in the works of HT founder al-Nabhani (24). The report goes on to reach out to Shiites, contending that despite Islam's split into Shia and Sunni denominations over the question of who should lead the *ummah* after Muhammad died, there was agreement that *someone* should be the caliph (24). In short, HTB positions the caliphate as the underpinning of Islam, not an aberration, and despite the leadership question that divided Islam into denominations, all Muslims can agree that (some version

of) the caliphate is mandatory if Muslims are to live out the rights and duties laid down by God (24).

As it does consistently, HTB positions 1924—the year the Ottoman Caliphate was dissolved—as the fallen condition from which Muslims must recover (and out of which the movement offers a path). Every redemptive narrative of a fall and return to grace depends on an identifiable, clear moment for that fall; in HTB’s case, 1924 serves as that moment. HTB portrays 1924 as “the end of a 1350 year-old institution that had existed from the time of the Prophet Muhammad himself” (24). HTB’s efforts to position *the* caliphate as a unified, unbroken political and religious entity spanning 1350 years—despite the existence of many factual and historical counter-arguments to this unitary vision—⁹⁶ are the end result of its three-stage vision of a return to the divinely-mandated political order.

In such a vision, with a golden past, a fallen present, and a vanguard offering a hope for the future, collective identity cannot be splintered by questions of what the caliphate “really” was at different times and in diverse places throughout history. Building on this unified Islamic history, HTB goes on to argue that the caliphate will improve the Muslim and non-Muslim worlds alike by replacing dictators and Western puppets with a ruler

⁹⁶The report does concede that Muslim states existed under different leaders with different titles (*khilafah*, *sultan*, *amir*), but contends nevertheless that “the political philosophy and the general structure of the state’s apparatus was not a point of variance” (“Radicalisation, Extremism & Islamism” 29). That contention is—to understate the point greatly—highly controversial. As Julia Voelker McQuaid, an analyst with the federally-funded think tank CNA Corporation points out, some caliphs (such as the opulent 10th century caliph al-Muqtadir) did not follow the ascetic, self-denying example of Muhammad and the first four “rightly guided” caliphs (“The Struggle for Unity and Authority” 3). Moreover, the caliphates of earlier eras were decentralized (3), unlike the centralized “Islam-as-ideology” model of a state that engineers social and political justice that has underpinned HT’s persuasive efforts for over five decades. In McQuaid’s view, groups that “advocate a caliphate model—most notably [HT]—tend not to examine the assumptions implicit in their vision” (3). I don’t aim to settle questions of Islamic history, but it is within the purview of this study to illuminate HTB’s copious rhetorical investments in presenting a vision of *the* caliphate as unitary and in building an overarching Muslim identity as against the West, against sectarian and national differences, and against historical counter-narratives.

chosen by the people, who works within a system of checks and balances (including a representative assembly and independent judiciary), who implements Islamic values, seeks to eradicate poverty, and provides credible leadership on Islam's role in daily life (26-28). In short, state will be reconciled with religion, which is God's mandate in revealing Islam as a comprehensive way of life (28-29).

Finally, and as a call to action, HTB argues that a transformative vision of the caliphate is the only way forward for Muslims (and for the West, unless it wants to continue to have an ideological enemy). This final section builds on the previous three sections to show why partial or progressive reform from within existing political systems cannot work. First, HTB claims that what the West (and Muslim rulers in league with the West) portray as fringe or radical Islam is in fact orthodox Islam that adheres to a core set of beliefs and traditions to which most Muslims subscribe, despite regional, ethnic, or sectarian differences (30-31). The real causes of political unrest and instability in the Muslim world, argues HTB, are not calls for an Islamist state; the causes of instability are colonialism's arbitrary carving up of the Middle East and current political institutions imposed on Muslims (institutions underwritten by the West and Western-educated elites but not built on Muslim "traditions or values") (32-33). As a result, HTB emphasizes, the failure to marry Islam and the political order has yielded totalitarianism, tyranny, and injustice (34).

For HTB, Islam enjoys "a traditional role of constraining tyranny" (34). Given that public position—that Islam is a counter to tyranny—an October 9, 2001 "communiqué" attributed to HT's Media Office and posted on K.com is of particular interest. Often cited

by HT critics,⁹⁷ the communiqué is entitled “America and Britain Declare War Against Islam and the Muslims” and voices HT support for the Afghan Taliban regime:

One of the aims of this oppressive war is to uproot the aspiration of the Muslims for the re-establishment of the rule by Islam, and to remove the Taliban government after it freed itself from the American subjugation and from the Western subjugation in general.

...

Over the necks of the Muslims [America and Britain] established agent rulers who inflict on [Muslims] a horrible torment to ... oppose any movement working ... to restore the rule of Islam... What America and Britain are doing is displaying their enmity for the Islamic *Ummah*. They are enemies; a state of war exists between them and all the Muslims that necessitates adopting an actual state of war as a basis for dealing with them according to the dictates of the *Shari'ah* rules. (“Communiqué n.pag.)

For decades, and in many countries, HT has built and sustained a movement fueled in part by portrayals of the West and of leaders in Muslim countries as tyrants. Tyranny

⁹⁷In an online article, “Hizb ut-Tahrir: An Emerging Threat to U.S. Interests in Central Asia,” Heritage Foundation scholar and HT critic Ariel Cohen cites the communiqué, attributing it to K.com as of October 14, 2001, with a now-defunct URL of www.khilafah.com/home/category.php?DocumentID=2428&TagID=3. Yet the Web’s vast reach and the digital DNA of online communications that facilitates capture and storage cut both ways. While HTB can maintain what amounts to an archive of its content, so can critics and scholars. The communiqué is, perhaps not surprisingly after the proposed ban, absent from the now-redesigned K.com and HT Media Office site. However, a simple Google search with the communiqué’s title as the search term reveals that the document has been preserved on multiple pages that HT does not control, including H-Net and a page in Pakistan. The text of the document as contained on these non-HT pages appears identical.

is, for HT, an all-purpose Devil term that serves as a foil against which the just, pious, state of the caliphate can find the sharper rhetorical focus that contrast brings. Thus, it is surprising to find HT's Media Office coming out publicly in favor of the Taliban regime, a regime whose brutal, arbitrary practices; subjugation of women; destruction of cultural monuments (such as the Bamiyan Buddha statues); and trade in opium would seem to provide an example of yet another experiment in an Islamic state gone wrong, yet another example that the caliphate (as it envisions it) is the only answer, yet another example that nonviolent movement activities are the path to change.

Instead, though, the communiqué cites several of the Q'uran's most bellicose verses and positions the Taliban as another "movement. . . working to restore the rule of Islam," while passing over the Taliban's crimes ("Communiqué" n. pag.). Though this communiqué is long gone from HT websites, the Taliban regime may be a touchstone for HT in that it was the sole Islamic government that surely did *not* work to preserve Western hegemony. Thus, the Taliban is more ideologically and theologically pure (and therefore more in need of the support of HT's audiences who are to respond to the call to arms) than other Muslim regimes. In the bargain between an extreme religious piety and the open debate that HT often calls for, HT (through its Media Office) cast its lot with piety. It is hard to imagine a regime whose policies and practices are more "rotten with perfection" and "pious" (in a Burkean sense) than the Taliban. Little wonder, then, that HT critics position HT as the "conveyor belt" to an incipient radicalized violence.

Ultimately, as the public face of Hizb.org and HTB's efforts to engage in sustained written argument about radicalization, the report calls for more debate and dialectic, placing

the onus on “Western politicians and thinkers” to find a way to deal with Muslims that acknowledges Muslims’ rights to create their own political futures based, of course, on the caliphate (35). Yet, as the communiqué shows, it is difficult to pin down the public face of just what constitutes HT movement identity. As we have seen, Hizb.org’s *ethos* is that of a news portal and HTB positions itself as intellectual vanguard—strident, to be sure—but using argument, debate, and non-violent protest in the UK as its methods. Different Web sites (K.com, the Media Office site) appeal to different audiences and sub-audiences of HT supporters while performing different aspects of Islamic identity and duties. A polished, well-organized, white-paper-style report issued by HTB is not the same as a message rousing support for the Taliban, declaring a state of war and marshaling Quranic verses about fighting one’s enemies issued by the HT Media Office.⁹⁸

The Web’s wide reach and the relative ease with which content can be created, duplicated, disseminated, and preserved can result in different websites presenting different aspects of a social movement’s “brand.” To push the corporate metaphor even further, the Web lowers barriers to communication and performance of movement identity. Among those barriers that the Web flattens out are geography, expense, production, and delivery. As the pro-Taliban statement highlights, one consequence of this flattening of barriers is the chance to present different faces to a global public to carry out different movement functions.

As the next series of artifacts I will examine shows, HTB uses the Web to preserve and maximize connections between online and offline movement activities and to position users

⁹⁸Indeed, the report cites only two verses, neither of which has to do with war (23, 29).

as movement actors to distribute its digital content elsewhere. The Web is qualitatively different from earlier mediated events, not only because digital production, delivery, and experience involve a greater Agent role for the machine, but also because the machine's greater Agent role suggests different Agent roles for human actors. In other words, the Web makes it easy for audiences to become producers. A revolutionary movement needs all the Agents it can get. Small wonder, then, that New Social Movements centered on identity, focusing on personal connection to ideology to foster collective action, and dispersed⁹⁹ have taken to the Web as a major rhetorical sphere in which to seek change.

4.7 Rajab Conferences: C2007 . com and “Khilafah: The Need and the Method” (X)HTML Pages; UK Khilafah Conference Digital Videos

For HTB, the caliphate is backed by God's will (thus, it *will* be implemented, provided Muslims do not shirk their duties); by contrast, the proposed ban is backed only by the temporal, secular authority of the British government. Thus, one HTB strategy in resisting the ban is to build a sense of meaningful, indeed *inevitable*, movement from one stage of history to another as supported by movement from one persuasive campaign to another. To put it pointedly, in a hierarchy between God and the Blair government, God wins; after all, who is afraid of the government if God and millions of your brothers and sisters in God are

⁹⁹These features of NSMs are drawn from Hauser and Whalen's definitions and arguments. See Chapter 2, section 2.11.

with you? If HTB can perform an identity consistent with reaching Muslims worldwide, summoning large audiences, forging connections between online and offline activities, and repurposing content to keep old campaigns fresh, any deterrent or speech-chilling effect of a proposed ban is minimized.

Highlighting its own ability to reach and mobilize the Muslim masses, multiple HT branches held a series of conferences during the Islamic month of Rajab in the summer of 2007. The conferences were timed to fall near the date (under the lunar Islamic calendar) on which the Ottoman Caliphate was abolished and were held in London, Jakarta, Kuwait, Lebanon, Palestinian Territory, the Netherlands, Malaysia, and Pakistan. Some of the conferences drew huge audiences, such as the Jakarta conference, which filled the Bung Karno soccer stadium with crowds estimated between 80,000-100,000 strong. Part of HT's mission in hosting the conferences was to resist, as HTB put it in its promotional flyer for the London conference, "Distortions of the Image of the Islamic Caliphate State Propogated by Western Governments through the War on Terror" ("International Caliphate Conference 2007, London" n.pag.).

To promote the conferences, HTB used the same server space it uses for `Hizb.org` and another low-cost Joomla! template¹⁰⁰ to create `C2007.com`. `C2007.com`'s purpose was to create anticipation for the HT conference in Jakarta and the HTB conference in London, as well as to offer arguments in favor of the caliphate as the answer to, for example, the plight of Palestinians, as reflected in the site's tag line: "Caliphate: Liberating

¹⁰⁰`C2007.com`'s XHTML markup, viewable in any browser, reveals that HTB subscribed to the Rocket Theme Joomla! Templates Club, a service that provides scores of high-quality templates at minimal cost (such as 80 templates for only \$50).

the Muslim World from Occupation, Chaos and Injustice” (C2007.com home page). Like Hizb.org and K.com, C2007.com is structured with XHTML 1.0 Transitional markup, styled with Cascading Style Sheets, and uses scripting to offer users a dynamic site experience, including the ability to print, email, or download content, the ability to watch, download or distribute a video “trailer” for the Jakarta conference, and the ability to leave comments or contact HTB.

As part of HTB’s efforts to attract the attention, so to speak, of search engine spiders (which means attracting the attention of Web users), the XHTML <keywords> tags on C2007.com’s pages are broad, attempting to push C2007.com near the top of search engine results for “Caliphate, Khilafah, Islamic State, Islam, Politics, Islamic Politics, Hizb ut-Tahrir, events, Conference, International Khilafah Conference, Jakarta.”

Although these tags mention only the Jakarta conference, the first item on C2007.com’s home page promotes HTB’s London Conference, whose theme was “Khilafah: The Need & the Method.” Among the items C2007.com site users can view, download, print, and distribute is a digital image¹⁰¹ of a flyer promoting the London conference and directing viewers to C2007.com for more information. The flyer blends images and text to construct a message of urgency, Muslim unity, and a shared enemy, the West, all of which coalesce in the caliphate as the answer to Muslims’ problems, with the conference as an important step toward solving those problems. In keeping with HTB’s Web-based rhetoric

¹⁰¹Specifically, the image is a Portable Network Graphics (.png) file, an image format particularly suited to the Web because it can be manipulated without loss of image quality and it can be compressed better than other image formats, reducing storage burden and download times.

of providing possibilities for action, on C2007.com, site users can not only view the flyer, but they can also (thanks to scripts running behind the screen, clear affordances indicated with common icons, and print style sheets) create a PDF file of the flyer, print it, or email it. Even without scripts, the flyer's materiality as a digital image makes it easy to capture with a simple right-click on a Web browser, to edit with common image-editing software, and to disseminate, if only as an email attachment.

Below is how the flyer appeared to C2007.com users.¹⁰²

¹⁰²I have scaled down the image file to fit it on the page. As it appears on C2007.com, the flyer image is 613 x 870 pixels (6.4 x 9 inches)—too large to fit well on this page.

Figure 4.5: HTB's Flyer for London Khilafah Conference



The flyer's text positions HTB as participating in "a global campaign to raise awareness for Khilafah"; as part of that campaign, HTB's London conference will "expos[e] the current rhetoric behind the 'War on Terror,' explor[e] the challenges faced by the Muslim Ummah in the pursuit of unity and [present] a solution to global problems the world faces" ("Khilafah: the Need & the Method" n.pag). For HTB, the solution to all these problems

is, of course, “restoration of *the* Khilafah” (“Khilafah: the Need & the Method” n.pag, emphasis added). Indirectly responding to governmental scrutiny such as the proposed ban, HTB positions the caliphate as “far from being a cause of world chaos and misery”; indeed, HTB contends that the caliphate “stands as the one solution that can bring stability and justice” worldwide (“Khilafah: the Need & the Method” n.pag). In short, these are textual performances of HTB’s identity as leaders showing the way forward to a just and unified Islamic state, resisting portrayals of political Islam as linked with terrorism, capable of reaching Muslims in multiple media, and commanding a wide audience sufficient to sustain a series of conferences.

Along with these textual performances, the flyer uses images to tell a redemptive story of Muslims’ current plight. On a green background (the color green is iconically Muslim),¹⁰³ the flyer presents an image of a group of poor African Muslim children and an image of Western soldiers on patrol in Iraq; these images tell a story of suffering, oppression, and invasion. (“Khilafah: the Need & the Method” n.pag). However, a way forward, a way out of the Muslim world’s fallen condition, appears at the bottom center of the flyer. There, a rear shot of a Muslim man facing the sacred Dome of the Rock on Jerusalem’s Temple Mount is bathed in light from above, the same light bathing a globe that hovers above the Dome (“Khilafah: the Need & the Method” n.pag). The narrative is unmistakable: rulers of nominally Muslim countries have neglected their people and the

¹⁰³One reason for green’s iconic status in Islam can be found in the Qur’an’s descriptions of the reward waiting for “those who believe and work righteousness” (18:31). The righteous believers are described as wearing “green garments of fine silk and heavy brocade” (18:31). Further possible explanations can be found in Christopher Beam’s article “Islamic Greenwashing: Why is the Color Green so Important in the Muslim World?” cited in the Works Cited.

West has invaded and exploited the Middle East; yet, at the center is Islam, the way up and out, the way mandated and blessed from above. God, through HTB, leads the passage from one stage of the journey to the next. Anticipation for the conference is anticipation for justice.

Eventually, anticipation becomes action. On August 4, 2007, HTB held its “Khilafah: the Need & the Method” conference at London’s Alexandra Palace. Drawing crowds of what reporter Jane Perlez described as “relatively well-heeled Muslims” and as “information technology managers, bankers and teachers” (“London Gathering” n.pag.; “Radical Islamic Party Convenes” n.pag.), the conference offered a slate of six talks by HTB and HT spokespersons, an “expert panel,” and a question-and-answer panel. Accounts of the conference’s size vary. HTB contends that the conference was “momentous,” drawing “thousands” to hear talks delivered in “packed” theaters (“Thousands Attend” n.pag.). Perlez estimated that the conference drew “several thousand” while the BBC estimated the crowd at around two thousand (“London Gathering” n.pag.; “Islamist Message” n.pag.).

Now that the London and other conferences have passed, HTB archives conference content on Hizb.org using a subsite. As of October 11, 2007, the home page of the Rajab Conferences subsite would have appeared much like¹⁰⁴ this:

¹⁰⁴As explained earlier, a qualifier such as this is necessary because of differences in web browsers, screen sizes and resolutions, style sheet choices, and individual settings.

Figure 4.6: Partial screenshot of Rajab Conferences subsite main page on Hizb.org as of October 11, 2007 (Internet Archive)

KHILAFAH
Global Awareness Conferences Rajab 1428

Press | What's New | Sitemap | Contact Us

Home | Who is HT? | What can I do | Resources | Multimedia | In The Community | Rajab Conferences

Video | Audio | HTB Publications

Tuesday, 14 August 2007

Video

- Indonesia International Khilafah Conference video Part 2
- Indonesia International Khilafah Conference video Part 1
- Ramallah Khilafah Rally: Video Highlights
- Documentary: Khilafah: The Need For Change
- Recitation of Qur'an and Chairman's Introduction
- Talk 1: The Muslim World Today
- Talk 2: A View from the Muslim Street
- Talk 3: Khilafah An Established Obligation
- Talk 4: The Khilafah and Women
- Expert Panel
- Question & Answer Panel
- Khilafah: A Global Call
- Talk 6: A Global Call

News Coverage

- Al-Jazeera Arabic Report: Lebanon and Indonesia Khilafah Conference
- IslamOnline - Taji Mustafa and an Islamic Caliphate
- Khilafah Conference International television news roundup part 2
- Dar Al-Hayat: Promised Sultanate and Bomb
- Khilafah Conference International television news roundup part 1
- Independent: Islamists rally to demand creation of Muslim state
- Pak Daily Times: Thousands gather in Jakarta to 'revive caliphate'
- EuroNews: Video - HT Jakarta Conference
- Reuters: Video of Indonesia Khilafah Conference
- BBC World Video: Thousands

A global awareness campaign during the month of Rajab brought together thousands around the globe calling for the return of the Khilafah. On Sunday 12th August 2007, more than 100,000 Muslims in Indonesia gathered at the **International Khilafah Conference**, this spectacular event brought together an array of key activists. Unfortunately three key international speakers, Dr Imran Waheed, Sheikh Ismail al-Wahwah and Sheikh Issam Ameerah from Al-Quds were prevented from entering Jakarta, Dr Imran Waheed was deported upon arrival. His speech was televised from outside the country.

On Saturday 4th August 2007, Hizb ut-Tahrir Britain held a Khilafah Conference, a host of speakers addressed a packed Alexandra Palace hall on the challenges the Muslim World faces and how only through the re-establishment of Islam in state and society will we as an ummah overcome these problems.

The International media who routinely downplay the sentiments from the 'Muslim street' for Islam could not avoid addressing these conferences. The BBC's Lucy Williamson reported the huge Indonesia audience and newspapers across the Arab world reported on the growing call for Khilafah.

Two conferences were held in Palestine, one in the West Bank was attended by 12,000 and was reported by the **International Herald Tribune**, the Ameer of Hizb ut-Tahrir Sheikh Ata' abu Rishita also spoke at the conference via a pre-broadcast speech. Sheikh Issam Ameerah of Palestine in an interview to this site also spoke of the success of the conferences (pictures to follow).

So far conferences have been held in Indonesia, Britain, Kuwait, Lebanon, Palestine, Netherlands, Malaysia and Pakistan. Later this month on the 26th August 2007, Hizb ut-Tahrir Denmark will host a Khilafah Conference.

We will be updating this page as more information arrives. We pray these conferences build the momentum for change.

The subsite's home page uses an XHTML template with PHP scripting (allowing, for example, the links framing the page content, as seen above, to be updated easily). This template is similar to the template from which HTB builds the rest of the content on Hizb.org, but the color scheme has been changed to a Muslim green similar to the London conference flyer. Also similar to the London conference flyer is the image of the Muslim man facing Temple Mount, though it is repurposed here in a smaller version and is not flanked by scenes of suffering and occupation in the Muslim world, just scenes of Muslim action ("Khilafah Global Awareness Conferences" n.pag.).

HTB associates the conferences in Jakarta and London by using an image of the

packed stadium in Jakarta and an image of HTB's Imran Waheed at the London conference ("Khilafah Global Awareness Conferences" n.pag.). On the page, HTB makes arguments about how successful the series of conferences were and how the conferences made traditional media finally take notice of Muslims' collective desire for change ("Khilafah Global Awareness Conferences" n.pag.). Framing those arguments are news stories that HTB copy>pasted to the subsite. As examined previously, this strategy keeps users on the subsite or on Hizb.org while creating the appearance of meaningful movement across the Web with many links to click and many different types of content from far-flung and diverse sources ("Khilafah Global Awareness Conferences" n.pag.). Landow's "rhetoric of arrival" (a move from *here* to *there* designed to be experienced as meaningful) is, through the copy>pasting that online artifacts enable, *here* refashioned into a rhetoric of always arriving at HTB's message.

On Hizb.org, HTB presents 34 captioned digital images of the conference. The page is dated August 6, 2007 and is still available as of May 1, 2009. These captioned images lead site users on a chronological narrative of the conference from before it begins to its crescendo in the final talk. The images depict setup activities, arrival of conference attendees, HTB spokespersons being interviewed, Muslim men praying, book tables offering HTB and HT literature, speakers delivering talks, and large audiences listening to the talks and asking questions ("Photos: UK Khilafah Conference 2007" n.pag.). The images build presence and salience. Site users, even if they were not at the conference, can participate in its narrative arc, including clear links between the conference and the other

ways HTB constantly performs its view of Islamic identity: through the written word, through collective action, through media appearances, and through prayer.

As one example of the kind of immediacy that HTB attempts to build into this narrative arc is the image below.

Figure 4.7: Digital image from HTB London Khilafah Conference on Hizb.org captioned “The audience”



The image¹⁰⁵ is a rear shot of male conference attendees from a point of view that one might have if in the theater during the talk. The speaker at the podium is Jalaluddin Patel, conference chair and former head of HTB. As the image establishes, speakers’ talks were broadcast to the conference audience on two huge screens flanking the stage. The image builds a sense of immediacy for users of Hizb.org (whether that immediacy is grounded

¹⁰⁵The image is a 500 x 333 pixel (about 5.2 x 3.5 inch) JPEG (a compression method named for its creator, the Joint Photographic Experts Group) file with a size of just 60.7 kilobytes. I have scaled the image to fit the margins of this page.

in a user's memory of actually having been at the conference or vicariously). Moreover, it performs HTB's professional, well-produced, technologically adept *ethos*—the *ethos* of the “information technology managers, bankers and teachers” described in the *Tribune* article. Maintaining that *ethos* is crucial because critics of political Islam argue consistently that Islamic law and politics are backward relics of a much earlier age. Certainly, regimes like the Taliban provide ample reinforcement for such critiques.

However, for HTB, the Web is not merely a means of disseminating a message; the Web, like the conference stage, is a highly managed performative space upon which HTB points the way forward to its vision of the just, truly “advanced” state. Conference subsite users can both view HTB's performance on that stage and take up their own roles in the drama. Users may download, save, print, or email site content. They may repurpose audio and video. They may bookmark conference content on social bookmarking sites as, for example, someone using the name “nostalgic4khilafah” has done by posting bookmarks on [Delicious.com](#). Finally, they may attempt to drive traffic to the subsite and increase search engine rankings, as user “Umm Sulayyem”¹⁰⁶ has done on [ejaan.com](#) by linking to HTB's conference pages and adding her own commentary that “although I recommend you listen to all the talks, the *Khilafah: Need for change* documentary and the comments by the Expert Panel are a MUST see *inshahAllah*”¹⁰⁷ (“*Khalfiah*” [*sic*] n.pag.).

But perhaps the best examples of HTB's use of the Web as a stage for both creators of

¹⁰⁶This user name was evidently chosen advisedly. Umm Sulayyem, also transliterated as Umm Salim, was a Muslim woman of Muhammad's era who helped win converts for Islam and who was adept at tending the wounds of Muslim fighters (*Ghadanfar* 13).

¹⁰⁷*InshaAllah* means “if God wills it.” It is a common formulaic statement used after expressions of intended action or future possibilities.

official movement messages and for site users to perform movement identity related to the Rajab conferences are the digital videos that opened and closed the London conference. As the conference's introduction, HTB played a 17-minute "documentary" entitled "Khilafah: The Need for Change"; similarly, the conference concluded with the 6-minute video "Khilafah: A Global Call" ("Thousands Attend" n.pag.; "Documentary: Khilafah: The Need For Change" n.pag.; "Khilafah: A Global Call" n.pag.). Both videos have been uploaded to YouTube while "Khilafah: The Need" has also been repurposed on K . com to maximize the video's online exposure on two HTB sites.

These videos are significant, highly adept rhetorical artifacts that help illuminate this dissertation's core inquiry of what difference the Web makes to HTB's collective efforts to strive for the caliphate. Indeed, the relative ease of manipulating and combining digital audio and video tracks and adding titles and transitions by selecting menu items in applications such as iMovie underscores the complex interactions of what Manovich calls the software and cultural layers, not to mention the role of automation—that is, the machine as a kind of co-author. The videos repurpose footage prepared by others, particularly news broadcasts and BBC films, giving them a new persuasive life and context in weaving a counter-narrative, namely a divinely mandated, comprehensive plan for Muslims to overcome oppression. But that plan is lived out through HTB's self-fashioned ideological vanguardism: HTB portrays itself in the video as having the true information, the answers, the next step in meaningful movement toward God's will and to justice.

Much of the footage used to assemble these videos (especially "Khilafah: the Need") to build new persuasive artifacts appears to be television news footage, even when identifying

markers such as the BBC's logo or news studio sets are absent. Such footage can be captured simply by recording news broadcasts or by downloading video clips from the Web, either from "official" media websites or from sites such as YouTube, where news and documentary films—regardless of the niceties of copyright law—are often uploaded by users. This repurposing of footage helps HTB perform, on its websites and at conferences, the role of "news portal" or "alternative press" serving the Muslim world. Where are Muslims to look for information and answers to their concerns? Hizb.org. Who is standing for justice? HTB. How can one participate in this resistance and drive for justice? Start by pointing a browser to Hizb.org.

As the kickoff to the London conference, "Khilafah: The Need" aims to set the tone for the day's events, establishing urgency to call audiences (at the conference and online) to action. Using some of the same documentary and newsreel footage that can be seen in the earlier video "Engagement Not Fear," "Khilafah: The Need" presents, set to music, a litany of 20th century colonialism, wars, and political wranglings in the Middle East, including the creation of the state of Israel, which HTB seeks to delegitimize by using scare quotes: "Israel." A central conceit of the video is to offer audiences the point of view of a satellite zooming over the globe, showing (much as HTB does in its rhetoric) a sweeping overview of history. Consistent with HTB's view of an unbroken caliphate finally abolished (through Western strong-arming, hegemony, and arbitrary nation-states), the dissolution of the Ottoman Caliphate figures heavily in the video, with Britain and "the perpetrator Mustafa Kemal" playing the roles of hegemon and traitor to which HTB assigns them. To underscore this low ebb to which the Muslim faithful have sunk, the video

presents late 20th and early 21st century events, including the Bosnian War, the current Iraq War, Hindu violence against Muslims in India, Russian military action in Chechnya, and the Palestinian-Israeli conflicts with many shots of dead and wounded bodies, bloodstained rubble, and women crying—including an elderly woman crying out, as the text on-screen translates: “May Allah avenge us.”

The video builds to a crescendo in the waning minutes, relying on the images compiled in the figure below.

Figure 4.8: Combined Frame Grabs from video “Khilafah: The Need for Change”



The satellite’s eye zooms in on a map of Africa, the Middle East, and South Asia with individual nations’ flags arrayed on the map. As the satellite fixes its eye on the

map, it obscures the map, glowing green, suggesting a process of change. A voice-over and text translation appears on the screen, asking “Will you not move soon, O nation of Islam?” followed by “For how much longer?” and “....and then there will be a Khilafah in accordance with the method of the Prophet.” The satellite’s eye reopens and the map divided into individual nations is now transformed into the all-encompassing oneness of a huge white flag with the Arabic text for the *shahada*, the Islamic profession of faith.¹⁰⁸ White text on a black background declares that “The change needs to be a political change,” that “The change need [*sic*] to [be] a comprehensive change,” and that “The change needs to be Khilafah.” These exhortations are followed by a quote from HT founder al-Nabhani about carrying the Islamic message to reestablish the Islamic state, a verse from the Q’uran, and a saying attributed to Muhammad about the need for the caliphate. This video sets the tone for the conference: transformation, possibilities, and identity—all underwritten by divine mandate—will carry the day against Islam’s enemies. That same tone persists in the Rajab Conferences subsite, where much of the tremendous work that went into the conference can still pay dividends in persuasion and identification.

Another video, “Khilafah: A Global Call,” concluded the conference. Like the opening video, this video is a call to action. Just as with the opening video, this video is archived and available on Hizb.org and has also been uploaded to YouTube. This second video is much shorter and takes a more agonistic stance. As HTB describes it, this video “presents the growing call for Khilafah around the globe, where masses are calling for the implementation of Islam and the removal of despotic regimes which continue to usurp

¹⁰⁸The *shahada* can be translated, “There is no God but God, and Muhammad is his messenger.” The *shahada* is the first, most basic Pillar of Islam, the sincere recitation of which makes one a Muslim.

the resources and dignity of the Muslims” (“Khilafah: A Global Call” n.pag.). As can be seen in the figure below, HTB positions this “growing call” as global right from the start; the video begins with an animation of a spinning globe, while music swells and the sound of thunder and lightning erupt.

Figure 4.9: Frame grab from opening of video “Khilafah: A Global Call”



A waving black *shahada* flag appears, topping the globe, followed by red Arabic letters reading “Hizb ut-Tahrir” (“Khilafah: A Global Call” n.pag.). The flag reinforces HTB’s attempts to position the call for a caliphate as “global” in a literal sense. What’s more, the flag-and-globe logo is part of the “brand identity” of HT as illustrated by its appearance, for over ten years, in digital image files on yet another HT website, www.hizb-ut-tahrir.org/. That site is the global website for HT as a transnational movement, contains content in six languages, and has been online since at least October 1997.

After this opening sequence reinforcing HT’s global identity, the video repurposes several digital clips of HTB spokespersons appearing on British television programs and

arguing for the viability of the caliphate, sometimes in the face of openly hostile reportage (“Khilafah: A Global Call” n.pag.). These clips show HTB’s publicly touted method of debate and argument to seek change—the method HTB most points to in self-descriptions in documents such as the “Radicalisation” document examined above. However, the video goes on to show how HT branches and supporters worldwide blend many methods and media to perform argument and its brand of Muslim identity as public ritual.

For instance, the video shows a repurposed digital image file of the logo for Soliders of Allah, a Los Angeles-based Muslim rap group said to be affiliated with HTB and whose songs are available for download on various sites (Gruen 5).¹⁰⁹ Next, the video reinforces the “global call” theme by presenting a rapid succession of clips from HT protests in Britain, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Indonesia, Lebanon, Uzbekistan, Malaysia, Denmark, Turkey, Belgium, Germany, and Palestine. Protesters hold placards with slogans such as “We will never be silenced” and “A call to the Muslim armies” (“Khilafah: A Global Call” n.pag.). Footage of large gatherings of HT supporters in all these countries appears on screen in a series of quick cuts. By sheer volume of examples, the video works to create the message that HT is a large, united, and unstoppable movement. Footage of HT protests in these countries is interspersed with images of tortured men (presumably the victims of Uzbeki governmental oppression) and with footage of HT protesters being led away by police. As the video builds to a conclusion, various HT branches from different corners of the globe are united in a four-way split screen, as seen below.

¹⁰⁹Soldiers of Allah also has pages on Facebook and MySpace.

Figure 4.10: Frame grab from video “Khilafah: A Global Call” showing split screen



Especially with this split-screen combining digital footage and uploaded to the Web, it is difficult to overstate the effects of Manovich’s “software culture” and the Web as a blurring of the boundaries between human and machinic symbolic action. While a six-minute video combining as much text, footage, and audio as this one takes many hours to produce, the rhetorical playing field between a social movement like HTB and mainstream society can be leveled considerably. Before the rise of the Web and of software culture, sophisticated video editing and distribution were the domain of a few experts and were dependent on physical instantiations such as master tapes and copies. Now, anyone with access to widely available software and a weekend to learn digital video editing can begin to produce effects such as this one¹¹⁰ and can repurpose news footage to serve a different narrative. Digital video and the Web make it harder for governments to suppress the sights and sounds of HT taking its rhetoric to the streets. Web users can experience the street-level

¹¹⁰Split screen effects can be created easily in any video editing application that allows multiple video tracks.

protests vicariously and can save that experience to their own hard drives or disseminate it elsewhere. What's more, Adobe® Flash® video files, such as this video, are highly compressed (which reduces file sizes, enabling easier transfer and storage) and will run within a Web browser (which is free) using the Flash® plugin for that browser (also free).

The video concludes with images of black and white flags bearing the *shahada*, images and footage of HT protests and events, and titles reading in all capital letters:

FROM THE WORLD OVER

ONE CALL

ONE UMMAH

FROM AROUND THE GLOBE

ONE CALL

FOR UNITY

FROM THE YOUNG

FROM THE OLD

FROM THE WEST

FROM THE EAST

ONE CALL

ONE UMMAH

ONE VOICE

ONE DEEN

ONE STRUGGLE

ONE NATION

AL-KHILAFAH

KHILAFAH: A GLOBAL CALL

Like the video that opened the conference, this video links the offline work of HTB with other HT branches, arguing for and performing the identity of a serious, unified, consequential global movement, unstoppable even in the face of oppression, police surveillance, or hostile media coverage. It not only brings HTB's 2007 UK Khilafah conference to a crescendo, pointing to future action, but that call to action remains evergreen on the subsite and on YouTube. The video aims to create a meaningful progression for HTB's version of Muslim identity—a progression is from being a target of suspicion while living under political arrangements that are unacceptable and impious to mass action worldwide (and the erasure of sectarian or national differences) to, finally, *al-Khilafah*, the caliphate, God's state. God's will cannot be banned, even by the British government.

These videos, produced digitally and framed, experienced, disseminated, and reframed on the Web, are particularly salient examples of how HTB leverages the work of mainstream media outlets who provide high-production-value raw material that HTB can weave into a different narrative. In the place of a mainstream narrative about terrorism and potential (and, in the case of the 7/7 bombers, *actual*) enemies within, HTB weaves

a narrative depicting Muslims as under siege by corrupt, oppressive regimes. But, in that fallen condition, HTB is the means to education, unification, and action, both on- and offline. HTB here perfects a digital transformation of culture: this is iconic Western-style television footage reworked for face-to-face (conference) and electronic (Web) realms with the caliphate as its (new) substance and HTB as its (new) author.

Of course, older social movements had myriad ways of garnering support and providing adherents with opportunities to show solidarity. However, there is a real difference between, say, petitions existing in one or a few paper copies and bits of code that enable users to, in essence, self-brand as Muslims by borrowing and redistributing HTB content. As one example, “Fazzamin,” (who is evidently an HTB sympathizer but one located in Australia, far away from HTB’s leadership) has uploaded another copy of “Khilafah: The Need” to YouTube as part of his personal YouTube channel, a channel that enjoys hundreds of subscribers (“Fazzamin’s Channel-Subscribers” n.pag.). Bits of code also make it easy for viewers of this video on Fazzamin’s channel to voice their support for HTB and the caliphate in comments, as scores of users already have, even many months after the 2007 conference and proposed ban that was the original context of the video. The video, and Fazzamin’s appropriation and reframing of it, underscores how the Web rewires core rhetorical considerations such as author, audience, and context and how what the machine makes possible becomes what is expected.

4.8 Conclusion

To conduct this chapter's case study, I used the three-layered heuristic, the rewired Burke, to examine selected HTB artifacts from the period immediately after the 7/7 bombings through HT's August 2007 Rajab Conferences. After providing relevant background about the bombings and the British government's proposed plan to ban HTB, I examined a diverse collection of primary digital HTB rhetorical artifacts, namely (X)HTML pages from `Hizb.org`; an online petition opposing the proposed ban; a PDF document entitled "Radicalisation, Extremism, and Islamism: Realities and Myths in the War on Terror"; and Web artifacts related to the 2007 Rajab Conferences. I focused on understanding and using, as Burke would have us do, "all there is" to illuminate what differences the Web makes in HTB's efforts to build and sustain collective, transformative action. In examining HTB artifacts using my three-layered heuristic, I argued that, in HTB's case, the Web is a kind of co-agent.

I showed that, through hyperlinks and scripting, HTB forged connections between its Web-based appeals and offline movement activities to resist the ban and provided users with some measure of participation. I went on to argue that HTB's use of `Hizb.org` to link to the online petition opposing the ban created a sense of purposeful arrangement and movement, including a sense of meaningful progression from preaching to the choir (HTB-controlled site) to taking action in a larger rhetorical sphere (Petition Online site). Moreover, the petition is a prime example of dispersed, decentralized symbolic action taken on behalf of HTB by individuals who are not the official leaders or spokespersons of the

movement, enabled by easy copy&paste operations that repurpose HTB content. As I also showed, the scores of mocking fake signatures on the petition served as a good example of how tightly HTB controls user comments on its own sites.

I then examined “‘Radicalisation ‘Extremism’ & ‘Islamism’,” the lengthy PDF document HTB uploaded to Hizb.org in the wake of the proposed ban. I argued that the document is a prime example of HTB’s use of the genre conventions of the white paper or the report, along with design and layout choices that reinforce HTB’s vanguard *ethos*. The report’s content, which I read closely using the “On the Screen” layer of my heuristic, positions the caliphate as central to Islam (and thus not the purview of “radicals”). I contended that the report is yet another example of HTB’s tremendous investment in presenting a unitary vision of Islam in service of a sweeping narrative of rebirth. I went on to complicate the public face of “HT” that the report exemplifies by examining an HT Media Office communication that voices support for the Taliban regime. I contended that the Web’s wide reach, ease of publication, and distribution of labor present movements with opportunities to use different divisions (or brand identities) to carry out different movement functions.

Next, I examined artifacts HTB prepared in connection with the August 2007 Rajab Conferences, including content on the websites C2007.com and on a subsite devoted to the conferences that HTB placed on Hizb.org. I argued that HTB’s use of “Behind the Screen” markup and scripting on these sites offers users a dynamic site experience, including the ability to print, email, or download content; the ability to watch, download or distribute videos; the ability to leave comments or contact HTB; and the ability to

repurpose HTB content to other sites. These “Behind the Screen” technologies leverage HTB’s persuasive work and disperse it across a wide group of users, blending online and offline movement activities. I also examined digital images of HTB’s London Khilafah conference, showing how HTB used those images to build immediacy, presence, and salience, all of which allows site users to participate in the conference’s narrative arc and HTB’s version of Islamic identity.

I concluded the case study by arguing that the digital videos HTB used to open and to close its London conference are particularly rich examples of how HTB used the Web as a stage for official movement messages, but with the possibility for site users to become co-producers of a sort. These videos, the 17-minute “Khilafah: The Need for Change” and 6-minute “Khilafah: A Global Call,” demonstrate the complex interactions of what Manovich calls the software and cultural layers, not to mention the role of automation—that is, the machine as a kind of co-author, blurring the boundaries between human and machinic symbolic action. The videos repurpose a variety of footage in weaving a divinely mandated, comprehensive plan for Muslims to overcome oppression and to assign roles of *Us* versus *Them* to create identification.

In my final chapter, I will draw out the overall contribution of this dissertation and suggest some implications for future scholarship.

Chapter 5

LOOKING BACK, LOOKING FORWARD

Although it is standard is to summarize one’s dissertation at the beginning of its concluding chapter, I am going to eschew the usual opening move. My individual chapters contain detailed summaries. Instead, I will focus here on examining the implications of what I brought out and analyzed in my dissertation. Then, I will sketch some directions in which it might be fruitful for future research to go.

Part of what one learns in examining online rhetoric is that it complicates the scholarly impulse toward closure, whether closure is based on a fixed object of analysis or on well-established rhetorical methods. A critic’s choices of theoretical and methodological lenses to analyze a print text, of course, depend on her particular aims. However, analyses of “typical” rhetorical artifacts such as presidential speeches or Civil Rights Movement documents—the kind of primary evidence examined in much rhetorical scholarship—tend to bracket out the medium itself, focusing instead on how best to draw warranted conclusions from the artifact’s content.

While some analog artifacts may be rare (such as collections of letters, obscure film clips, etc.), they are static. That is to say, a particular copy of (for example), Martin Luther King, Jr.'s September 15, 1963 telegram to President Kennedy about the Birmingham church bombing will, in all likelihood, still be available tomorrow. It will not, in any case, incorporate any new text or additional media. In this study, I have answered in part Warnick's call for case studies that serve not only a media-specific analytical function, but which also serve an archival or preservation function. While online artifacts are in many ways far more "durable" than print artifacts, they can often become difficult to access more than once. They are difficult to maintain in ways that preserve all of the experiences presented to users when the artifacts were on the live Web. In other words, the spectre of "here today, gone tomorrow" haunts scholarship that uses the Web as primary evidence.

Moreover, there is another reason why, when examining online rhetoric, one's claims immediately begin a half-life, decaying as soon as they are written. Critical methods and analyses of artifacts that use particular standards of markup or bandwidth or video compression (or any of dozens of other important material specificities) can become dated quickly. Moreover, online artifacts are repurposed, commented on, taken down, or altered all the time. The pace of technological development, the growth of the Web as a metamedium, and the opportunities for ever-more pervasive and ubiquitous persuasion are all occupational hazards (or opportunities, depending upon one's task) of examining Web-based rhetoric.

Despite these challenges, I have made contributions to our discipline by showing how HTB must address part of its symbolic action to non-human actors—that is, to search

engine spiders that find and index online content. Breaking away from previous rhetorical scholarship on movements, I have shown how building and sustaining machinic “appetites” for findable, indexable content, a machinic level of “persuasion”—is now necessary if much important human persuasion is to be possible. HTB’s uses of scripting to present and frame the many modular digital assets in its databases, to allow users to repurpose site content, and to shape its message by gathering data about users’ behavior provide additional examples of how the material specificities and human uses of the Web blur the boundaries of authorship and the boundaries between nonsymbolic motion versus symbolic action.

Burke, of course, separated motion from action staunchly. Indeed, Burke himself might well have resisted the rewiring that this study offers. Yet, to limit the scope of what Burke can offer and to circumscribe in advance the media to which his insights apply, especially in light of the Web’s importance to social movement rhetoric, is to forfeit too much. Burke’s wariness of the pull of technology in structuring and ordering desires should not be ignored, but it is a mistake to take his critiques of machinic models of communication, grounded in the communicative and computational media of earlier decades, as preempting any attempt to better understand the Web as a pervasive and increasingly important persuasive realm. The cost of choosing not to grow our critical methods is a limited set of questions from which to understand and critique the digital symbolic action that surrounds us and affects many aspects of our lives. Persuasion always involves some medium, even if that medium is limited to the human brain and body, such as in oral communication or even self-persuasion. As Tina Huey argues (as I cited in Chapter 1), “construction of a community is indivisible from the technology that allows it to exist” (127). As I have shown, the indispensability of

rhetorical form to creating values, expectations, and appetites—to symbolic action—offers a way forward to a rewired Burke who continues to yield rich critical dividends.

In scholarship, what endures are methods and analyses that are capable of creating and blending multiple ways of seeing complexities, along with particular critical attitudes that focus on media and technologies on their own terms as human artifacts—in use, situated, and meaningful. Indeed, the continued richness of Burkean methods derives in large part from the many ways of seeing and the critical attitudes he has given us. Burke enables us to ask profound questions about what makes us human, how we act upon ourselves and others, how we band together (and mark out who is the enemy), and how we create meaning. As others before me have pointed out, Burke’s methods and analyses using those methods are products of an extremely skeptical view of technology and are grounded in the core technology from which Burke drew his vast learning and in which he reached audiences: the printed book. Thus, without some recontextualization, some rewiring (as I put it) or technologizing (as Cathcart puts it), we risk losing the best of what Burke offers us.

And so, while dissertations can rarely aspire to creating whole new critical methods, I did accomplish the more modest task of fashioning a flexible, useful critical tool that takes steps toward breaking out of the limitations of “screen studies” approaches to studying the online symbolic action of collectives seeking social transformation. I used this tool to extend the vitality of Burkean understandings of social movement rhetoric in the 21st century, much of which rhetoric takes place on, and is affected by, the Web. The Web is the fullest expression to date of a metamedium for rhetorical and community-building experiences. The speed, abundance, wide reach, and variety of rhetorical events the Web

makes possible warrant serious attention. Serious attention avoids both the Scylla of faddish appreciation of the Web and the Charybdis of walling off media from the realm of symbolic action.

My three-layered heuristic (Behind the Screen, Off the Screen, On the Screen) may one day become obsolete in the sense that the markup, scripting languages, and digital media capable of being blended on the Web will one day be significantly different from those used today. However, what I believe may endure—though it will inevitably need its own rewiring—is the example of crafting the right tool for the job, a tool that opens up the “black box.”

In opening the black box, I was struck by similarities between the challenges facing scholars who study classical rhetoric and those who study online rhetoric. Both must build theories and analyses from incomplete samples of data that are often in a medium that might not be accessible tomorrow. The classical scholar begins with, for example, fragments of fifth-century BCE Sophistic rhetoric while the scholar of online rhetoric begins with Internet Archive snapshots supplemented with personal archives limited by available time, bandwidth, and hardware. Yet, just as scholars of classical rhetoric have developed their own tools and standards of evidence, corroboration, and qualification—what Stephen Toulmin would call their own “field-dependent *canons* for the criticism and assessment of argument (35, emphasis original)—to advance knowledge, so too must scholars of online rhetoric continue to develop their own tools and standards.

This tool—really, a method grounded in a set of interrelated inquiries—can be learned and put to good use by a wide cross-section of rhetorical scholars and critics. Some

may object that rhetorical studies and media/digital studies are, and should be, separate realms. In other words, why should rhetorical scholars learn about markup or scripting? Well, it depends on what one wants to find out. Rhetorical scholars have borrowed from other disciplines such as history, philosophy, feminist theory, religious studies, psychology, and sociology. So long as the focus remains on unpacking the implications of persuasive appeals within a richly developed context, the borrowing is fruitful, not promiscuous. The tool I developed testifies to the need not simply for yet another borrowing, but for one that focuses our attention on *three* important aspects of richly developed context (Behind, On, and Off the Screen), not just on one. Close reading remains central: the critic just needs to expand the range of what she reads closely.¹¹¹ In expanding context and close reading by using this tool, rhetorical scholars need not become full-time software programmers or Web designers any more than they have had to become full-time sociologists to use tools from that discipline. But we cannot just throw up our hands when faced with qualitatively new communicative events. In fact, Burke himself gives us the best example of the fruits of meaningful, purposeful eclecticism.

Thus, my dissertation was devoted to examining the rhetorical forms and material specificities (and the interrelationships between the two) that the Web enacts and to showing why symbolic action and nonsymbolic motion are not as neatly separable as Burke himself would have them be. While HTB is a revolutionary movement (and thus cannot stand as a paradigm for all collective symbolic action on the Web), the “rotten perfection” of

¹¹¹Looking at it from another angle, this tool also enjoys the virtue of not stopping at the “code” layer. That is, while it is tremendously interesting to examine the material specificities of how online persuasion is crafted, found, indexed, presented, and reused, the rhetorician’s interest in any critical tool is in using it to examine how human beings act upon themselves and one another for persuasive purposes.

its ideological and religious messages is matched with the Web's own rotten perfection. This match makes HTB a fruitful case study for rewiring Burkean understandings of social movements. HTB builds identification centering on performances of a particular brand of Muslim identity (vanguard, tireless, copious, inspirational, and participatory) and uses the Web to reinforce activities occurring offline, building a sense of immediacy or presence that can be reexperienced long after offline events are over. I sought to pay attention not only to HTB's discourse but also to the online realm in which much of it takes place.

Much of what emerges from my examinations highlights the fact that the same technologies that enable HTB to play vanguard's role, to leverage the use of digital assets and dispersed manpower, to serve as an alternative news source for the Muslim *ummah*, and to perform repeated acts of Muslim identity cannot help but spur the need for more and more such acts, more and more ways of blending content in the Web's metamedium. While I have taken some pains to examine in detail the tremendous opportunities and advantages the Web affords HTB, Burke's caution about "the cult of new needs" (or what Richard Rogers calls the "perceived freshness fetish") describes the inevitable dialectical counterpart to the Web's opportunities and advantages. I am not necessarily a cheerleader for the Web and its rhetorical forms. This dissertation should not be read as an act of gee-whiz digital appreciation. Instead, I want to emphasize that the rhetorical forms of the Web and the blurring of boundaries between action and motion results in an audience psychology underscoring Burke's insight that repetition, not eloquence, is the key to rhetorical success.

Of course, repetition is essential to any ideological, religious, or political agenda, but it is perhaps even more crucial to efforts to transform social order from the outside. HTB

works to imagine and sustain a counterpublic, which, as explained previously, is a “parallel discursive [arena] where members of subordinated social groups invent and circulate counterdiscourses to formulate oppositional interpretations of their identities, interests, and needs” (Fraser 123). Building that “parallel discursive arena” takes an enormous amount of rhetorical labor, particularly when one’s agenda is revolutionary and redemptive, as HTB’s is. The proposed ban on HTB after the 7/7 bombings is a particularly illustrative case of what Hauser and Whalen describe as a “highly moralized war over language” (132). Recall that the proposed ban’s basis was a law concerning “glorification” of terrorism and radicalism—themselves highly moralized terms. As the range of artifacts I examined in Chapter 4 show, HTB not only used the Web as a means of responding quickly to a potential threat as it unfolded, but also archives, reframes, and repurposes the context of that threat for continued performances of Muslim identity and affirmations of solidarity. There is always some movement from here to there, from ignorance to understanding, from present to past to future, from victim to victor, incipient in the experiences and psychologies HTB offers site users.

While it is important for its own sake to understand how HTB wrings maximum persuasive and ideological benefit from what the Web makes possible, Burke would have us pause here. HTB’s rotten perfection of the Web’s rhetorical forms must cause us to turn our critical attention to the nature and consequences of the audience psychology and attitudes HTB builds. While it is easy to understand why an outsider movement seeking societal transformation would create online spaces for adherents to reinforce movement

identity and solidarity, the Web's rhetorical forms, its seemingly endless, always-available opportunities to be *Us* as against *Them* carry some dangers.

First, the potential of online rhetoric to “*reveal the strategic spots at which ambiguities necessarily arise*” (*A Grammar of Motives* xviii, emphasis in original) and, thus, to increase awareness and understanding is highly problematic. HTB site users, for example, are faced with never-ending opportunities to have HTB's vision, theology, and ideology reinforced, not examined for its terms and implications. No comic Burkean irony, no ameliorative critique need ever occur on an HTB website. There is always a narrative of victimhood, guilt, and redemption to be had for the price of a mouse click. Incommensurable visions of the social order harden rather than soften. Old wounds, old triumphs, transformations not dependent upon common ground (except as God wills it) can be reexperienced over and over.

Of course, the same is true of much online rhetoric, not just HTB's, and I am not the first to point out the tribalism that characterizes political discourse on the Web. Another contribution of this study, though, is to use Burke in a new way to unpack just how that experience of tribalism is built using the features of the media that create and sustain it and that preserve it, evergreen, ready to keep the tribal divisions stark and the identification among the like-minded strong. Burke would have us pay attention to the inevitable divisions that are counterpart to all the communication and community occurring online. This study is a contribution toward that critical endeavor and might point the way to the next Burkean step: ironic, comic correction, a purification of war.

Other next steps that this study suggests spring to mind here. First, print-based

academic genres such as the venerable print dissertation are not necessarily suited to every project. Scholars in rhetoric and writing studies are increasingly doing scholarship *about* digital media *in* digital media (Cheryl Ball is a particular example) because a print text cannot fully present multimodal rhetoric. A print text has no sound, animation, or hyperlinking. Time and resource challenges—let alone potential copyright issues—make the task of a natively digital dissertation daunting. Had I world enough and time, I would have composed this dissertation in a natively digital, multimodal format. My revisions of portions of this dissertation for possible future publications will probably use smaller chunks of data and will be more manageable, making a natively digital project more feasible.

Second, I can envision further uses of the tool I have fashioned. How, for instance, does the tool apply to other types of online rhetoric besides movement rhetoric? In particular, the now-widespread uses of social media to create and maintain connections, perform identities, and fashion consumers into producers suggests future uses and refinements of the critical methods I have developed and tested here. Moreover, those methods might lead to the development of other tools based on what emerges from application across a wider range of online artifacts.

Third, this study highlights the need for collaboration with scholars in other disciplines who are already developing tools that are unlike any we rhetoricians have used to date. For instance, Manovich's software studies group at UC San Diego designs and uses "computer-based techniques for quantitative analysis and interactive visualization...to begin analyzing patterns in large sets of cultural data" ("Cultural Analytics" n.pag.). Such

techniques, particularly the use of software to find and display meaningful patterns in the explosion of user-generated content on the Web, have much to offer us. HTB's RSS feed updates alone could generate a substantial project. Similarly, as Niels Brügger argues, the challenges to finding and preserving online artifacts, especially as they were experienced on the live Web require a new "critical textual philology of the website" (171) concerned with the same sorts of questions that confront classical scholars (such as comparison of variants, progression of drafts, copies and originals) (161-63). Either we rhetoricians should master these techniques and develop these methods ourselves, or we should begin, right now, to collaborate with those whose skills complement our own.¹¹²

Finally, although it was not feasible within the time, resources, and scope of this dissertation, a long-term study of HTB and other important online rhetors would be both a useful next step in understanding online movement rhetoric and a long-term test/refinement of the critical tool I developed and used here.

Ultimately, my goal for showing what a rewired Burke can illuminate has been to open new conversations about how rhetorical studies can adapt to continue to do well what it has always done: pose and answer important questions about human beings' efforts to build and critique visions of social order. Taking the Web seriously on its own terms, as I have done here, is one way to open those conversations. Borrowing from Burke's parlor metaphor, let the conversation continue—a conversation I hope will be inflected in part by this study's contributions.

¹¹²The collaborations I urge will involve changing the lone genius model of judging scholarly merit for promotion and tenure, but that change is long overdue anyway.

Appendix A: Statement Regarding Copyright and Use of Images

This dissertation includes 25 figures, all of which are screenshots created locally on my Hewlett-Packard laptop computer using the shareware image capturing utility FireShot Pro or the commercial utility SnagIt. Except for figures 3.1, 3.2, and 3.8, my uses of these images and my inclusion of them in this dissertation have not been pre-authorized.

In accordance with 17 USC Sec. 107, this material is viewable for educational and intellectual purposes. The images are vital to my academic purposes in this dissertation because they illustrate important aspects of the primary evidence at the heart of the dissertation's arguments: websites. My uses of these images are, I contend, permissible under the U.S. copyright law doctrine of "fair use" as defined by the 1976 Copyright Act's "four-factor" test (17 USC Sec. 107). The four factors of that test are:

1. The purpose and nature of the use, including whether the use is for profit or for nonprofit educational purposes;
2. The nature of the copyrighted work;
3. The amount and substance of the portion used as related to the copyrighted work as a whole and;
4. The use's effect on the copyrighted work's potential value or market.

In addition, courts often consider the good faith of the person who uses another's copyrighted material (Modern Language Association 51) and tend to protect unpublished copyrighted works more than published ones (52-53). (Modern Language Association 51). It is important, however, to note that the four-factor test is not a recipe. As the Modern Language Association's recently revised *Guide to Scholarly Publishing* puts it, "no one factor is more important than the others, nor must the use be supported by all four factors to be fair" (51).

When examining the first factor (purpose and nature of use), "courts give greater latitude to uses 'such as criticism, comment...teaching... , scholarship, or research' and to uses that are for nonprofit educational rather than commercial purposes" (17 USC Sec. 107, qtd. in Modern Language Association 51). In examining the second factor (nature of copyrighted work), courts tend to protect copyrighted factual works (or works based on factual subjects) less than they protect creative works (52). The third factor (amount and

substance used) depends on the individual work; however, using even extensive portions of copyrighted material may be justifiable in particular cases (52). The fourth factor (effect on value or market) is determined on a case-by-case basis (52).

Hizb ut-Tahrir Britain websites might also fall under UK copyright law. Like the United States, the UK allows scholars to make limited copies of arguably protected material for non-profit educational uses. The UK's "fair dealing" laws allow scholars to make single copies or short extracts of works, for non-commercial research, private study, and for criticism and review, so long as there is "sufficient acknowledgement" (Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988, Ch. 48, Sec. 29 and 30).

The figures I use in this dissertation fall within the following classes and are well within "fair use" and "fair dealing" for the following reasons:

Images of sample website markup that I myself created (Figures 3.1 and 3.2).

Because I am the creator of those images, there is no copyright concern.

An image by Jesse James Garrett illustrating the classic web application model versus the Ajax web application model (Figure 3.8).

Mr. Garrett gave me written permission to use that image in this dissertation.

Screen captures of small selections of (X)HTML markup and JavaScript from various HT and HTB web pages (figures 3.7, 3.9, and 3.10).

My uses of screenshots showing small selections of markup and scripting code fall under fair use and fair dealing because they depict a tiny portion of the particular markup structuring, displaying, and generating the published web pages from which they are taken (and an infinitesimally small portion of the total websites in which they appear). Moreover, my uses of these images are for the non-commercial purposes of identification and critical analysis that advances criticism, comment, research, and scholarship in rhetoric. The websites from which I created my electronic archive do not have a `robots.txt` exclusion preventing electronic indexing by Web crawlers. None of my uses of these figures impedes HT or HTB from continuing to receive the value of their web pages, a value that is persuasive rather than financial. I have also acknowledged the source of all these images.

Screen captures of browser-displayed pages from various HT and HTB websites in my own archive (figures 3.3, 3.4, 3.5, 3.6, 3.12, 4.2, and 4.3).

My uses of screenshots showing some or all of particular browser-displayed pages from various HT and HTB websites in an electronic archive I created fall under fair use and fair dealing because they depict selected, limited examples of what a user sees on the published websites in which they appear. Moreover, my uses of these images are for the non-commercial purposes of identification and critical analysis that advances criticism, comment, research, and scholarship in rhetoric. The websites from which I created my electronic archive do not have a `robots.txt` exclusion preventing electronic indexing by Web crawlers. None of my uses of these figures impedes HT or HTB from continuing

to receive the value of their web pages, a value that is persuasive rather than financial. I have also acknowledged the source of all these images.

Screen captures of browser-displayed pages from various HT and HTB websites as archived in the Internet Archive (figures 3.11, 3.13, 3.14, 4.1, 4.4, and 4.6)

I use particular screenshots showing some or all of particular browser-displayed pages from various HT and HTB websites collected by the Internet Archive (www.archive.org). I accessed the archived pages using the Internet Archive's "Wayback Machine" search page. These screenshots implicate two layers of copyright concern: HT/HTB and the Internet Archive. First, with regard to HT/HTB, these screenshots fall within fair use and fair dealing because they depict selected, limited examples of what a user would have seen on the published websites in which they appeared in the past. Moreover, my uses of these images are for the non-commercial purposes of identification and critical analysis that advances criticism, comment, research, and scholarship in rhetoric. I have also acknowledged the source of all these images. None of my uses of these figures impedes HT or HTB from continuing to receive the value of their web pages, a value that is persuasive rather than financial.

The Internet Archive is a nonprofit electronic archive (officially recognized by the State of California as a library) that has indexed and preserved snapshots of portions of the visible Web for scholarship and research uses since 1996. The Archive's Terms of Use (dated March 10, 2001) state that users must "agree not to . . . copy offsite any part of the Collections without written permission" ("Terms of Use" n.pag.). I do not have such permission. Of course, making a screenshot of a browser-displayed page to be incorporated into a dissertation involves "offsite copying" in the sense that the screenshot must be stored on the writer's computer if it is to be included in the dissertation, but the Archive's blanket prohibition on all "offsite copying" in take-it-or-leave-it terms of use is overbroad, and is ambiguous at best, given that the Archive *does* allow content to be downloaded ("Frequently Asked Questions: Downloading Content" n.pag.). It is, of course, reasonable for the Archive not to allow its collections to be simply copied in full, but my uses of these screenshots fall under fair use, given the Archive's status as a library intended to preserve the Web and make it available for scholarship and research. Making these screenshots from the Archive is analogous to photocopying content from a library book for possible incorporation into a scholarly work.

Frame grabs from HTB videos posted to YouTube (figures 4.8, 4.9, and 4.10)

My uses of frame grabs from HTB videos posted to YouTube fall under fair use and fair dealing because they depict selected, limited examples of what a user sees when watching an HTB digital video uploaded to YouTube, a site hosting millions of digital videos. Each HTB video contains thousands of frames, from which I have selected an infinitesimal percentage for frame grabs. Moreover, my uses of these images are for the non-commercial purposes of identification and critical analysis that advances criticism, comment, research, and scholarship in rhetoric. None of my uses of these figures impedes HT or HTB from continuing to receive the value of their digital videos, a value that is persuasive rather than

financial. I have also acknowledged the source of all these images. While YouTube's take-it-or-leave-it Terms of Service purport to prohibit any use of its logos and service marks without written permission, YouTube does permit complete downloading of user-submitted videos like the ones from which I made these frame grabs ("Terms of Service" n. pag.). My frame grabs contain the YouTube logo in the lower right portion of the frame, which is a trivial use of the YouTube logo from a copyright standpoint but which is important for scholarly purposes capture some of the context in which HTB uses a popular video-hosting site to spread its message. Moreover, while YouTube is owned by Google and is part of a profit-seeking enterprise, none of my uses of these few frame grabs from two videos will harm YouTube's market for user-generated content or YouTube's site traffic.

Digital images from HTB web pages (figures 3.15, 4.5, and 4.7)

My uses of digital images from HTB web pages fall under fair use and fair dealing because they depict selected, limited examples what a user sees on the published websites in which they appear. Moreover, my uses of these images are for the non-commercial purposes of identification and critical analysis that advances criticism, comment, research, and scholarship in rhetoric. I have also acknowledged the source of all these images. The websites from which I created my electronic archive do not have a `robots.txt` exclusion preventing electronic indexing by Web crawlers. None of my uses of these figures impedes HT or HTB from continuing to receive the value of their web pages, a value that is persuasive rather than financial.

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VITA

Personal

- Drew Martin Loewe

Background

- Born August 9, 1967 in Encino, California
- Son of Ronald G. Loewe and Patricia A. Loewe
- Married Mireya Fernandez, October 17, 1997
- Two children

Education

- Diploma, Adolfo Camarillo High School, Camarillo, California, 1985
- Bachelor of Arts, Philosophy, University of California at Santa Barbara, Santa Barbara, California, 1989
- Juris Doctorate, Gonzaga University School of Law, Spokane, Washington, 1993
- Master of Arts, English, University of Texas at San Antonio, San Antonio, Texas, 2004
- Doctor of Philosophy, English, Texas Christian University, Fort Worth, Texas, 2009

Experience

- Attorney 1993-2002
- Graduate Instructor, University of Texas at San Antonio, 2003-2004
- Radford Fellow, Texas Christian University, 2004-2005
- Graduate Instructor, Texas Christian University, 2005-2006; 2007-2008
- Managing Editor, *Composition Studies*, 2006-2007
- Instructor, English Writing & Rhetoric, St. Edward's University, Austin, Texas, 2008-present

Professional Memberships

- Conference on College Composition & Communication
- Kenneth Burke Society
- Legal Writing Institute
- National Council of Teachers of English
- Rhetoric Society of America

ABSTRACT

REWIRING KENNETH BURKE FOR THE 21ST CENTURY: HIZB UT-TAHRIR'S SOCIAL MOVEMENT RHETORIC AND ONLINE QUEST FOR THE CALIPHATE

by

Drew Martin Loewe, PhD 2009

Dissertation Advisor: Ann L. George, Associate Professor of English

Chapter 1, "Introduction and Overview: Changing the Tools," introduces my dissertation as an attempt to answer two sets of calls: calls for Burkean scholarship on social movements to be updated and calls for case studies of online rhetoric. I explain how social movements have been among the most important users of the Web and I introduce the subject of my dissertation, Hizb ut-Tahrir Britain (HTB).

Chapter 2, "Social Movement Rhetoric Online: How Form is Formed," conceptualizes a way to meet the challenge of updating Burkean methods to better understand social movement rhetorics created, disseminated, and received online. I examine the Web on its own terms, tracing its origins and blending insights from new media scholarship and rhetorical scholarship. I introduce and examine relevant Burkean rhetorical concepts, including symbolic action/nonsymbolic motion and rhetorical form. I argue that previous rhetorical scholarship on social movements, while valuable, has omitted the media-specific analysis necessary to understand the Web as a rhetorical event.

Chapter 3, "Rewiring Kenneth Burke," maps a rhetorical understanding of the Web as a vast global hypertext. I develop a critical tool, a three-layered heuristic, to

examine the Web as a whole experience. That tool blends the material specificities of the Web with rhetorical form by considering “Behind the Screen, Off the Screen, and On the Screen.” This three-layered heuristic complicates our rhetorical readings of websites as *websites*, as mediated human drama and supplies a more sensitive means of reading rhetorical context and symbolic action.

Chapter 4, “The Change Needs to be *Khilafah*,” applies the heuristic developed in the third chapter to examine a wide range of artifacts from HTB’s online rhetoric surrounding the proposed ban. I use a case study of HTB’s online rhetoric in the two years following the 7/7 bombing and proposed ban to test that heuristic and to show its usefulness for “rewiring” Burkean methods for understanding social movement rhetoric.

Chapter 5, “Looking Back, Looking Forward,” draws out the overall contributions of this study and suggests some implications for future research.