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ARRANGEMENT OF GOOGLE SEARCH RESULTS AND IMPERIAL IDEOLOGY: SEARCHING FOR BENGHAZI, LIBYA

by

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B.A Indiana University, 2008

A thesis in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Master of Arts
in the Department of Writing and Rhetoric
in the College of Arts and Humanities
at the University of Central Florida
Orlando, Florida

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2014

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ABSTRACT

This project responds to an ongoing discussion in scholarship that identifies and analyzes the ideological functions of computer interfaces. In 1994, Cynthia Selfe and Richard Selfe claimed that interfaces are maps of cultural information and are therefore ideological (485). For Selfe and Selfe and other scholars, these interfaces carried a colonial ideology that resulted in Western dominance over other cultures. Since this early scholarship, our perspectives on interface have shifted with changing technology; interfaces can no longer be treated as having persistent and predictable characteristics like texts. I argue that interfaces are interactions among dynamic information that is constantly being updated online. One of the most prominent ways users interact with information online is through the use of search engines such as Google. Interfaces like Google assist users in navigating dynamic cultural information. How this information is arranged in a Google search event has a profound impact on what meaning we make surrounding the search term.

In this project, I argue that colonial ideologies are upheld in several Google search events for the term "Benghazi, Libya." I claim that networked connection during Google search events leads to the creation and sustainment of a colonial ideology through patterns of arrangement. Finally, I offer a methodology for understanding how ideologies are created when search events occur. This methodology searches for patterns in connected information in order to understand how they create an ideological lens.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES viii

PREFACE: FEELING THE INFLUENCE OF THE INTERFACE 1

CHAPTER 1: POWER AND PERSUASION IN DIGITAL ENVIRONMENTS 6

1. Selfe and Selfe, Ideological Maps, and Cultural Dominance 7

2. Cybertypes, Identity Tourism, and Imperial Ideology 9

3. The Cultural Interface and Ideology 11

4. Naturalization of Ideology in Interfaces 13

5. Developments in New Media Technology: Extending Interface Scholarship 14

6. Defining "Interface" in the Context of New Media Technology 16

7. Arrangement and Pattern in New Media Interfaces 19

8. Imperial Ideology in the Context of Digital Interaction: Benghazi, Libya by Patterns 22

CHAPTER 2: A COMBINED THEORETICAL FRAME OF IDEOLOGY IN DIGITAL ENVIRONMENTS 24

1. Analyzing Google Search Results as Ideological Markers 25

2. Imaginative Geography and Google Search Results 30

3. Transitioning to New Media Interfaces: A Move from Text to Interaction 37

4. Questioning Patterns in Googling "Benghazi, Libya" 40

5. The Search Event as a Unit of Analysis 41

6. Benghazi, Libya as the Land of The "Other" 45

7. Toward a Search for "Benghazi, Libya" 46

CHAPTER 3: IDEOLOGICAL MARKERS OF IMPERIALISM: GOOGLING BENGHAZI, LIBYA 47

1. The Imaginative Geography in Google Search Results: A Rhetorical Analysis 48

2. An Imaginative Geography of Benghazi, Libya in Google Search Results 50

3. An Imaginative Geography of Damage and Violence 57

3a. Damaged Infrastructure 57

3b. Libyan Violence 58

3c. Rituals of War, American Discipline 60

3d. Protest against American involvement 61

4. Infrequent Ideological Markers of Imperialism: The Imperial Civilizing Mission 62

5. Challenges to an Imperial Imaginative Geography of Benghazi, Libya 64

6. Extension of Imperialist Ideology in the Context of New Media Interaction 67

CHAPTER 4: GOOGLING AND THE CREATION OF AN IMPERIAL TOPOGRAPHY OF MEANING 69

1. Topoi, Topography, and Networks 71

2. Repetitions of Ideological Markers Surrounding Benghazi, Libya 73

3. From Repetition to Connection: Tracing Networks of Meaning 78

4. Repeated Imperial Patterns of Connection 83

5. Limited Impact of Challenges to an Imperial Topography 86

6. Implications of Patterns of Connection in Digital Contexts 87

CONCLUSION: TOWARD A CRITICAL MEDIA LITERACY OF SEARCH EVENTS 89

APPENDIX A: IMPERIAL NETWORKS OF MEANING 96

APPENDIX B: CHALLENGING NETWORKS OF MEANING 104

APPENDIX C: IMAGE INVOICES 106

LIST OF REFERENCES 108

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1: Washington D.C. based U.S. Army drill team. Source: *pixabay.com*..... 29

Figure 2: A link to a *New York Times* article characterizing Washington from an economic perspective. Source: *NYTimes.com*, January 10, 2013..... 29

Figure 3: A screen capture of Google Worldwide Images search results with a creative commons filter setting that represent a visual and theoretical imaginative geography of the location..... 35

Figure 4: A list of Google Worldwide search results that constitutes a visual and theoretical imaginative geography of the location..... 36

Figure 5: Shorthand Classes of Imperial Ideological Markers 52

Figure 6: Shorthand Classes of Ideological Markers Challenging the Imperial Dichotomy..... 52

Figure 7: A screen capture of Google Worldwide Images search results that represent a visual and theoretical imperial imaginative geography of the location..... 54

Figure 8: Members of Anti-Gaddafi forces. Source: *Wikipedia Commons,* October 17, 2011 55

Figure 9: A list of Google Worldwide search results that constitutes a visual and theoretical imperial imaginative geography of the location 55

Figure 10: A link to a news story from *Yahoo News* concerning ongoing conflict in Benghazi. Source: *Yahoo News*, November 28, 2013..... 56

Figure 11: A link to a *CBS News* story concerning a massive jailbreak in Benghazi. Source: *CBS News*, July 27, 2013 59

Figure 12: An image of doctors treating a wounded man in Benghazi. Source: *Scott Nelson Photography*..... 63

Figure 13: Image of a Benghazi street market. Source: *commons.wikimedia.org,* Chris Griffiths 66

Figure 14: Repeated Markers Sorted by Interface in Order of Prioritization 74

Figure 15: Image of President Obama and Secretary Clinton at the transfer of the victims of the Benghazi attack. Source: *commons.wikimedia.org*, September 14, 2012 79

Figure 16: Representation of Visual Affinities within Search Results 81

Figure 17: Representation of a Network of Meaning 82

PREFACE: FEELING THE INFLUENCE OF THE INTERFACE

On September 11, 2012, the American diplomatic mission in Benghazi, Libya was attacked, causing political fallout both in the Middle East and the United States. New information flooded out of the region and reports of political unrest pervaded websites of major news organizations and media conglomerates. One important way that users learned about the unfolding events in northern Africa was by searching for information online or by visiting major news websites. The information found in these reports joined the storehouse of information held in various web locations, where most of it remains archived today. In the following weeks, events in Benghazi developed as American and Libyan officials responded and political rhetoric was exchanged between powerful groups in both nations. The Benghazi attack, as it was characterized by multiple media outlets, dominated the 24-hour news cycle for months. Yet as time passed since the precipitating day of the attack (one of several in the region over the following week) the information remained online, readily accessible for users. The Benghazi attack had become an intricate node of information found on the web that characterized the way Western users came to understand and interact with the location of Benghazi and its people. Locating such information was facilitated by the users' day-to-day web searching practices.

In order to access data, search engines, websites, and software programs organize, categorize, and prioritize information for users. This activity infiltrates the daily practices of developed Western populations as use of digital electronic devices is commonplace (Pew 2014). No longer do Western populations rely only on standing personal computers to access network information. Embedded in several mobile technologies is the Google family of interfaces.

Access is constantly at users' fingertips through cell phones, tablets, and laptop computers; searching activities are repeated throughout our daily experience.

In my experience of web searching, I found that using Google interfaces to find products, check email, watch films, read books, and understand world events was an intricate part of my daily routine. But not only had web searching itself become an intricate part of my life, Google interfaces were my preferred and accepted forms of performing this activity. I would use Google to find information regarding world events, check my email, find scholarly texts, find and play games, and access music on my smart phone, television, tablets, and laptop. By and large I came to think of the Google family of interfaces (Gmail, Google Worldwide, Google+, Google Docs, etc.) as an ecosystem – an environment that an organism comes to rely upon for their daily livelihood, inescapable both because of the obstacles that exist to leaving it and the fact that organism would function much less efficiently outside of it[1]. As a user I was trapped in the Google ecosystem. I knew how to use these sites quickly and efficiently. They were easily accessible through all of my stationary and portable electronic devices. I preferred Google's method of intercommunication that integrated email and web chat seamlessly, even conflating them when necessary (exchanging emails using Gmail is much like a web chat). I enjoyed the way that Google allowed for seamless movement between news stories, commentary, images in the Google search interface, and the posting of such information in Google+. And, most importantly, I trusted without question Google's methods of retrieving and organizing information through web searching.

[1] The term *ecosystem* is related to the term *information ecologies*. The latter is defined as "a system of people, practices, values and technologies in a local environment… [where] the spotlight is not on technology, but on human activities that are served by technology" (Nardi and O'Day 49).

Herein lay the foundational problem of this study. By not questioning the way the interfaces used on a daily basis organize information, by not questioning if there are other ways of organization, Western users (including myself) accept the logic of these interfaces as *the* way of navigating online information. The ecosystem knows best; it allows us to operate quickly and efficiently in digital environments and this is enough for the user. The ramifications for how we come to understand the world, prioritize some information over other information, and remain completely ignorant of a great deal of data that the interfaces do not reveal is of little consequence to the unquestioning Western user. As I began to read more scholarly research in new media and rhetoric, however, I developed a wariness of these interfaces' internal logic. I became committed to understanding how shifting to receiving and navigating information in digital-rhetorical environments results in changing information arrangements and the influence of such organization on how Western users make meaning. Furthermore, the issue of ubiquity of some interfaces became particularly problematic, for a wide-ranging influence seemed to translate into great power in how Westerners came to understand other peoples and locations. Therefore, I am committed to studying those interfaces that seem the most widely proliferated throughout the West, a commitment that led me to select Googling as my object of study.

But if I could only see limited, prioritized information in Google interfaces then what worldview did this organization reflect? The constraint on access to information I felt in the Google ecosystem indicated to me that dominant power relationships were at the foundation of my research. Having spent a great deal of time studying transnational relationships in literature, foreign policy, and news production, I inquired to what extent these Western-produced and globally proliferated interfaces revealed patterns of imperial dominance. During the colonial enterprise and carrying forward into present day international relations, Western interaction with

other cultures has shown a tendency for dominance and hierarchizing Western interests above the rest of the world. The result of such imperialism has been the marginalization of other groups. Rather than attempting to obtain an accurate representation of other cultures, the cultural information used to characterize them existed in hierarchies that prioritized Western culture (Said, Pratt, McClintock). Such dominant systems inherently limit how Westerners understand other groups of people while simultaneously misrepresenting other peoples, locations, and cultures in order to promote Western worldviews. Such imperial power was apparent in the way that Benghazi, Libya was being characterized in the Google ecosystem after September 11, 2012. How exactly Google search result themselves were contributing to this imperial worldview through arrangement of online information remained unquestioned.

A fundamental commitment of my research is to reveal how systems of dominance are created and sustained in order to challenge those that problematically oppress groups of people. The Benghazi attack has become a singular occurrence by which Westerners know Benghazi. This event contributes to the creation of an ideological prophecy of American political rhetoric that characterizes the "Middle East" as violent, uncivilized, and filled with Western enemies. The characterization of the Benghazi attack and Benghazi, Libya more generally in Google search results assists Westerners in justifying military and political activities in the region, a continuation of imperialism in the twenty-first century. Revealing such systems of dominance can assist individuals in breaking down barriers to creating new forms of knowledge. One location in which such systems of dominance are sustained is in the search events that happen as a result of our everyday interaction with online information.

In the following pages, I report the results of a rhetorical analysis of Google search results for the term "Benghazi, Libya" in Google Worldwide, Google+, and Google United Arab

Emirates. This analysis aims to understand whether users are persuaded to accept a stable meaning when searching for Benghazi, Libya and what patterns in information create that meaning. By investigating the way that these results are arranged, I explore how Googling the term prepares a user for and delivers a stabilized meaning surrounding the location. In so doing, I show how Googling contributes to systems of imperial power through arrangement of cultural information. Furthermore, I present a method of research that allows critics of new media to understand how ideologies are created in search results when they are returned to users.

CHAPTER 1: POWER AND PERSUASION IN DIGITAL ENVIRONMENTS

When technologies are effectively implemented, often it is the transparency of the work they do that leads to their success. Successful technologies, broadly defined by their role in the accomplishment of some work or objective, hide their process and instill a sense of being both natural and inevitable. Thus, technologies such as computer interfaces, while seemingly commonplace in our everyday practice, actually play an important role in how we make meaning in the world. The foundation of this project lies in uncovering patterns and arrangements in what seems to be "natural" organization of information that is created by computer interfaces. In this rhetorical analysis, I analyze patterns of Google search results and interrogate their influence on how users make meaning. I question how digital acts of arrangement intersect with imperial dominance in results returned by Google interfaces. And I inquire to what extent these Google search results support imperial power structures when arranging ideological markers surrounding Benghazi, Libya.

In this chapter, I first review early interface scholarship that investigated how computer interfaces were establishing hierarchies of peoples based on issues of race, language preference, and social status. Early interface scholars such as Cynthia Selfe and Richard Selfe and Lisa Nakamura identified how interfaces repeated symbols, icons, and other tropes of imperial dominance. Next, I explore scholarship that theorizes how interfaces shape culture by facilitating connections among information that creates ideologies. Such ideologies become naturalized through hiddenness and repetition. I discuss the early interface scholarship that attempts to understand how ideologies in computer interaction are naturalized. Finally, I explore shifting definitions of new media interfaces that view them as interactions rather than persistent and

predictable textual forms. Understanding interfaces as interactions is important for my analysis because it indicates that rhetorical arrangement is useful for understanding how search interfaces can be both influential and transparent when constantly mobile information is connected and reconnected.

However, rather than the traditional sense of rhetorical arrangement as parts of a text or composing process, arrangement is constituted by patterns of information interacting to support temporary meanings. These arguments contribute to my rhetorical analysis of Google interfaces by bridging the gap between postcolonial rhetorical criticism and new media developments. Such bridging is useful for understanding imperial dominance in a digital age.

1. Selfe and Selfe, Ideological Maps, and Cultural Dominance

For Stuart Hall, investigating ideological structures rests on the study of "connotative codes" or "maps of meaning" that limit the meaning that can be made, allowing some meanings while systematically eliminating others (See Hebdige 364). We live in these maps and treat them as the natural or real world even as they exist as a limited set of potential meanings. This same difficulty is outlined—and same metaphor is used—by Selfe and Selfe when they analyze how colonial dominance functions in a digital age. They write, "The users of maps. . .read cultural information just as surely as they read geographical information--through a coherent set of stereotyped images that the creators of maps offer as 'direct testimony' (Berger 69) of the world, of social formations and socially organized tendencies, of a culture's historical development" (Selfe and Selfe 485). For Selfe and Selfe, interfaces are potential elements of these connotative codes or maps that help to uphold an ideologically-driven representation of the world. Interfaces serve to limit meaning that can be made when users interact with computer technology. Shifts to

computer technology carry with them ideological baggage that systematically oppresses certain peoples and ideas.

Selfe and Selfe's scholarship is a seminal investigation of how ideology is created and sustained in interfaces. They argue that interfaces such as Microsoft Word and desktop operating systems in the early 1990's supported American, white, male privilege. Saturated with such ideological baggage, the interfaces performed "small but continuous gestures of domination and colonialism" (486). For example, they asserted in 1994 that it was difficult and slow to replace the English-based system of communication inherent in computer interfaces because it required working against "a complex set of tendential forces encouraging inertia" including a refusal to update old software and rework proven approaches to computer programming (491). Selfe and Selfe indicate the difficulty of undermining these tendential forces when they state that to resist such ideologies requires "that individuals and groups in the computer industry abandon English as the *natural* language of, the natural standard for, computer technology" (Selfe and Selfe 491, italics in the original). They indicate that the naturalized marker of imperial ideology (the English-language standard) leads to continued Western cultural dominance.

Selfe and Selfe's work serves as a useful foundation for interface scholarship because they were asking the field to be critically aware of such acts of domination by identifying their occurrence and considering their influence. Rather than simply accepting English as the natural language of computer technology, they asked rhetorical scholars to consider the influence of the English language on how they came to access digital information. Rather than accepting the "desktop" metaphor as the inevitable gateway for accessing computer files, they asked users to question where this metaphor was created, whose purpose it served best, and whose values it reflected. In the context of this rhetorical analysis, the ideological values that are carried out in

Google search results might seem as natural as the desktop metaphor or the English language as the inevitable computer language. In some ways, this analysis answers Selfe and Selfe's call.

2. Cybertypes, Identity Tourism, and Imperial Ideology

While the desktop metaphor might be most related to capitalist ideology, Selfe and Selfe indicate in their invocation of both "domination and *colonialism*" that ideological values in early interfaces were based on racial ideologies as well (486, emphasis added). Lisa Nakamura's scholarship also explores how racial tropes are reproduced in digital environments based on Western, white values and identity politics. In *Cybertypes: Race, Ethnicity, and Identity on the Internet*, Nakamura creates the term cybertyping to describe an ideological activity that occurs when racial categories are stabilized and hierarchized in digital environments—often through visual constructions. Nakamura analyzes cybertyping in MOOs (MUDs, Object-Oriented), which are multi-user domains that arrange database elements based on object-oriented design protocols. Nakamura criticizes their common tendency to rely on pre-established ideological hierarchies that reinforce problematic racial stereotypes: "[I]n constructing this necessary difference [between the self and its interlocutors], the subject has recourse only to those markers of difference that already exist within the symbolic order" (40). For example, an early MOO called LambaMOO allowed for a race to be selected when creating a user profile. When users selected an Asian, male persona, they received a stock avatar that was orientalized in its description of hair and eye color and came equipped with a samurai sword that "confirms the idea of the Asian man as potent, antique, exotic, and anachronistic" (Nakamura 39). She identifies the categories of racial markers online as associated with similar cultural practices occurring in other spaces such as film, television, and music: "[R]acism… and other forms of identity-based oppression

online become possible (and perhaps inevitable) when visual perceptions are informed by the same set of objectifying ideologies that inform these activities offline" (34). Nakamura asserts that such markers are stabilized in order to facilitate "identity tourism," where white users can inhabit othered personas in order to define themselves as "the *one*, not the *other*" (Nakamura 40, italics in the original).

This assertion resembles that of Edward Said in *Orientalism* who argues that the Orientalized markers in the Western tradition were used to obtain the Orient. Once such markers were set as standard representation of the East, Europe could define itself as other than and superior to it (Said 7). Identity tourism is about defining racial boundaries for the dominant order in an online space where visual markers of dominance might potentially be destabilized. This activity represses discussions that do not adhere to predictable racial cybertypes. Identity switching is only available to those willing to inhabit stabilized categories of race that fit the dominant order. Therefore, the ability to fantasize about identifying as an Other is available only from a privileged position.

Nakamura's investigation of LambdaMOO's design and Selfe and Selfe's investigation of Microsoft and web operating systems provide a useful window into why interfaces are rhetorical and how their rhetoric is related to powerful understandings about colonial, race, class, gender, sexuality, and ability hierarchies. Like other tools of colonialism, interfaces delimited the choices a user could make about how to represent themselves or how to organize online information. Interface designs reflected cultural values of certain groups who used positions of power to define both their own culture and the culture of others.

3. The Cultural Interface and Ideology

Lev Manovich's 2001 text, *The Language of New Media*, argues that the computer's ubiquitous distribution and use in sharing varying types of information have fundamentally shifted what it means to "interface" in the context of new media. The changing nature of the information found in digital form has a profound impact on the way that we come to understand the world around us: "As distribution of all forms of culture becomes computer-based, we are increasingly 'interfacing' to predominantly cultural data: texts, photographs, films, music, virtual environments. In short, we are no longer interfacing to a computer but to culture encoded in digital form" (Manovich 80). Drawing on previous cultural forms including the written page and cinema, the cultural interface provides access to digital information. Because the information is cultural in nature, the way in which interfaces facilitate its access has a profound impact on cultural organization; interfaces impose their own culturally loaded logic (Manovich 80). Yet Manovich simultaneously asserts that the art of rhetoric is undermined by new media hypertext:

> In short, the printed word was linked to the art of rhetoric.
>
> While it is probably possible to invent a new rhetoric of hypermedia, which will use hyperlinking not to distract the reader from the argument (as it is often the case today), but instead to further convince her of the argument's validity, the sheer existence and popularity of hyperlinking exemplifies the continuing decline of the field of rhetoric in the modern era. (86)

Manovich contends that the "flattening" of the interface data into "texts" arranged in a random order undermines the capability of an author to persuade an audience of any particular argument. However, the space that Manovich leaves open here, in which hyperlinking can convince a

"reader" to see things in a certain way, is one form that rhetoric takes in computer interfaces. Thus, Collin Brooke, in *Lingua Fracta*, asserts that Manovich, in his attempt to form understanding from this infinitely "flat" data set, "ignores the order that we regularly impose on it" (91). Even as new information is added into the cultural interface with potential random impact on old information, we organize information through patterns that allow us to make sense of it. Investigating patterns or the arrangement of information returned by an interface can help us determine its culturally loaded logic: how information is colliding with other information can help us determine how culture is being structured in a particular way.

Despite Manovich's denunciation of rhetoric in new media, his assertion that interfaces are where we access culture in digital form provides an access point for understanding interface activity as having a profound impact on the way that we understand the world around us, including other people and locations. Understanding interfaces as cultural implies a need for critical perspective on how culture is being organized, or in other words, what ideologies are created and sustained by data in the interactive interface. Lawrence Grossberg identifies ideologies as "particular structures and forces that organize [people's] daily lives in contradictory ways, and how their everyday lives are themselves articulated to and by the trajectories of economic, social, cultural, and political power" (8). Because search interfaces such as Google are locations where access to cultural data is achieved, the interaction of this data is part of what creates and sustains particular ideologies. Examining the patterns of arrangement of the data can reveal clues to ideological organization. But because successful technologies are transparent, users' ignorance of ideologies present in interfaces is an intricate part of their upholding cultural systems. As Stuart Hall argues, "you cannot learn, through common sense, *how things are*: you can only discover *where they fit* into the existing scheme of things. In this way, [ideology's] very

taken-for-grantedness is what establishes it as a medium in which its own premises and presuppositions are being rendered invisible by its apparent transparency" (quoted in Hebdige 362-63). Interfaces carry ideological positions below the level of consciousness in common sense that organize cultural information.

4. Naturalization of Ideology in Interfaces

Alexander Galloway provides a frame for identifying just how such naturalization of interface logic occurs. Galloway argues that hiddenness is one of the most powerful forces of naturalization (99). Following Marx, Galloway discusses power in human-computer interaction as mediated by social hieroglyphs, which are artifacts that do not announce on the surface what they are in reality. For Marx, this is the construct of capital; for Galloway, HCI protocol. The interface becomes naturalized when its inner logic is not challenged, when it forgoes what Marx and Galloway call demystification. Recalling that Manovich argues the cultural interface mediates the way we obtain cultural data, cultural interfaces operate as social hieroglyphs that do not announce their control over access to cultural data. Furthermore, the misrecognition of what is actually occurring in cultural organization and the continued treatment of the social hieroglyph as indexical truth captures the way the ideologies are created and sustained. "To simplify the formula: natural misrecognition = ideology" (Galloway 102). The social hieroglyph has little to do with indexical reality of people, locations, artifacts, or phenomena. But when it is recognized as the indexical truth, ideology is created and sustained.

Galloway's explanation of the hiddenness of the interface as a process recalls the discussion of transparency I used to open this chapter. What makes the issue of interfaces so interesting is that, in order to work well, to some degree they must reduce the number of

variables that we process. But they do not announce this reduction; successful interfaces hide the fact that they take over work for us. When cognitive load is reduced for the user, interfaces are more successful at holding user's attention (Rosinski and Squire 152). The reduction of cognitive load is one primary mode of the naturalization of an interface. This mode relies on the already internalized knowledge of the user in order to maintain its transparency. Paul Rosinki and Megan Squire argue that perceived affordance, or the way a user inherently understands how to use a tool upon initial experience, is a key aspect in reducing cognitive load:

> Perceived affordances of an object, therefore, are subject to each user's ability to sense, as well as to their experiences, their backgrounds, their memories, etc. This is an important distinction; it is not solely the inherent qualities of the object itself that imply its use. These inherent qualities will always be complemented (and complicated) by the very powerful knowledge that exists in the user's own mind (155).

Interfaces, then, both introduce cultural logics and become mediated by knowledge that users bring to them; this knowledge is already imbued with ideology.

5. Developments in New Media Technology: Extending Interface Scholarship

According to the interface scholarship that I have reviewed in the paragraphs above, interfaces are the gateways between users and information. Thus, in order to understand how interfaces are ideological, it is necessary to investigate them by denaturalizing or demystifying their meaning beneath the level of common sense. Therefore, interfaces are often analyzed much like texts that have enduring characteristics leading users toward information in particular ways. Websites such as Amazon, E-bay, search engines and blogs are treated as interfaces, the contact

point by which we come to access information in digital form (Brooke 22-23). A rhetorical analysis that treats interfaces as texts might search out the rhetorical arrangement of the interface design to see how it delimits access to cultural information, or it might identify key tropes such as "folders" and "files" within the desktop metaphor and uncover the warrants or appeals that ground these icons (see Selfe and Selfe, 486-87).

However, scholars continue to shift how interfaces are defined as new media technology develops. Whereas previous generations of interface research could interrogate the interface as a text with persistent characteristics reflecting a certain set of values, scholars increasingly view interfaces as interactive environments where multiple and dynamic "authorship" occurs as new information is continually added. In order to rhetorically analyze interfaces as interactions rather than as texts, we need to account for the continual production of new cultural data linked together by interfaces and how this new data changes the information already existent there (and vice versa). Rhetorical agency is distributed across information and people in socially subjective ways that facilitate activity rather than to an individual with singular rhetorical purpose (Herndl and Licona 133). Therefore, a rhetorical analysis of interfaces can look for patterns between information and people.

A rhetorical analysis of interface as interaction differs from previous scholarship I have reviewed because it does not assume one author with a single rhetorical purpose. Rather, patterns of information uploaded from a variety of users might indicate how new information will be arranged when it enters and interacts in the interface. The scholarship I have reviewed often analyzes interfaces for the rhetorical purposes of the designers. Nakamura's definition of cybertyping assumes one author or designer of the interface. An investigation of the interface design views cybertypes as assumed by a creator who then deploys it as the only available option

for users, who they furthermore assume are white. In Nakamura's example, the samurai sword is the only option for understanding and obtaining the Asian perspective. However, when considering the interface as interaction, the way that information interacts in the interface as it is added from outside sources tells more about how ideologies are created than the investigation of what the site does to facilitate specific categories. Understanding interfaces as interactions indicates that there is not a single author or designer, but multiple authors who are adding information for different purposes; this information continually connects and reconnects. In this context, cybertyping would necessarily occur in a different form. Rather than acquiescing to one option, the stabilized cybertype would occur as users were constantly inundated with the same marker over and over again. The cybertype might constitute one of Selfe and Selfe's maps of meaning, a prediction for how data will be networked with other data when it enters the interface. The appearance of several hundred or thousand Samurai swords linked to male of Asian descent and linked to accompanying descriptions of their place in Asian culture (or vice versa) would establish these as the cybertype for the Asian male. In order to determine what constitutes the marker of a cybertype, a rhetorical analysis could interrogate the arrangement of these markers within interface events.

6. Defining "Interface" in the Context of New Media Technology

Colin Brooke calls for a rhetoric of new media that changes our unit of analysis from textual objects to medial interfaces. For Brooke, websites' dynamic information distribution and their organization and articulation of electronic communication render them more than static contact points between users and technology. "I suggest instead that interfaces are those 'ever-elastic middles' that include, incorporate, and indeed constitute their 'outside' …" (Brooke 24).

Website interfaces are dynamic in nature, changing as information from multiple locations is added to them. Such websites, then, are not merely storehouses of information. They are the locations of interaction, and in new media contexts they constitute communication.

From a rhetorical perspective, such interaction is characterized by the continual exchange of information that does not necessarily result in an end product (Rice 79-81, Brooke 77). The dynamic nature of an interface means that a great amount of information can be navigated within the interface. As more information is added, the interface expands and an increasing number of interactions are facilitated. Rhetorical investigation of interfaces then can occur when inquiring how "information affects and produces information" (Rice 25). For Jeff Rice, individuals bring their own information sets when entering into an interface, drawing various connections between the database elements of the interface and their own storehouse of experience. Rice suggests that the interface then plays an important role in how meaning is produced. While the limitless options "…may suggest anarchy, the interface unites these elements together based on the role or purpose of each within the system" (Rice 112). The information in the interface connects with other information until it coalesces into a categorical meaning. For Rice, buildings are interfaces in so far as users use of them serve to a specific, categorical purpose; the building-as-interface responds to specific human needs (110-11). For example, a building is a school building because it contains certain elements that a user connects to personal experiences related to education. As Rice indicates, "How these items interact and affect one another within the interface, though, remains unanswered" (112).

Because interfaces naturalize their logic and processes, they often hide how they influence the arrangement of interface information. Such arrangements may promote specific meanings surrounding artifacts, places, people(s), information, or events. When meanings

associated with a term or place are arranged in similar ways repeatedly, they become difficult to challenge or alter. In *Digital Detroit*, Rice calls this process the stabilization of topoi, the term representing meaning around an artifact, space, or phenomena as predictable: "The topoi maintain commonality, predictability, expectation" (Rice 11). He defines stable topographies through his discussion of categories of understanding, as metaphorical containers of meaning that result in a "fixed place" or idea (35, 42-35). These containers, which are culturally influenced, allow only certain types of information to be included while denying information that does not fit the stabilized meaning of a term. Those who encounter organized meaning around the artifact, space, piece of information, action, or individual, tend to cling to predictable narratives that already categorize them. For Rice, this adherence plays out in popular media representations of Detroit as a location of decay and redemption that come to define the location, "fixing" the ideas around it and forging the narrative to which people adhere (Rice 106). In this context, a topoi can be defined as a marker that through repetition, connection, and prioritization implies additional markers within the predictable narrative. A topography is the narrative itself, the sum total of those topoi that are interconnected to stabilize meaning.

Interfaces help determine communicative practices and assist people in making meaning. The presentation of information, people, locations, and ideas through their arrangement and delivery in interfaces will have a fundamental impact on the way that users come to make connections between these elements and how such connection results in a unified presentation of information (Brooke; Rice 115). Such connections are determining factors in how users make meaning of the world around them. "[T]he links that allegedly demonstrate the irrelevance of rhetoric are rhetorical practices of arrangement, attempts to communicate affinities, connections, and relationships" (Brooke 91). Thorough investigation of these "affinities, connections, and

relationships" can assist scholars in determining how categories of understanding become persistent and unified. How such connections are occurring is of fundamental importance for considering how meaning is stabilized in new media interfaces.

7. Arrangement and Pattern in New Media Interfaces

Rice claims arrangement in its classical rhetorical form might be thought of as an architecture in which information has an already established place in a system (32). Arrangement is the proper selection of information and its deployment in a structure so that an argument has its maximum persuasive impact. The structure of the page, the arrangement of paragraphs, the compartments of an argument, and other such textual elements determine the way that meaning is made. Invention only occurs within the parameters of the determined structurally arrangement of the page, those ideas that fit in their proper place (Rice 32-33).

In a digital context in which information is continually added to online environments, arrangement becomes crucial for understanding the rhetoric of new media. Because rhetorical arrangement has historically been associated with stable texts, Brooke asserts that new media requires an update to the canon, shifting from arrangement to what he calls "pattern." Because interfaces are dynamic and elastic, rhetorical implications cannot be contained in set arrangements. Rather, rhetoric in the interface can be seen in patterns of information. Within this conception of rhetorical arrangement, patterns of interaction between pieces of information carry rhetorical implications. A rhetorical investigation of arrangement in new media contexts then is an investigation of the way "information affects and produces information" as a dynamic interaction (Rice 25). As a result of new information being constantly added to the interaction,

patterns might reveal whether topographies are being created and repeated or are being challenged.

In their multimedia project *Re-Inventing Invention: A Performance in Three Acts*, Bre Garrett, Denise Landrum-Geyer, and Jason Palmeri argue that dynamically bringing together disparate information facilitates randomly inspired invention. Similarly to Rice and Brooke, they assert that new media can be used to break patterns of meaning and support new ideas through unexpected connections (for Garrett, Landrum-Geyer, and Palmeri that connection is random, while for Rice and Brooke it is often based on user preferences and actions). They call this multimedia activity "creative juxtaposition," which brings together two or more pieces of information that seem inherently disconnected in hope that new ideas will be inspired. In this way, their multimedia project illustrates how arrangement of information helps users make meaning through invention. Palmeri states in Act II of their digital performance:

> Valuing the idea of creative juxtaposition…. What that means is sometimes not valuing the idea of the creator as the person who makes form, makes coherent, but rather, in some cases, our role as composers here is to put images and words into conversation that might not have been in conversation before. And to do that, to really open up a space for that, we have to be willing to let go of our internal drive for coherence.

In this statement, Palmeri indicates a prime tension in the study of rhetorical arrangement in new media interfaces. While interfaces seem to provide potential for an open exchange of information where new ideas can be invented and continually reinvented, patterns of information may repeat in such a way as to sustain coherence, limiting how meanings are made in digital environments.

Rice also recognizes this tension. He asserts: "What is unfamiliar, or whatever rhetorically combines items that don't seem to belong together, often induces anxiety, anger and hostility" (77). Brooke argues that we regularly impose order on this open exchange of information. How this order is imposed and the rhetorical effects of such imposition are the subjects of this project.

Manovich's assertion that there can be no rhetoric of new media and Brooke's rebuttal that we regularly order the "flat" data set indicate that arrangement constitutes our inventive practices online. Rice offers a utopian vision of databases that shifts the agency for making connections or arrangements to individual users:

> Instead of spatializing place and space in terms of the outline or grid so that items remain in their separate place, the database leaves open how information might be navigated or finally arranged by not dictating the exact structure of the arrangement. It's a vital point because that openness allows for a variety of possible interventions with information, among them the personal investment and involvement that occur in information arrangement. (33)

When applying this logic to a more open collection of all information on the Internet that search interfaces access, Rice's utopian vision of the openness facilitated by databases in some senses rings true – individual users have control over where they navigate online. However, the history of interface scholarship that I reviewed to introduce this chapter helps us understand that interfaces are always ideological. This tradition does not simply dissolve with the introduction of new media interfaces that are interactions. While Brooke and Rice offer a perspective that treats interfaces as interactions and challenges classic understandings of arrangement, what the patterns of interaction reveal about meaning making in new media does not necessarily bear out a

narrative of openness and multifarious meaning. Patterns potentially repeat themselves in such a way that limits meaning in ways that have serious implications for understanding the people, places, or artifacts the information supposedly indexes.

8. Imperial Ideology in the Context of Digital Interaction: Benghazi, Libya by Patterns

As I outlined early in this chapter, the rhetorical analysis of interfaces has been the subject of a rich tradition of study. Scholars such as Selfe, Selfe, and Nakamura correctly identify that forms of cultural dominance have been reiterated in a digital age. They apply postcolonial criticism to online environments by identifying ideological tropes in interfaces that are places of contact between users and information. But shifting perspectives on interfaces as interactions, the speed of digital media update, and the medial interface as the main analytical object of rhetoric in digital environments call for new understandings of how imperial dominance is constructed through patterns of information online. My critical investigation of Google search results is one avenue by which investigating markers of imperial ideology might be updated for new media contexts where information is mobile, malleable, and constantly added.

While Selfe and Selfe advocate for a critical awareness of continued imperial dominance and Nakamura identifies how racial ideologies are established online, my rhetorical analysis attempts to rhetorically analyze patterns present in search returns. I will investigate how repetition, prioritization, and connection between ideological markers occur and will ask whether these patterns resonate with the ideological tropes Selfe and Selfe and Nakamura find in their analyses. In this way, I am investigating the new rhetoric of hypermedia to which Manovich

alludes: the prospect that meanings are made through arrangement of information and that these meanings are often precisely tailored to individual preferences.

The following chapter is dedicated to integrating theoretical frames for understanding imperial power distributions with those that outline how information interacts in digital form. In so doing, I will establish a frame for understanding the patterns of Google search results about Benghazi, Libya and a method for analysis that will provide a means for investigating patterns that signal continuing imperial dominance in the creation of meaning about that location.

CHAPTER 2: A COMBINED THEORETICAL FRAME OF IDEOLOGY IN DIGITAL ENVIRONMENTS

In the previous chapter, I discussed a tradition of interface scholarship often cited in rhetorical analysis projects. In this scholarship, a select group of authors interrogate interfaces' impact on how we invent meaning and come to understand the world around us. These authors have investigated the ways in which interfaces carry culturally loaded logics that influence the way we encounter and process information (Selfe and Selfe, Nakamura, Manovich, Galloway). Cynthia Selfe and Richard Selfe and Lisa Nakamura concentrate on the ways that interfaces reproduce colonial ideologies through persistent markers of white, Western values.

Over time, interface scholarship has shifted to conceiving of interfaces as more dynamic and interactive, exploring how continually changing information interacts when users confront it. From this perspective, rhetoric in new media exists in the way that information connects to other information in meaningful arrangements (Rice, Brooke). To discover the rhetorical impact of these connections, Brooke argues that we should look for patterns in these connections in order to determine the order that is being imposed on regularly changing information.

This project occurs at the intersection of these two conversations about interface. I aim to extend the claims and goals of scholars who study how interfaces potentially reproduce colonial systems of power. I take up this scholarly conversation and attempt to understand it in a digital environment–the Google search environment–that continually arranges new information from a wide array of sources. My investigation of rhetorical patterns in Google search results is aimed at understanding how rhetorical arrangement patterns work within this new media interface. In order to do so, this chapter expands the prior chapter by introducing a combined theoretical

framework that accounts for the nature of patterns that characterize imperial systems of power distribution and that are likely to occur when we make meaning with new media interfaces.

In this chapter, I first review scholarship from the postcolonial tradition that provides a theoretical framework for understanding individual Google search results as ideological markers. This framework is most useful when establishing that the markers exist within the patterns of information that Edward Said calls an "imaginative geography." I then discuss how this theoretical frame needs to be extended in order to analyze ideological markers that exist in a changing digital environment. The theoretical frame must take into account the practical implications of shifting our study of interfaces from textual objects to medial interfaces (Brooke) and therefore account for the ways that patterns of connection occur in digital environments.

1. Analyzing Google Search Results as Ideological Markers

As I discussed in Chapter 1, Selfe, Selfe, and Nakamura's interface scholarship identifies markers of race, class, and social value in the digital texts that provide access to computer information and exchange. For these theorists, particular markers, or tropes, can be understood to represent ideologies that limit understanding or categorize people, places, and ideas in problematic ways[2]. Through identifying and analyzing markers of racial and social value, they are able to postulate ways in which peoples are being systematically oppressed in computer interaction. The rhetorical tropes of racial and social value that they identify then might be understood as *ideological* markers, since those artifacts that create, are produced within, and reflect systems of social power. Each of these authors draws from a scholarly tradition that

[2] "Ideologies" are structures beneath the level of consciousness that determine what is and what is not possible in the construction of meaning. When cultural interaction occurs, ideologies dictate the roles of participants, what information is being exchanged, and an order of value for artifacts, people, and phenomena. See Hebdige, 362-63.

investigates the way that oppression occurred during the imperial enterprise, when colonies were being "obtained" by Western powers and made systematically inferior. Critics of texts, material objects, and actions from the colonial endeavor searched for markers of ideological oppression. For Selfe, Selfe, Nakamura, and I in turn, this criticism is useful for establishing a theoretical framework for understanding these ideological markers. This tradition of scholarship explores how Western imperialists made distinctions between themselves and othered peoples and locations.

Western-European attempts to find natural distinctions between themselves and the populations they found in Africa and the Americas resulted in and supported systematic oppression. In *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation*, Mary Louis Pratt argues that a fundamental shift in travel discourse occurred with the invention of the scientific taxonomy by Carl Linnaeus' in *The System of Nature* in 1735. Linnaeus provided travel writers and Europeans more generally with a systematic way of categorizing previously unknown species. Travel writers began to turn their narratives into attempts to obtain and locate species in the natural system, indicating their position of power in an assumed right to do so while simultaneously attempting to seem innocent of any assertion of that power. "Here is to be found a Utopian image of a European bourgeois subject simultaneously innocent and imperial, asserting harmless hegemonic vision that installs no apparatus of domination" (Pratt 33). However, while this activity was purportedly innocent and a simple organization into an already existent natural order, it actually constituted a new way of seeing locations by placing unknown species and things into relation with those things already known. Eventually this systematic treatment of biology extended to human relationships, developing classification of *homo sapien* into six categories that, in contrast to several other classification comparisons between plants and

animals, were largely subjective. Europeans were described in the taxonomy as "governed by laws,' while Africans were described as both "black" and "governed by caprice" (Pratt 32). "The categorization of humans… is explicitly comparative. One could hardly ask for a more explicit attempt to 'naturalize' the myth of European superiority" (Pratt 32). Pratt asserts that the natural system of understanding was a comparative exercise that lent ideological support to a particular hierarchy of humanity. Europeans were both superior and the ones who had drawn the boundaries in the classification systems.

But in this description, it is also clear that race became attached to attributes concerning the civilized or uncivilized "nature" of other people. Biological differences became constitutive of differences in other markers of civilization. "The systematizing of nature represent not only a European discourse about non-European worlds… but an urban discourse about non-urban worlds, and a lettered, bourgeois discourse about non-lettered, peasant worlds" (Pratt 34). Race became linked as an indicator of rank in level of civilization. In *Imperial Leather*, Anne McClintock argues that the development of these links did not occur because of natural observation in which one race was observed to be less civilized. Rather, they developed to validate imperial ideology by verifying the imagined subordination of other peoples beneath the European and justifying imperial dominance of other peoples and locations. "In order to meet empirical standards of the natural scientists, it was necessary to invent visible stigmata to represent… the historical anachronism of the degenerate classes" (McClintock 41). "Stigmata," in this sense, are defined as visible tropes of appearance that are marked as natural and then assigned to a constructed cultural comparison as evidence of a hierarchy of those cultures. In this context, evidence of class degeneration is linked to invented stigmata that "prove" certain groups (Africans, women, working classes, etc.) were uncivilized and therefore justifiably dominated.

Furthermore, these stigmata were used as indicators that subordinate races were dangerous to the civilized, European, bourgeois society. "…[T]he idea of racial deviance was evoked to police the 'degenerate' classes… who were collectively figured as racial deviants, atavistic throwbacks to a primitive moment in human prehistory, surviving ominously in the heart of the modern, imperial metropolis" (McClinock 43). As primitive and uncivilized, racial deviants were to be feared. This position substantiated an ideological hierarchy that placed Europeans as the superior race. The stigmata of this deviance were located in biological distinctions attached to race. In this way, not only could Europeans extend their commercial interests and seize ownership of new lands by force, they had visual evidence that the populations of other locations were of lower class, therefore justifying their right to do so. Ideological markers of imperialism in this study are these stigmata, indicating the (problematic) categorization of peoples for which they supposedly provide indexical representation. In the context of Google search results connected to a particular location, McClintock's concept of stigmata offers a useful way for understanding how items returned through search terms can become meaningful ideologically. Individual search results may "mark" or allude to ideological apparatuses that they support. Just as certain anatomical markers were constructed and assigned to Africans in order to provide "evidence" of their savagery (McClintock 41-42), so too can the ideological markers be analyzed to determine whether they provide imagined proof that non-Western, non-democratic locations and populations lack characteristics of civilization. Furthermore, Pratt argues that the scientific taxonomy provided imperialists a way to naturalize their systems of dominance. The fact that these ideological markers are displayed images (in the Images interfaces) or based on displayed eye-witness accounts (the textual reports from the links in Google search results) helps to naturalize the ideology that characterizes meaning.

Figure 1: Washington D.C. based U.S. Army drill team. Source: *pixabay.com*

Figure 2: A link to a *New York Times* article characterizing Washington from an economic perspective. Source: *NYTimes.com*, January 10, 2013

In *Rhetorics of Display*, Lawrence Prelli argues "to display is to 'show forth' or 'make known,' which, in turn, implies its opposite – to conceal…. [D]isplays are rhetorical because the meanings they manifest before situated audiences result from selective processes and, thus,

constitute partial perspectives with political, social, or cultural implications" (11). Even if a "scientific" perspective is employed in which some evidence is offered as "proof," these are actually "staged performances that 'make known' noteworthy features of some occurrence or object" (Prelli 15). Apparent "proof" hides other perspectives. Because markers seem to be observed in the "natural" environment of the location, they might be taken as indexical representations of the region and its people even though they are rhetorical displays selected from a particular perspective. Figures 1 and 2 are two examples of such apparently natural observations. Figure 1 is a creative commons image of a Washington D.C. based U.S. Army drill team, providing a partial representation of these citizens and the location in which they are found. Figure 2 offers a news report that provides a narrative of Washington D.C. that it purports as factual. In this way, each becomes a "lens" through which we understand Washington D.C. In Chapter 3, I will show that the lenses through which we understand Benghazi, Libya have an imperial tint.

2. Imaginative Geography and Google Search Results

For both Pratt and McClintock, analyzing individual textual and material objects as ideological markers of imperialism was made much more impactful when those markers were discussed as single objects in a whole field of objects that operated together to uphold oppressive systems of power distribution. Said defines this field as an imaginative geography, a conglomeration of dramatized ideological markers that assists a group of people in defining other groups of people, artifacts, events, and phenomena. Said indicates the "dramatizing" function of ideological markers in the sense of theatricality (55, 63). The object is put on display for local understanding. "Dramatized" encapsulates the imaginary quality of the ideological marker. The

ideological marker assists one group render the "other" obtainable and therefore distinctly not "us." Said argues that ideological markers solidify both the physical and natural, social "distance" between these groups: "For there is no doubt that imaginative geography… help(s) the mind to intensify its own sense of itself by dramatizing the distance and difference between what is close to it and what is far away" (55). The imaginative geography primarily functions to draw a clear line between "us" and "them," the local and the other. This distinction is facilitated through geographical understanding, in which a place (and its people) is defined by the boundaries set up and sustained by the local group.

> … [D]esignating in one's mind a familiar space which is 'ours' and an unfamiliar space beyond 'ours' which is 'theirs' is a way of making geographical distinctions that *can be* entirely arbitrary. I use the word 'arbitrary' here because the imaginative geography of the 'our land-barbarian land' variety does not require that the barbarians acknowledge the distinction. It is enough for 'us' to set up these boundaries in our own minds; 'they' become 'they' accordingly, and both their territory and their mentality are designated as different from 'ours.' (54)

The boundaries that demark the "barbarian land" are the ideological markers that together compose the entirety of the imaginative geography. Each marker aims to obtain a stable picture of the "Other," in order that it might be contained and held in the mind of the local peoples. For Said, this distinction plays out in the drawn boundaries between the Orient and the Occident. Ideological markers of the Orient are less about indexical representation of Eastern lands and people and more about capturing an image of the Orient that is thoroughly distinct from the

West. The markers "are the lenses through which the Orient is experienced, and they shape the language, perception, and form of the encounter between East and West" (Said 58).

Said analyzes several instances of literature and identifies ideological markers of the Orient that help to define an imagined superiority of the Occident. These markers, proliferated throughout the West, do not require a direct connection in which those who deploy them are aware of each other's role in supporting the ideological function of Orientalism. Rather it is the role of the Orientalist to Orientalize those areas outside of the Occident, a process that "forces the uninitiated Western reader to accept Orientalist codifications… as the *true* Orient. Truth, in short, becomes a function of learned judgment, not of the material itself…" (Said 67). For example, Barthèlemy d'Herbelot's *Bibliothèque orientale* attempted to alphabetically define (and capture) the history of the Orient (including Biblical history and images of Islamic culture and places). But it did not refer readers to principally Oriental resources but to other Orientalist codifications of Orient. This included using the insulting name "Mohammedan" in place of "Islam" and positioning "Mahomet" as an "imposter" (Said 64-66). Orientalists assign the Islamic prophet a stable role that is alphabetized, placed in relation to other "M" words so that it can be quickly found, used, and placed back where it belongs after use. His role in this (imperial) system is therefore obtainable by the uninitiated Westerner and reproduced across several cultural sites (books, plays, decorative objects, etc.).[3] The dangers of a heretic religion are removed when "it is transformed into an ideologically explicit matter for an alphabetical item" (Said 66). Islam is obtained, categorized, and defined in distinction to Occidental Christianity. Both Islam and the religion's prophet fit safely into an already established system of cultural

[3] Ideologies are hidden beneath the level of common sense from peoples within the culture, who, as Stuart Hall indicates, can only place cultural information into the current ideological system. They cannot see the system and imagine how connections might occur without it unless they develop a critical consciousness of those structures below the level of common sense. See Hebdige 362-63.

meaning, an ideological hierarchy that characterizes Islam as subordinate to Christianity. Furthermore, this ideology characterizes the way Westerners make meaning surrounding cultural objects of similar nature.

> One tends to stop judging things either as completely novel or as completely well known; a new median category emerges, a category that allows one to see new things, things seen for the first time, as version of a previously known thing. In essence such a category is not so much a way of receiving new information as it is a method of controlling what seems to be a threat to some established view of things. (Said 58-59)

Through Orientalist codifications or representational markers of the Orient that operate as boundaries, the imperialist ideology that allows the West to define itself against this "othered" space is both created and sustained.

This theoretical concept of imaginative geographies founded on a geographical metaphor can be useful for analyzing what I will later describe as a Google search event returning results about a contemporary geographical location. In the case of this rhetorical analysis, each search result provides a representation of the search term and location. Analyzing these individual search terms can provide insight into how each has ideological influence on the way that the location is understood. Yet the ideological function of each individual marker is intensified when it is understood as one ideological marker in a larger imaginative geography. Ideologies are sustained when imagined meanings are reproduced until they constitute a standard, the "established view of things" that allows groups to understand new information as recapitulations of previously known information. Analysis of one particular Google search result as an

ideological marker is most useful when demonstrating that it is one of many similar markers present in the imaginative geography of the search results. In other words, to understand how an ideological marker (the search result) is functioning to uphold systems of power distribution, it is useful to first understand it as existing within an imaginative geography.

As an example, Figure 3 shows a screenshot of Google Images search results with a creative commons filter for the location "Washington D.C." These results show repeated images of the meaning of the search term. Repetition of images marks them as an apparently indexical representation of that location. Visually, while each image holds an individual place and can be focused upon (either through intense concentration on the search results page or enlargement of the image), the conglomeration of repeated images could be argued to establish an imaginative geography. In Figure 4, each individual hyperlink can be focused upon and followed in order to analyze its individual ideological impact. But the conglomeration of hyperlinks forms an imaginative geography that supports a particular understanding of the location.

Once it has been established that an imaginative geography exists, an individual search result can be understood as ideological marker representative of the wider geography. Figure 1 is an enlargement of one of the images of from Figure 3. Since the existence of an imaginative geography has been established, the image becomes one of "the lenses through which" users come to view Washington D.C. and which are representative of the "established view of things." It can be analyzed as an ideological marker; the same can be said of the individual hyperlink search result shown in Figure 2, which is one link from Figure 4.

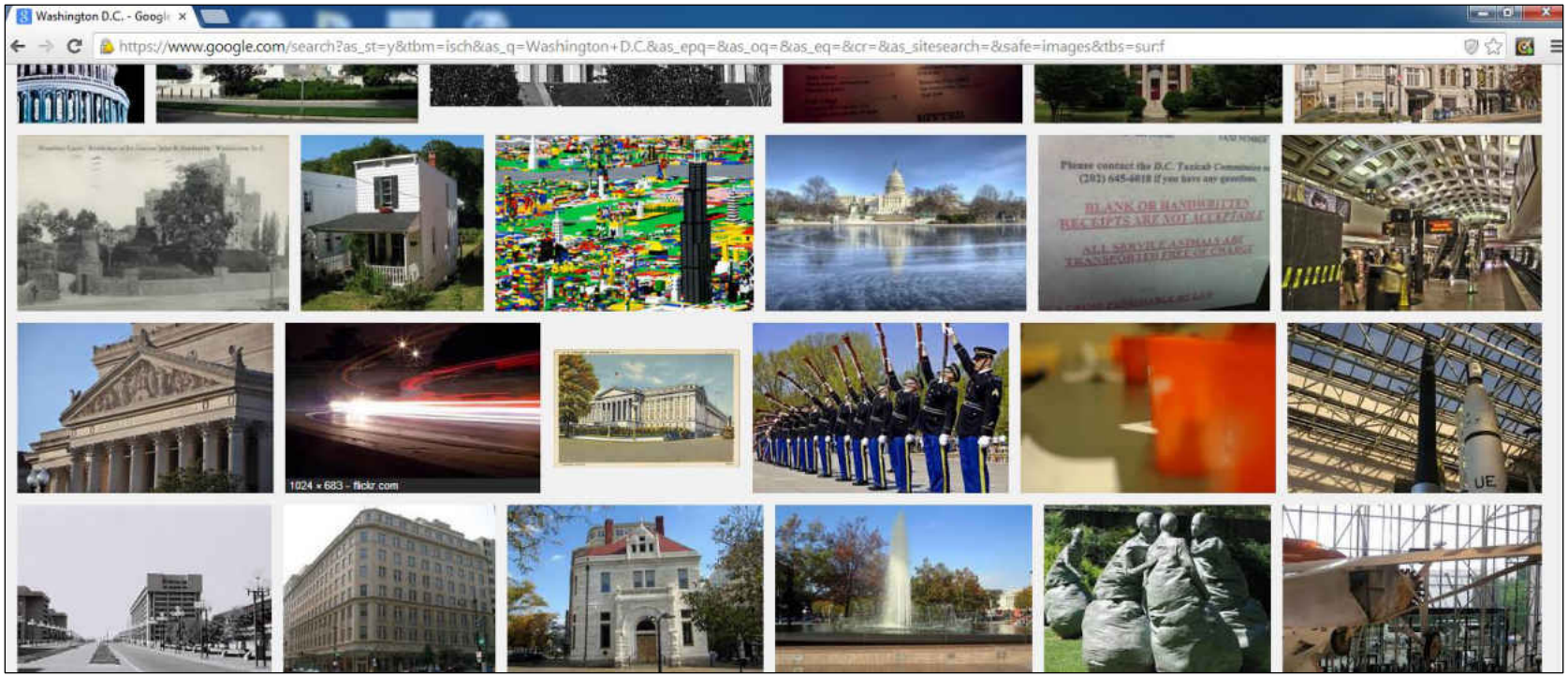


Figure 3: A screen capture of Google Worldwide Images search results with a creative commons filter setting that represent a visual and theoretical imaginative geography of the location.

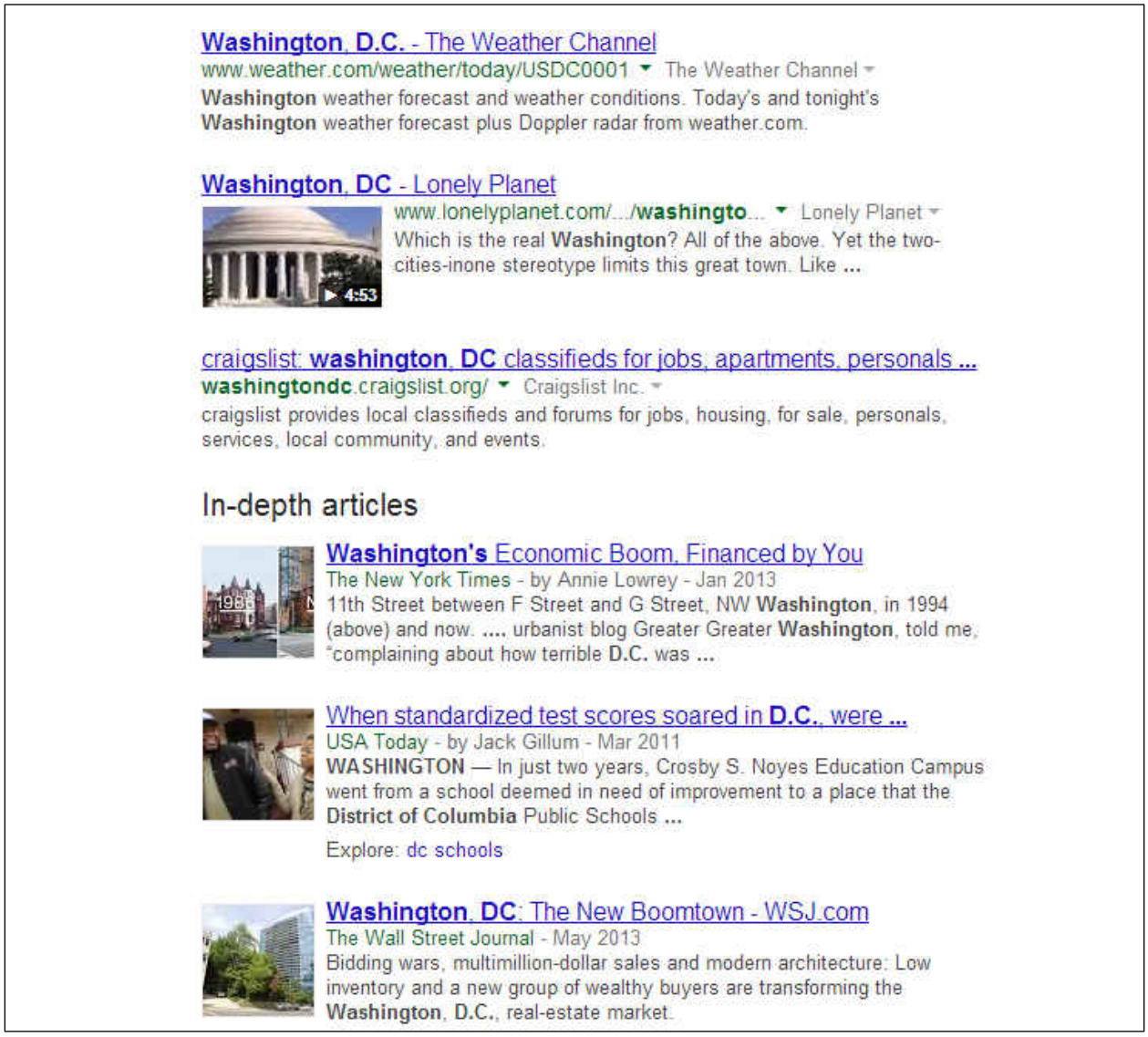


Figure 4: A list of Google Worldwide search results that constitutes a visual and theoretical imaginative geography of the location

3. Transitioning to New Media Interfaces: A Move from Text to Interaction

While the above theoretical frame is useful for examining ideological markers and imaginative geographies, the development of new media interfaces call for transitioning our approach to understanding how meaning is made in environments where information is continually changing. Said, Pratt, and McClintock investigate texts or material objects as the primary examples of how meaning is made surrounding other locations. For Said, the Orientalist codifications of the Orient could be obtained, labeled, categorized, and maintained in an unchanging text. For Pratt, the scientific taxonomy created by Linnaeus provided a categorization system that naturalists could use to obtain foreign flora and fauna and record in the superficially unchanging text of travel writing. For McClintock, the visual stigmata of ideological systems were inscribed in both material objects and texts. In each of these cases, unchanging material objects and texts could be placed into relation with other objects and texts in order to form a stabilized imaginative geography of a location. The texts could be deployed and redeployed and include persistent characteristics, continually fulfilling Western expectations through the same codifications.

However, as I outlined in Chapter 1, interfaces in new media are interactions. Google interfaces are sites where cultural data is continually contributed and connects to other data in new and changing ways. Theories based on textual objects are useful for understanding the ideological function of individual markers and how their conglomerations create an ideology. But to understand how ideologies are created and sustained in a continually mobile digital environment, one must build on these foundations. Treating individual search results as singular texts (similar to the *Bibliothèque orientale*) does not fully account for Google search results' dynamic connection and interaction. For instance, the list of results is not the knowledgeable act

of one individual author or group of authors attempting to portray meaning surrounding a location by providing systematic categorizations and definitions. Rather, these lists include artifacts (textual and visual) that come from a myriad of sources not working together to portray a single meaning, but with varying motives and goals. Furthermore, there are clear connections between both the artifacts and other sites of interaction. These search results are characterized by their repetition and connection in a networked environment. With this shift to understanding Google as a site of meaning that is fundamentally an interaction, a frame for understanding how ideologies are created needs to take into account the change to a digital thinking based on networked connectivity.

As I outlined in Chapter 1, Jeff Rice argues that stabilized narratives surrounding a location become difficult to challenge as they are repeated, bearing out Said's discussion of "imaginative geography." Rice's scholarship is not ideologically driven. But his assessment that networked connectivity between cultural objects can lead to either adherence to a stable narrative or the creation of new narratives provides foundation upon which we can build a theoretical approach to colonialism in the age of new media. An individual ideological marker may become what Rice refers to as a "topoi" of meaning when it connects to other markers in order to form a stabilized narrative surrounding a location (Rice 56-59). But because these markers are constantly changing as new information is added, networks offer the potential for users to make new connections that change those narratives (Rice 60-61). Because of the constant change in networks, the rhetorical implication is that we need to search for patterns of markers in the interface to see what narratives are being established (Brooke 95-97). Identifying these patterns might reveal whether stable topographies are being created and repeated, therefore upholding problematic ideological systems of power, or whether those topographies are being challenged.

In order to identify these patterns, we might trace networks of connection attached to a single ideological marker. We can determine both how often it is repeated and how it connects to other information in consistent or inconsistent ways. In this way, we can see how ideologies are being created and supported through patterns of connection that impose order in an environment defined by change and dynamism.

Simultaneously, new media contexts require not just that we examine the theoretical connections between disparate objects – that is, new media requires that objects be viewed as connected not just based upon the theoretical idea that they reproduce similar cultural information (though this is in itself a useful understanding of connection). In her multimedia project "*Wunderkammer*, Cornell, and the Visual Canon of Arrangement," Susan H. Delagrange argues that arrangement in the context of new media is visual by nature: "… [W]hile we may be attuned to thinking of association and analogy in verbal terms, they are also deeply and fundamentally visual" ("Visual Analogy"). For Delagrange, arrangement in digital contexts is driven by visual association because new media relays the imaginary connections of verbal rhetoric (metaphor, hyperbole, etc.) in material ways. "…[B]ecause [visual arrangement] focuses on affinity rather than on difference, it is more likely to produce rhetorical effects that are collaborative and communal" ("Analogical Manipulation"). In order to understand how ideological markers from various sources are potentially arranged in ideological patterns, visual affinities between those ideological markers can help determine whether they are connected in ways that render them topoi of meaning.

4. Questioning Patterns in Googling "Benghazi, Libya"

Google search results occur at an interesting crossroads of ideology; they provide clear examples of ideological markers while existing in a location that is constantly bombarded with new and shifting information. In order to rhetorically analyze these results one must account for ideological markers, the patterns among markers that are returned in results, and for the fact that the relationships among markers are dynamic and shifting over time. In the remainder of this chapter, I outline my research questions and explain how the above theoretical framework is useful for answering them. I then define a unit of analysis called the *search event* that accounts for the dynamic protocols of online search. Next, I describe the procedures that I used to in order to analyze these search events, outlining my search for "Benghazi, Libya" across five different Google interfaces. Finally, I discuss my reasoning for selecting Benghazi, Libya as the geographical location around which I staged these search events.

In Chapters 3 and 4, I perform an analysis of Google search results by searching for patterns of ideological markers. I do so to understand their function in creating an imperial ideology surrounding Benghazi, Libya. In order to focus my analysis, I use the following research questions as a lens for viewing the Google results around the term "Benghazi, Libya":

1) What patterns of ideological markers are returned upon Googling the term "Benghazi, Libya" in several Google search engines? How might these patterns support imperialist power structures?

2) What do the patterns of ideological markers suggests about the role of digital arrangement in establishing stable topoi of meaning surrounding Benghazi, Libya?

In the context of the theoretical framework outlined above, these questions drive my investigation of Google interfaces. They indicate my attempt to contribute to the ongoing

conversation that explores imperial oppression in computer technologies. These questions are well-suited to contribute to this conversation because they take into account both scholarship that investigates markers of oppressive power systems and the new media context in which such markers are deployed.

5. The Search Event as a Unit of Analysis

The questions above pertain to analysis of searches for one term in five different Google interfaces. As a unit of analysis, I am investigating what I identify as a particular *search event*. In this project, I define a *search event* as an interface activity wherein several constituent components interact to return results based on their conglomerated influence. The search event around the particular term initiates the interaction of these components. In order to explain what I mean by "components," I will first identify some of the multiple influences at play anytime a user runs a search online: histories, algorithms, cookies, available information on the web, physical location, and moment in time, just to name a few. The Google Pagerank algorithms take over 200 various signals into account when attempting to determine the relevance of search results ("About Google – Inside Search – Algorithms"). User search histories and cookies are tracked by the interface in order to determine his/her traits and return results based on what the interface assumes are his/her preferences. In addition, the number of times a link is cited by other links influences how it is prioritized in the search results (Brin and Page). Physical location, type of computer, and browser choice are all taken into consideration when Google returns results (Pariser). All of these constitute components of the search event that is initiated when a term is Googled. The user's role as one of these constituent components, then, is to begin the interaction by relying on the other components to return relevant results for the particular term. Among the

interaction of the constituent components, the user's motivations and perspectives (both through the algorithmic markers such as cookies and previous searches and personal, largely unquantifiable motivations and perspectives) are an important factor in the search event. While the other constituent components are primed to interact and become a search event, the user initiates and participates in this interaction in order that these components might interact in order to make meaning.

In this study, I do not analyze any one of these constituent components, including the user, because my goal is to identify a unit of analysis that is compatible with rhetorical textual analysis methods and that reveals arrangement of ideology as users encounter it. Analyzing the individual search histories, browser choices, or cookies of a search event would be difficult if not impossible to stabilize. Simultaneously, my inquiry looks for arrangement of patters of information in which associations between pieces of information is of prime importance. Yet because the results that are the visible product of the search event are always changing and because the algorithmic factors beneath this visible level are also changing to a lesser extent, those associations may not occur as stabilized and reproducible texts. Said, Pratt, and Mclintock were able to use methods of rhetorical analysis on texts and artifacts that they discovered and that had persistent and predictable characteristics. But this trend in using rhetorical textual analysis methods necessarily shifts in digital contexts. Instead of expecting to find similarities in visible search results, understanding the search event as the dynamic interaction of several factors leads to treating these results as stable for a moment. The ideological lenses that are created then develop from the search event, and the stable for now search results are the visible residue of this event that users see. Therefore, I can perform rhetorical textual analysis on the arrangement of these results and see the resultant claims as pertaining to the search event as the

whole. The search event as a unit of analysis allows me to perform rhetorical analysis on the search results in order to see how ideologies are created and sustained through the search event operating below the level visible to users when they Google. I indicate my interest in analysis of the search returns that occur as a result of interactions among components in the search event[4]. My intention is that this interest bears out a useful model for understanding ideological construction in the results returned by the search event. In this way, users might make sense of the impact on meaning making that the search event carries. Such a model would be usefully applicable by all users to help see limitations and affordances of search events that they initiate.

In order to answer my research questions, I constructed a small set of search events that could be analyzed for ideological markers and patterns. In order to construct these search events, I obtained data from five Google interfaces by searching the term "Benghazi, Libya" at three separate University of Central Florida Library computers. My purpose in using public computers in one location was to keep the "components" of the search event that would be affected by the particular technology, time of day, and physical location relatively stable and to disconnect from my own personal "online footprint" or that of any one personal user for the purposes of this search. Next, I Googled the term "Benghazi, Libya" in the Google Worldwide interface. However, desiring to have a comparative set of data that may offer an alternate perspective, I Googled the term "Benghazi, Libya" in the Google United Arab Emirates interface (Libya does not have a Google specific domain). I selected an interface that had an associated nation whose national language is Arabic, postulating that the integration of a different language may imply a varying perspective on Benghazi. Taking into account Delagrange's assertion that digital

[4] The scope of this project does not include reaching out beyond the individual search event to an analysis of its constituent components. Rather, it investigates the patterns of information that occur as a result of the interaction of these components.

arrangements are fundamentally visual, I searched the term in both the Google Worldwide Images and Google UAE Images as well. Finally, I searched the term in Google+, an interface that combines text and image results. In each interface, Google algorithms determined the results based on relevance.

For each search event that I constructed, I captured ten screenshots of search results, limiting the search to the first ten pages. As a methodological decision, I did not continue to interrogate ideological markers and patterns beyond ten pages based on the hypothesis that users are less likely to seek out meaning around a location if it is not prioritized in the hierarchy of "relevant" results.

By analyzing one instance of a search event across five interfaces, I account for the idea that connections between search results are dynamic and change over time. That is, my unit of analysis investigates one instance of searching and one instance of how an ideology may be present in these search returns. What I intend to accomplish by investigating this particular search for "Benghazi, Libya" is first a contribution to the ongoing discussion concerning colonial dominance in an age of interactive interfaces as I describe in Chapter 1. I am constructing a representation of a particular search event and then deconstructing it by searching for patterns of meaning that may or may not link to imperial ideology. But by analyzing a particular search event, I also aim to provide a method for tracing patterns of arrangement and connecting them to ideologies in other events; this method can be generalized beyond just an investigation of imperial ideology in Google search results. It is a tool for understanding how patterns of arrangement in search results are influencing the user's ability to invent meaning in other search events no matter what the interactive components of the particular event may be. The Google

search event initiated by searching for "Benghazi, Libya" across these five interfaces serves as an illustrative example of this method.

6. Benghazi, Libya as the Land of The "Other"

Before moving on, it is important for me to clarify why I chose this particular location in constructing these search events. According to Said, imperial ideology founded in imaginative geography rests on Westerners identifying a location "beyond 'ours' which is 'theirs'" and assigning arbitrary boundaries around both the location and the characterization of its people. This practice might extend to a wide variety of locations, begging the question: Why does Benghazi, Libya serve as a useful example of a location that is defined by an imperialist ideology in Google search results?

Outside of the fact that Benghazi constitutes a location characterized as 'othered' (which I will show through extensive analysis in Chapter 3), it is particularly suited for this rhetorical analysis because of the urgency that Westerners have to make meaning of it. The September 11, 2012 attack on the U.S. embassy in Benghazi initiated a need for Western populations to understand the location in order to make meaning of the event. And while it is dangerous to consider this the only reason for a Westerner to understand Benghazi on the level of reproducing the very structures that I find problematic, the attack is an initiating event that has caused the creation of imperialist ideology surrounding Benghazi. This, as I will show in both Chapters 3 and 4, is exemplified by the repetition of ideological markers in my Google search results that characterize Benghazi through content that concerns the attack.

Furthermore, even after the passing of over a year, ideological markers dealing with the Benghazi attack are still prevalent in the Google search results. Despite the continual changing of

information in the database, the Benghazi attack still holds a prominent position in the Google search results examined in this study. This repetition indicates that ideological markers associated with the Benghazi attack are prevalent in patterns of information, still partly dictating meaning surrounding Benghazi. Benghazi is therefore a useful case study for understanding how narratives about a location (Rice) are stabilized through repetition and connections that result in patterns of meaning.

7. Toward a Search for "Benghazi, Libya"

In Chapters 3 and 4, I interrogate this collected data through the combined theoretical framework outlined above in order to determine how the results uphold imperial power structures through particular patterns of information. In Chapter 3, I identify ideological markers of imperialism in the Google search results by first establishing that there exists an imaginative geography for the Western user surrounding Benghazi. I interrogate individual cultural objects present in the return to establish how they support an imperial apparatus of meaning making. In Chapter 4, I explore the connections and repetitions that establish patterns of understanding surrounding Benghazi, Libya. I assert that the ideological markers are topoi, markers that through repetition and connection imply additional markers which characterize Benghazi, Libya. Together these patterns of meaning establish an imperial topography of meaning surrounding Benghazi, Libya that is repeated across various connections and repetitions in the search results.

CHAPTER 3: IDEOLOGICAL MARKERS OF IMPERIALISM: GOOGLING BENGHAZI, LIBYA

Rhetorical analysis of Google search returns that investigates the ideological structures that they sustain and uphold occurs at the intersection of postcolonial rhetorical scholarship and new media interface scholarship. By interrogating Google search returns for their influence on how a user might make meaning surrounding a location, traditional postcolonial rhetorical scholarship can be extended to include repetitions of imperial and colonial power structures in digital environments. Early interface scholarship asked the field to identify how these imperial power structures were reproduced. The following two chapters are a response to this call that take into account shifting understandings of interfaces.

In this chapter, I identify the ideological structures present in Google search results across five interfaces. The chapter is engineered to help answer the first of my two research questions: What patterns of ideological markers are returned upon Googling the term "Benghazi, Libya" in several Google search engines? How might these patterns support imperialist power structures? I identify ideological markers present in the Google search returns and discuss how they represent the boundaries of an imaginative geography of Benghazi, Libya. First, I explain how I took into account the reciprocal relationship between the imaginative geography and its individual ideological markers while analyzing the search events described in Chapter 2. Next, I describe the larger context of the imperial imaginative geography of Benghazi, Libya that emerges from my rhetorical analysis. I then outline the categories of ideological markers found in these search results that are usefully understood within this context of this imaginative geography. These categories create an imaginary, colonial dichotomy between civilized, Western populations and the uncivilized, Libyan population. Finally, I address those ideological markers that operate

against the dominant imaginative geography and discuss the extent and limitation of their influence by accounting for their overwhelming infrequency in comparison to ideological markers of imperialism.

1. The Imaginative Geography in Google Search Results: A Rhetorical Analysis

As I described in Chapter 2, meaning surrounding Benghazi, Libya is supported by an imaginative geography present in Google search results. This imaginative geography, constituted by repeated codifications of the location and its people, is an ideological apparatus. This imaginative geography of results is inherently visual in one sense, as repeated ideological markers appear on a screen and allow users to draw affinities between them. In this section, I describe how I identified ideological markers in the search events I constructed and explain the analytical methods that led me to conclude that they form an imaginative geography of Benghazi.

An imaginative geography and its individual ideological markers exist in a reciprocal relationship. Each individual marker constitutes a boundary of the imaginative geography as it is repeated over and over throughout the search results. Each individual marker can be analyzed for its ideological impact. However, each is best understood and its influence extended when it is viewed in the overall context of the imaginative geography. Thus, when I began rhetorically analyzing the search events, I made the decision to begin by first categorizing the foundational, individual ideological markers. In this way I was able to construct my understanding of the imaginative geography of Benghazi, Libya piece by piece from the individual marker to the larger context. However, in my reporting of this data, I will perform just the opposite, deconstructing the imaginative geography by starting with the overall context and zooming in on

individual ideological markers for analysis only after this context has been established. In this way, I assist readers understand that my analysis of the individual ideological markers is not at random but rather representative of the overall imaginative geography of Benghazi. Each can also be understood as having an impact on that imaginative geography as a boundary marker.

Ideological markers are stigmata of an already established system of meaning; they are evidence that confirm an imagined indexical characterization of the location and its people. My first move in analyzing the search events was to identify categories of images and text hyperlinks in each interface that repeated most often (city landscapes, burned out buildings, fire, etc.). Rice claims that tropes become categories of meaning when they are often repeated and assist people come to a stabilized narrative of location (61-63). In the case of my Google search results, when a particular form of ideological markers occurred repeatedly, I classified it as a category of ideological marker. For example, the appearance of burned out vehicles in almost every screenshot of Google Images and Google Images UAE resulted in its classification as a category of ideological marker.

Once I had established these categories, my next analytical move involved connecting these categories of markers to their place within a larger system of meaning: an imaginative geography. In order to work toward characterizing the larger system, I therefore organized these categories of markers into what I called "shorthand classifications," which involved groups of categories (i.e., Damaged Infrastructure, Libyan Violence, American Political Rhetoric, etc.). In each shorthand class, the categories of markers could be analyzed to determine their ideological perspective on the people of Benghazi and their relation to the West. These shorthand classifications serve as a useful middle step toward assembling and understanding the imaginative geography present in the Google search results. The shorthand classifications give a

clearer picture of the boundaries that these ideological markers form. Once they were established, the imaginative geography within the Google search results took shape.

2. An Imaginative Geography of Benghazi, Libya in Google Search Results

In this section, I argue that ideological markers in these search results are woven together into an imperial tapestry that constitutes the imaginative geography of Benghazi. I argue that the classes of categories represent boundaries that define Benghazi citizens as hierarchized below U.S (Western) citizens and locations. The shorthand classes reveal an imperialist dichotomy between the U.S and Benghazi populations.

As shown in Chapter 2, Said relies heavily on the example of d'Herbelot's *Bibliothèque orientale* to define imaginative geographies. This text operates as a useful example because of its inherent function, namely to index the Orient by capturing definitions of people, places, artifacts and phenomena and alphabetizing them so they fit into a fixed place, where they can be returned after use. These definitions and codifications are imaginary. They are boundary markers that are not based in reality. Instead they are ideological markers that assist the West as it defines itself against the Orient. In much the same way, the search results in each of these five interfaces repeat imperial representations of Benghazi, stigmata of a Western perspective on an Othered location.

The imaginative geography's boundaries are supported throughout the search results across the five interfaces. I analyzed approximately 1,000 ideological markers in 50 screenshots. Of these ideological markers, well over 800 fell into categories that I identified as supporting an imperial ideology (I am tentative to give an exact numerical representation as some images and hyperlinks include several markers simultaneously). Approximately 100 ideological markers

were landscapes or hyperlinks containing geographical information, which I argue are markers that assist Western populations in obtaining the location by stabilizing a generic image of it. Approximately 50 ideological markers were maps or hyperlinks to maps, which function in a similar ways as the landscapes and geographical sites. And approximately 50 ideological markers were exceptions to the imperial ideological apparatus.

Figure 5 shows a list of the ideological markers that index Benghazi through an imperialist lens throughout all 50 screenshots across five interfaces. Each category of marker is placed under a shorthand classification. The number in parentheses represents the total number of screenshots in which an example of the category appears at least once. Figure 6 shows a list of ideological markers that might be thought to challenge imperial ideology, following the same format. Comparing the volume of markers in each figure and the number of screenshots in which they appear reveals the imperial tapestry that I have thus far alluded to. Ideological markers of imperialism are proliferated throughout these results, while those markers that challenge this apparatus are few and far between.

It is clear from these tables that the images and hypertext links found in these search results carry thematic overtones of war and violence. Definition through conflict provides an overarching theme of the imaginative geography. Simultaneously, conflict is associated with political discussion from a distinctly Western perspective that, though less prominent in the results, provides a backdrop against which these ideological markers are defined.

Shorthand Classes of Imperial Ideological Markers

Damaged Infrastructure:
Burned out building (20)
Fire (20)
Burned out vehicles (18)
Streets in disarray (trash, brick and mortar, graffiti) (18)
Rebuild Libya (2)

Libyan Violence:
News Article/Opinion Ed w/ Ongoing Conflict Content (23)
News Article/Opinion Ed w/ Benghazi Attack Content (20)
Non-military weapon holders, undisciplined (19)
Images of Libyan Soldiers, undisciplined (17)
Terrorist groups in images and text content (17)
Rituals of Peace, demonstrations against Libyan violence (6)
Articles related to Ambassador Stevens (5)
Maps representing conflict areas (4)
Images of Beaten Ambassador Stevens (3)
Plane dropping from sky on fire (2)
Children in Military Costume (2)
Facebook Breaking News Feed, Conflict Coverage (2)
"In-depth articles," All from U.S. News outlets, all about attack (1)

Rituals of War, American Discipline:
American soldiers, ritualistic discipline (14)
American flag coffins, return of those killed in Benghazi attack (12)
Images of Ambassador Stevens (4)
American War Plane (4)
U.S. Capital Building (1)
Evacuation of Westerners from Libya (1)

Protest against American involvement:
Crowded Street Protests (15)
Violent protesters and fire (8)
Destruction of American Flags (4)

Images Used to Capture the Physical Location of Benghazi:
Maps of Benghazi/Libya (23)
City landscapes (22)
Nature Landscapes (2)
Souvenir image of Benghazi (1)

American Political Rhetoric:
The American President (10)
American Propaganda Poster (3)
American Themed Comics (2)

American Rhetoric concerning Libyan Politics:
Commentary on failed politics in Libya (2)
American themed "posters" decrying the death of Ambassador Stevens (2)

American/Western Institutions defining Libya:
U.S./British News Outlets (23)
U.S. Embassy reports (U.S. Embassy posters) (3)
Screen Capture, American Television News Outlet (3)
American Documentation (2)

Western Institutions in Benghazi, Libya Region:
British School Benghazi (1)
Post or Pic/Articles relating to Libyan Population with Western ally characteristics (Jewish community (1)
Catholic Church in Libya (1)
Images of Violence against Western sites (1)

English Language Use:
Use of English is most prevelant; Arabic language is mostly translation of Western content (10)
Arabic language use (only translation of "Benghazi") (3)

Miscellaneous Markers:
Missing People Wall (1)
Western Coded Doctors operating on Libyan Man (1)
Oil Fields (1)

Figure 5: Shorthand Classes of Imperial Ideological Markers

Shorthand Classes of Ideological Markers Challenging the Imperial Dichotomy

Images of Everyday Life in Benghazi:
Boy selling Birds (2)
Zoo Visit (2)
Soccer Stadium (2)
Benghazi Street Market (2)

Restoration of Benghazi:
Rebuild Libya (2)
Cleaning of streets (1)

Sites/Institutions that imply Libyan Stability:
University of Benghazi (1)
Benghazi, A beautiful Libyan City (1)
Libya Herald (1)

Discourse Distinctly Operating against Dichotomy:
Article/Posts that refute claims of deteriorating Libyan security (1)

Arabic Language Use:
Arabic Content first on breakingnews.com (1)

Other Information Found in Searches:
Accuweather (4)
Current Local Time (2)
Flights by Trip Advisor (2)
Benghazi Chat, Badoo.com (1)
Used Car Site, beezat (1)
Omega Watches (1)

Figure 6: Shorthand Classes of Ideological Markers Challenging the Imperial Dichotomy

Figure 7 represents one screenshot of search results from Google Worldwide Images that includes several boundary markers that index Benghazi, Libya in much the same way that d'Herbelot's *Bibliothèque orientale* attempted to alphabetically define (and capture) the history of the Orient. In this screenshot, we see repeated military themed images and images of violent and uncivilized civilians that index the Benghazi population. As the images on the screen conglomerate to form an index of Benghazi pursuant to the search term, they create and sustain an imaginative geography that defines Benghazi as a violent and uncivilized location. Overwhelmingly, these images capture the military activities of U.S. military, war practices of Libyan soldiers, and violent citizens' activity. Each individual image can be removed from the imaginative geography, examined as an ideological marker or stigmata of the indexical knowledge that Benghazi is violent location, and then replaced before moving on to another image, which supports the same ideological apparatus. One image from the search results includes several categories of ideological markers such as a civilian weapon holder, a burned out vehicle, and fire. The civilian weapon holder, as it is associated with a generic search for "Benghazi, Libya" can be interpreted as a generalizable index for the Benghazi citizenry. The burned out vehicle and fire simultaneously operate to characterize the location as uncontrollable and in disarray. (Figure 8 is a creative commons image with similar ideological overtones. The actual image can be found here). But the image's ideological function is extended in the context of the imaginative geography shown in Figure 7. This single images is surrounded by four other images of fire, ten instances of burned out or decimated buildings, and at least one other instance of a civilian weapon holder. As Said asserts, an imaginative geography is visible when the same ideological markers are repeated to form boundaries and when imperialist codifications are repeated.

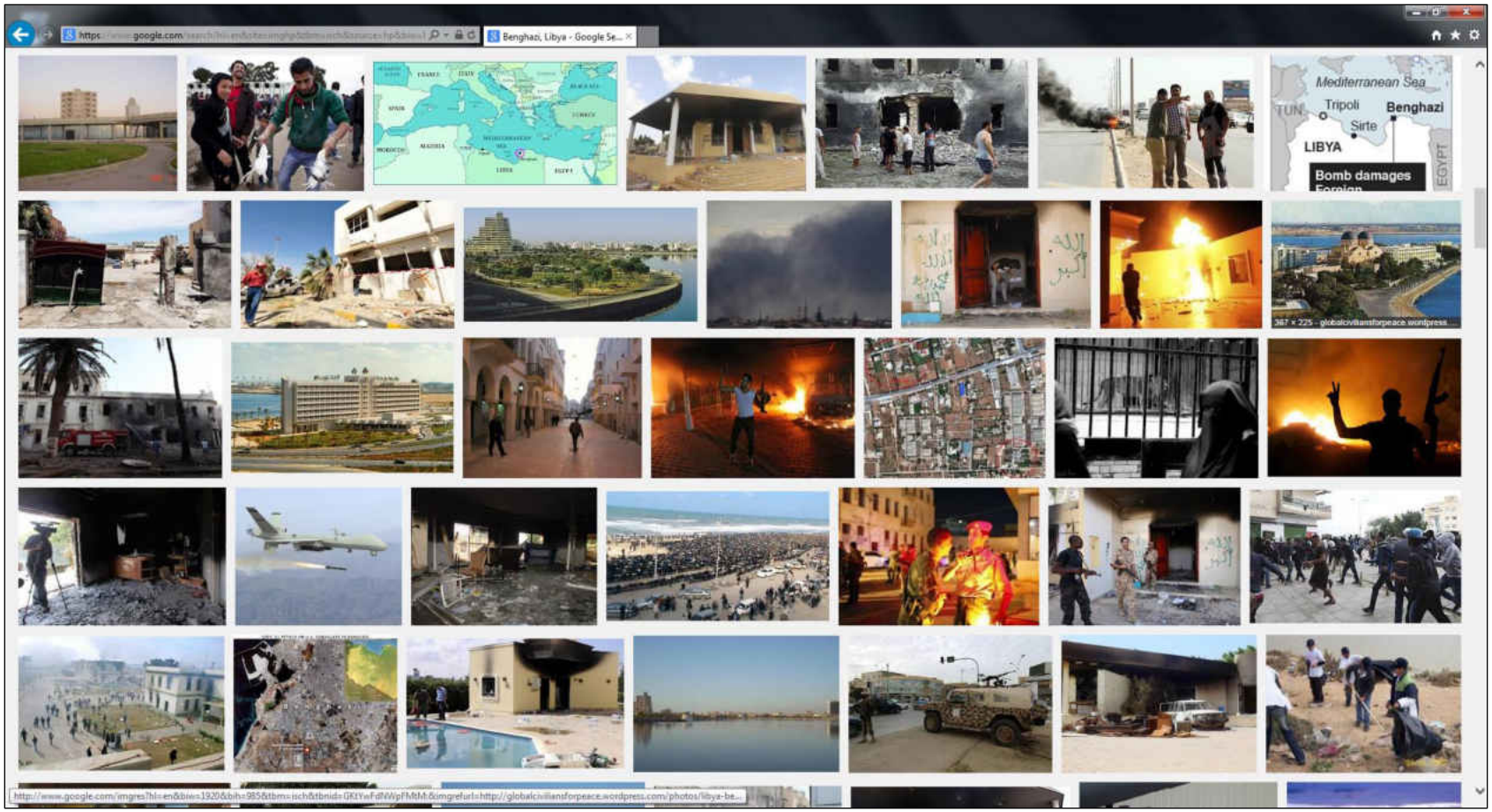


Figure 7: A screen capture of Google Worldwide Images search results that represent a visual and theoretical imperial imaginative geography of the location.

Figure 8: Members of Anti-Gaddafi forces. Source: *Wikipedia Commons,* October 17, 2011

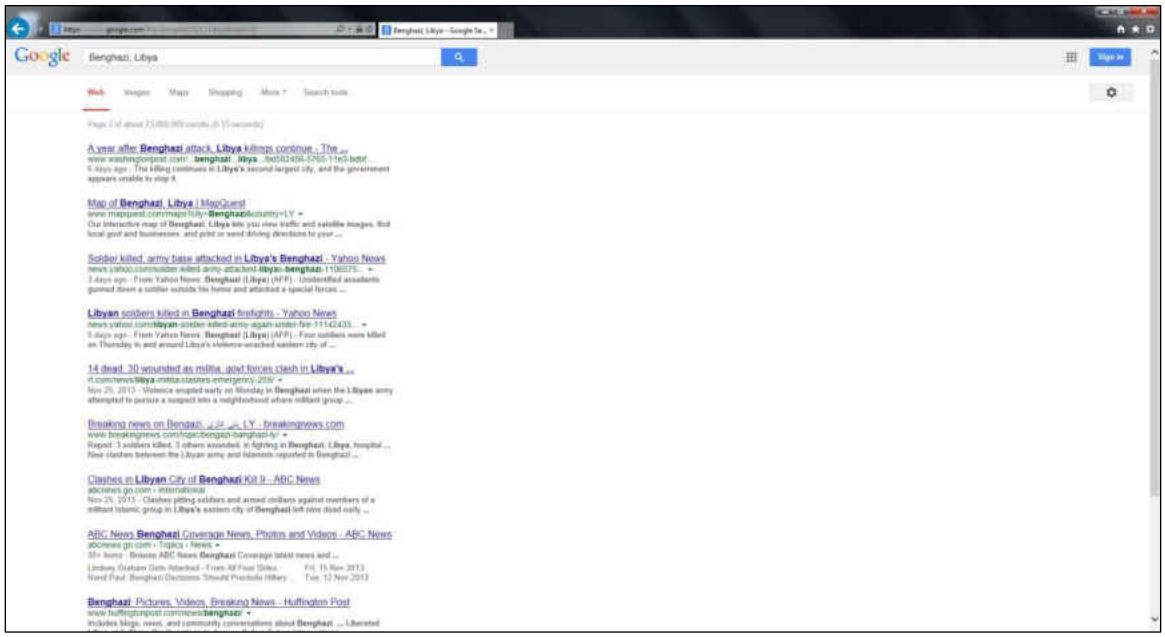


Figure 9: A list of Google Worldwide search results that constitutes a visual and theoretical imperial imaginative geography of the location

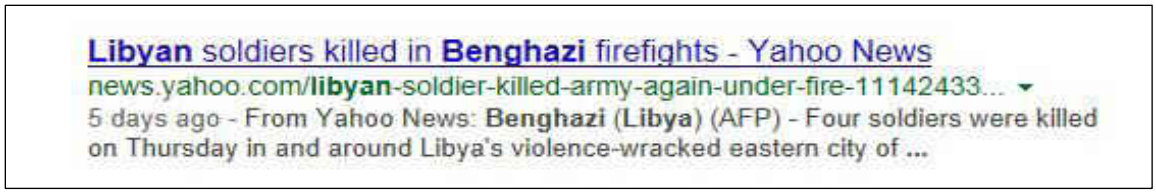


Figure 10: A link to a news story from *Yahoo News* concerning ongoing conflict in Benghazi. Source: *Yahoo News*, November 28, 2013

In the instance of this screenshot, we see the beginnings of an imaginative geography within these .Google search results. The same can be said of Figure 7 and Figure 8. Figure 7 is a screenshot of search results in Google Worldwide. Figure 8 is one ideological marker, a hyperlink that exemplifies the category of ideological marker "news article with ongoing conflict content." As in the case of the images results, this one hyperlink is surrounded in the overall imaginative geography by five other instances of the same category.

In *Imperial Leather*, Anne McClintock argues that imperialists obtain indexical representation of Othered populations and co-opt them into their own ideological apparatus through marginalization, echoing Said's claim that defining an imaginative geography assisted Europeans in defining themselves against the Orient. "At the same time, the dangers represented by liminal people are managed by rituals that separate the marginal ones from their old status, segregating them for a time and then publicly declaring their entry into their new status. Colonial discourse repeatedly rehearses this pattern – dangerous marginality, segregation, reintegration" (McClintock 25). This pattern of indexing reveals a need for the population to be defined as other than the dominant order so that they can be hierarchized in the existing ideological apparatus. The first four shorthand classifications of markers in Figure 9 operates to segregate the population of Benghazi, Libya by defining it as other than the U.S. population when it comes to military conflict and civilian violence.

3. An Imaginative Geography of Damage and Violence

In the initial four shorthand classifications, a repetition of markers emerges that define Benghazi, Libya in dichotomous position to the U.S. and the West. This dichotomy exists between imaginary boundaries around an uncivilized, pre-democratic, violent Libyan population and a civilized, democratic, peacekeeping U.S. population. The dichotomy is characterized by damaged Libyan infrastructure, distinctions in military/war activity, and resistance to civilized, democratic, governance as it is defined by the West or U.S. political involvement. The categories of markers in these shorthand classifications are pervasive. Of the approximately 800 ideological markers I identified as supporting an imperial ideology, approximately 700 markers fall under these first four shorthand classes. In this section, I will discuss each of these shorthand classes, defining their position as boundaries in the imaginative geography. I will illustrate each class by analyzing an individual ideological marker in each, revealing its support of the larger imaginative geography.

3a. Damaged Infrastructure

Images of damaged infrastructure are prevalent in both Google Images interfaces and Google+. The categories of ideological marker found in this shorthand class include "burned out building," "burned out vehicle," "streets in disarray," and "fire." In addition to these are narratives from Google Worldwide and Google UAE that imply Benghazi (and Libya more generally) is in need of immediate repair by other nations in the world community. The link to "Rebuild Libya," an international conference designed to share development plans for the region, represents such a narrative. The markers in this class serve to marginalize Benghazi by defining it as uncivilized, unruly, and uncontrollable. From a Western perspective, they can help

Westerners define what Said calls the "our land-barbarian land" dichotomy by indexing imaginary representations of a damaged infrastructure in Benghazi as opposed to the images and texts that show U.S. locations that are well kept (the White House, military hangers, halls of Congress, etc.). These markers carry and create an imperialist ideology by not only defining the location against the U.S., but as beneath the United States' place in a hierarchy of locations.

The image found at this link is an ideological marker in the category "burned out car" from the fourth page of Google UAE images results. This image of a burned out car resulting from a car bomb encapsulates the damaged infrastructure and helps define that boundary of the imaginative geography. While the burned out vehicle itself (through repetition in these results) is one category that characterizes this othered location as uncontrollable and unruly, the fact that the civilians in this photo are so close to the chaos helps Westerners to connect the damaged infrastructure with the lives of everyday citizens in Benghazi. In other instances of this category of marker, burned out vehicles are often surrounded by civilian onlookers.

Images such as these create and sustain the imaginative geography by defining Benghazi not only as uncivilized but also as a location where violence and damaged infrastructure is a part of everyday life. Such images serve to marginalize the population of Benghazi, separating the civilized West from the liminal and dangerous Benghazi population. The category of ideological marker "burned out car" operates as a stigma that confirms this liminal population as dangerous and necessary to segregate.

3b. Libyan Violence

Those ideological markers that fall into the shorthand class "damaged infrastructure" justify segregation of Benghazi, Libya based on stigma assigned to its physical location. The

shorthand class "Libyan Violence" operates as a boundary marker which includes invented stigmata assigned to the people living in that location. The ideological influence of these markers is most impactful when viewed in conjunction with the shorthand class "Rituals of War, American Discipline," which shows boundaries around the Western population that render it fundamentally distinct from the Libyan population. Both classes include boundary markers of the imaginative geography surrounding Benghazi. As representations of stigmata that affix imaginary characteristics of violence to Benghazi citizens, these search result sustain an image of the othered, liminal people as violent and necessary to segregate from "civilized" society.

Figure 11: A link to a *CBS News* story concerning a massive jailbreak in Benghazi. Source: *CBS News*, July 27, 2013

Figure 11 is a hyperlink from the third screenshot of Google UAE search results and falls under the categories "News Article/Opinion Ed w/ Ongoing Conflict Content," "News Article/Opinion Ed w/ Benghazi Attack Content," and "U.S./British News Outlets." This hyperlink characterizes the citizenry of Benghazi as violent by both reporting on the release of 1,000 prisoners into the population and simultaneously linking this jailbreak to the 2011 attack on the U.S. embassy. CBS news defines the people and its location by implying that the citizenry of Benghazi is violent. The ideological marker delimits the boundary of meaning around these people as dangerous and necessarily segregated. By defining these boundaries, imperial hierarchies are

substantiated, defining the Libyan population as uncivilized and beneath the civilized West. The dichotomy that these categories of markers imply is clarified when viewed in conjunction with those markers in the shorthand class "Rituals of War, American Discipline."

3c. Rituals of War, American Discipline

This shorthand class defines the dichotomy between the U.S. and Benghazi and justifies the segregation of the dangerous population of Benghazi by showing it as clearly distinct from the civilizing, military presence of the U.S. As Said argues, the imaginative geography assists local populations in defining themselves against the other. The relationship between these two shorthand classes serves such a purpose by providing correlating and opposite stigmata for U.S. military discipline that is civilized.

The image linked here is from the fourth screenshot of Google Worldwide Images and shows an often repeated example of the category of ideological marker "American flag coffins" and "American soldiers, ritualistic discipline" and shows the return of the remains of those killed in the Benghazi attack accompanied by U.S. military personnel in full, formal dress. This ideological marker functions in multiple ways to define the dichotomy between these locations. The return of U.S. victims' remains from Benghazi recalls their violent deaths and facilitates the necessary segregation of the supposedly dangerous, liminal people of the region. Simultaneously, the marker operates to define the U.S. population as distinctly non-violent and civilized. The military personnel are disciplined and invoke the U.S. ideal of honor for those killed in the service of its democratizing mission. In the overall context of the imaginative geography, which includes the category of ideological marker "Images of beaten Ambassador Stevens," the military discipline exemplified by these soldiers exists as a definition of the dichotomy between

violent Libyans and civilized Westerner. This dichotomy is further defined in the shorthand class "Protest against American involvement," within which the categories of marker define the explicit rejection of democratic ideals (those associated with civilization in the ideological apparatus) by the Benghazi population.

3d. Protest against American involvement

In this shorthand class, imperial ideological dichotomies and hierarchies are bounded by markers that depict the Benghazi citizenry as inherently opposed to American presence or its democratic ideals in the location. In the imaginative geography surrounding Benghazi within these Google results, the American presence is presented as a civilizing one. The rejection of American ideals and presence operates as stigmata that the population of Benghazi is uncivilized because it is pre-democratic. Within the ideological apparatus of imperialism, such stigmata justify the segregation of the location and its population, the hierarchizing of Western populations above the Benghazi population, and the civilizing mission of the U.S. and its allies in democracy.

This linked image is located in the seventh screenshot from Google Worldwide Images. It shows several armed civilian protesters outside of a Libyan elections facility burning documents while cheering and holding the crescent and star. Analysis of these markers for their ideological value reveals an image which inherently supports the dichotomy and hierarchy outlined above. The elections facility and documentation are key markers of the Western democratic process and standard tropes of Western civilization. The civilians represented in this image resist such democratic process, resistance that is characterized by violence and destructive (uncontrollable) fire. The particular circumstances of their protest are not characterized in the image itself (a

connected article from a Western source provides one perspective). Instead, the markers serve not as representation of the reality of the civilians' protest but as stigmata of a dichotomy that characterizes the Western political perspective as civilized and Benghazi's civilian population as uncivilized. This supports a Western, democratic civilizing mission.

Together, the ideological markers in these four shorthand classifications characterize the dichotomy between a civilized, democratic, West and an uncivilized, violent, pre-democratic Libya. The wide proliferation and persistence of these markers in the imaginative geography help to substantiate the marginalization of Benghazi and its population.

4. Infrequent Ideological Markers of Imperialism: The Imperial Civilizing Mission

This marginalization is facilitated by the overwhelming amount of these markers present in the search events; these shorthand classes might be considered the most clearly defined boundaries of the imaginative geography. However, following McClintock's assertion concerning the repeated method of colonialism, marginalization and segregation of the population evolves into reintegration of the location and its people. They are brought back into the imperial structure of meaning and hierarchy. The overwhelming majority of the ideological markers in the imaginative geography support the marginalization and segregation of Benghazi citizens. Yet the imperial tapestry is dotted with individual examples of ideological markers than are seldom repeated. Often, these markers are representative of the Western, democratic, civilizing mission in Benghazi. Repeated tropes of the civilizing mission in colonial ideological apparatuses define Western civilizations as rescuing uncivilized population from themselves by gifting Western ideals (democracy, Christianity, commerce, etc.).

Figure 12: An image of doctors treating a wounded man in Benghazi. Source: *Scott Nelson Photography*

While the overarching theme of the imaginative geography is the civilized-uncivilized, violent-nonviolent dichotomy outlined above, individual markers sometimes solidify the civilizing imperial mission in Benghazi. Such markers are gestures of reintegration dependent on the Benghazi citizenry being civilized by Western presence in the region.

Figure 12 occurs on seventh screenshot in Google Worldwide Images. It shows Western coded doctors operating on a Middle Eastern coded man. The ideological marker provides the civilizing mission of the West, characterizing the Western population as those capable and with the responsibility of delivering Benghazi out of violence. While the repeated images in the Google interface define the perimeter of the topography of meaning, this image, which is not repeated in the data set or connected to any similar text marker, delivers the totalizing meaning

of hierarchies of populations (Westerners as saviors, Libyans as saved) and the subsequent right of the West to politically reorganize Libya.

5. Challenges to an Imperial Imaginative Geography of Benghazi, Libya

The above discussion characterizes the imaginative geography of Benghazi, Libya by revealing the dichotomy between civilized and uncivilized populations of two regions. This dichotomy defines the civilized against the uncivilized and results in a problematically constructed "need" to segregate the Benghazi population. It includes single ideological markers that create and carry the trope of the colonial civilizing mission. However, a few yet notable examples in the data set operate against the colonial vision of Benghazi delimited within the boundaries of the imaginative geography. Said identifies that the scholarly field of Orientalism was based on the reproduction of ideological markers that enabled Western populations to obtain and hierarchize the "barbarian land." Orientalists had no interest in capturing an actual representation of the Orient but were satisfied and successful when they found and created reproductions of the already established system of understanding surrounding the Orient (69-70). Nonetheless, indexical representations outside of the field of Orientalism existed and were simply ignored in the Orientalist tradition. They existed in the "blind spots" of the field and were diminished in light of the "awesome" amount of published "Orientalist" material that reproduced codifications of the Orient as "the exotic, the mysterious, the profound, the seminal" (Said 52, 51).

In these Google search results, the exceptions to the imaginative geography seem more visible than they are characterized within Said's study of Orientalism. It seems likely that this is the result of the interactive environment, where multiple authors add information with various

motivations. Because these exceptions are so notably visible, the comparative amounts of ideological markers that uphold the imperial tapestry or challenge it is of prime importance. As outlined above, only approximately 5 percent of the total amount of markers in these searches challenges the imperialist ideological apparatus. Among such markers are those images and sources that characterize the daily lives of Benghazi citizens as non-violent, civil, and specific to Benghazi culture rather than Benghazi war and conflict. Yet in comparison to the (to repeat Said's term) "awesome" amount of ideological markers in the search results that create and sustain imperial ideology, these results are diminished even though they are very visible. In Chapter 4 I will argue that these exceptions are overwhelmed by their visual and theoretical connection to markers within the imperial topography of meaning established in the search results. For now, however, it is useful to analyze one example of a marker that challenges the imperial ideological apparatus in order to account for its individual ideological impact.

Figure 13 is a creative commons image that occurs in screenshot three from both Google Worldwide Images and Google UAE images. The image portrays a Benghazi market. Rather than showing the violent streets of Benghazi, this image distinctly challenges the dichotomous imperial ideology by showing non-violent commerce in the same locations where the imperial ideology seems to deem it impossible. The image establishes a different indexical representation of daily life in Benghazi that disrupts the imaginative geography established by the often repeated images of violence. This ideological marker reveals a very different narrative of Benghazi that shows it as civilized location whose people are involved in daily acts of commerce that resemble those similar to Western citizens. If commerce and civilization exist already in Benghazi, Libya, then the Western civilizing mission made "necessary" by indexes of violence are undermined. The presence of such markers is minimal. However, the user interface as an

interactive location allows such images to infiltrate the imperial topography and exist as visible exceptions among the multitude of imperialist markers. Among other examples of markers that undermine this imaginative geography are images of Benghazi citizens on a trip to the zoo and breakdancing. Hyperlinks to websites that define Benghazi from a Libyan host's perspective, defining it as a "beautiful city," exist in both Google Worldwide and Google UAE. In the Google+ results, one hypertext link leads to a new story in which Libyan officials flatly deny the Western representation of the location as violent and unruly.

Figure 13: Image of a Benghazi street market. Source: *commons.wikimedia.org,* Chris Griffiths

These markers provide a very different indexical representation of the everyday lives of Benghazi citizens, and influence the ideological approach to making meaning surrounding

Benghazi because of their inherent visibility in the interface. I will further explore their influence (or lack thereof) in Chapter 4.

6. Extension of Imperialist Ideology in the Context of New Media Interaction

In this Chapter, I analyzed the construction of an imaginative geography in these Google search results through investigation of both the overall context of the results and individual ideological markers contained within them. Much like Said's analysis of d'Herbolet's *Bibliothèque orientale*, this analysis treats these results much like an enduring text that indexes Benghazi, Libya, each category of ideological marker constituting a boundary that delimits how meaning is made surrounding the location and its people. This analysis is useful for understanding the ideological function of these particular results, discovering the structure for constructing meaning that surround Benghazi.

However, in the context of new media further analysis needs to occur because of the constantly changing data set that exists within interactive interfaces. As I asserted in both Chapters 1 and 2, the interaction between constantly changing and dynamic information implies that we do more than investigate the results as a stable text. Rather, a useful practice for understanding these search results is to look for both theoretical and visual patterns of ideological markers that may be predictive of how new information will connect and impact other information when it is uploaded into the interface database. Furthermore, as such patterns are repeated, an individual marker may come to be what Rice calls a "topoi" of meaning, or a category of marker that connects to other categories of markers and ensures the continuation of a stabilized narrative surrounding a location. In Chapter 4, I investigate patterns of repetition, connection, and prioritization in order to see how the existence of ideological markers in new

media interfaces influences the way that they establish (or undermine) and imperialist topography of Benghazi, Libya.

CHAPTER 4: GOOGLING AND THE CREATION OF AN IMPERIAL TOPOGRAPHY OF MEANING

In Chapter 3, I argued that the Google search results I obtained supported an imperial ideology. The ideological markers found within the search results exist in a reciprocal relationship with the imaginative geography in which they exist and of which they are boundary markers. This position is supported by the frequency with which such markers appear in the search results across all five interfaces, establishing a stabilized narrative of Benghazi, Libya. In order to frame this assertion, I drew on the scholarship of Edward Said and Anne McClintock; these authors investigate colonial texts and artifacts to understand how they deliver an imperial ideology for organizing physical location and classes of people.

The discussion from Chapter 3 is useful in that it establishes, first, that ideological markers of imperialism are proliferated throughout this particular set of data, and second, that these markers are best understood as individual examples in a larger, dominant narrative of Benghazi, Libya. However, having established these two positions, my investigation now moves to account for the location in which these ideological markers exist – namely the interface that is a changing and dynamic interaction. Chapter 3 drew on scholarship that treated ideological markers as enduring texts where those theoretical links between them could remain relatively persistent. However, my object of analysis is a particular search event in which several units interact in order to define a particular location in ways that may change within another searching event (algorithms will return different results, user preferences will be taken into account, new information will be available, etc.). To treat this interaction as an enduring text runs the danger of problematically asserting that these search results are the only way that interaction occurs between ideological markers when Benghazi, Libya or other locations are Googled. Instead, the

theoretical links between these markers are constantly changing. Therefore, the usefulness of this study extends to other search events if it investigates patterns of meaning that may or may not be predictive of how connections are made in other search events for Benghazi, or for other locations. Instead of treating the imperial imaginative geography as *the* way of making meaning around Benghazi, an investigation of patterns attempts to see how power is constructed through repetition and connection of ideological markers.

Furthermore, the links between ideological markers in Google search results are inherently visual. The links between markers in Said's discussion Orientalists texts and McClintock's discussion of colonial artifacts are largely theoretical in nature – the links are assumed because the scholars identify similar tropes across boundary markers. In the interactive interface, these theoretical links are made visual because the ideological markers are gathered in the same location; users draw visual affinities between ideological markers causing the construction of meaning surrounding the search term (Delagrange). Theoretical links like those in the work of Said and McClintock (and, to some extent, Chapter 3) imply that an individual may come into contact with ideological markers at varying times and locations and see repeated meanings. The Google interface makes these connections visual and coexistent in the same location, rendering those connections material.

In this chapter, I draw on the analysis I performed in Chapter 3 in order to investigate how imperial ideological markers are repeated and connected in this interface and how patterns of repetition and connection help to sustain an imperial ideology of Benghazi, Libya. I do so in order to account for the dynamic nature of the interface, where changing and dynamic information interaction results in shifting connections. An investigation of patterns attempts to trace digital contexts' influence our invention capabilities. First, I will remind readers of the

work in Chapters 1 and 2 that defined my understandings of repetition and connection. I draw on the work of Jeff Rice to understand how topoi of meaning are created and how they imply a stabilized topography or narrative of a location. Next, I identify how repetition of ideological markers in these Google search results create and sustain a stabilized topography in a single interface and across interfaces. I then outline networks of meaning initiated from single ideological markers that are often repeated in the interface, tracing each to connected ideological markers. I do so in order to determine what other ideological markers a single marker may imply, rendering it a stabilized topoi. I identify these networks as patterns of connections, and identify those patterns that are repeated in the search results. I argue that these patterns support an imperial ideology that may be predictive of how connection will be made during other search events. Finally, I explore networks associated with those ideological markers that challenge the imperial imaginative geography established in Chapter 3. I argue that these markers' ideological power is undermined because they are connected to ideological markers that fit into the imperial topography.

1. Topoi, Topography, and Networks

For Rice, categories of meaning become stabilized into a narrative as they are repeated. It is not that repetitions cannot carry with them multiple meanings as they are connected to different pieces of information in a continually changing digital space. Rather, it is that singular meanings become difficult to challenge once they become a stabilized narrative of a location, artifact, or phenomena: "Still, the rhetoric that surrounds urban affairs… seldom takes seriously how and where multiple meanings with one or more categories may move in a given rhetorical situation or space. The topos of Detroit typically is not allowed to move nor to be dual; it is

posed *as is*" (66). Networked connection allows for multiple meanings to be made surrounding a given location, person, artifact, or phenomena. But that does not necessarily establish that multiple meanings will be made. In many ways, this distinction lies at the foundation of this chapter. I constructed search events in five Google interfaces in order to investigate whether patterns of connection lead to multiple meanings or whether they cling to already-established narrative of Benghazi. Rice argues that such narratives (what he, and I will moving forward, call topographies) are stabilized when categories of marker with singular meanings are repeatedly connected to a given location. Furthermore, as connections between these categories and the location and between categories themselves are made, each individual example tends to imply other ideological markers, initiating a totalizing topography of meaning (Rice 61-67). For the purposes of this study, I call categories of marker that connect with and imply other categories of marker "topoi" of meaning. In order to establish whether these ideological markers imply changing or persistent meanings surrounding Benghazi, I look to two interrelated modes of linking. First, I determine what categories of marker are repeated in the search results, searching for their influence on establishing a singular topography of meaning surrounding Benghazi. I then trace networks of connection initiated by individual examples of ideological markers in order to determine whether there are persistent patterns that support a singular topography. Once these patterns are established, we can begin to see categories of ideological marker as topoi of meaning that imply a larger topography. As my rhetorical analysis shows, the patterns of repetition and connection in these Google search results form an imperial topography of meaning surrounding Benghazi. Ideological markers of imperialism are repeated and connected to other imperial ideological markers proliferated throughout the data set.

2. Repetitions of Ideological Markers Surrounding Benghazi, Libya

If repetition of markers that carry singular meanings leads to the establishment of a stabilized topography, then investigating Google search results for repetitions within them can lead to an understanding of what ideologies are created and sustained in those results. The topography of meaning surrounding Benghazi is ideologically organized if the same ideological markers are repeated over and over again and cling to a persistent meaning. Much like Detroit for Rice, Benghazi would be present *as is* if there are such patterns of repetition.

Figure 14 shows a list of categories of marker for each of the five interfaces' search results. The figure organizes these categories by showing the repetitions of each within the search results. Ideological markers were considered repeated if they were either the same or if they shared characteristics that rendered them in the same category (two different images of two different civilian weapon holders would be considered two repetitions of the same ideological marker). The number in parentheses indicates the total number of times an example of this category was repeated in each interface. For example, the category of ideological marker "burned out building" was repeated 60 times in the Google Worldwide Images interface according to the table. For a total amount of repetitions across all five interfaces, the totals under each heading may be added. The category of ideological marker "burned out building" is repeated 115 times throughout the Google search results (this particular marker is an influential one, making up over 10 percent of the entire data set). Furthermore, the categories are not listed at random. Rather they are listed in order of appearance within the each interface. The first marker that appears in the Google+ interface, for example, is "News Article/Opinion Ed w/ Ongoing Conflict Content."

Repeated Markers Sorted by Interface in Order of Prioritization (First Appearance)

Google Images:

City Landscape (Total Repetitions, 52)
Maps (Total Repetitions: 14)
Burned out Building (Total Repetitions: 60)
Protests (Total Repetitions: 24)
-Violent (Total Repetitions: 6)
- Peace Messages (Total Repetitions: 3)
Fire (Total Repetitions: 36)
Streets in disarray (trash, mortar graffiti) (Total Repetitions: 22)
Burned out Vehicle (Total Repetitions: 23)
American soldiers, ritualistic discipline (Total Repetitions: 7)
American flag coffins, those killed in Benghazi attack (Total Repitions: 6)
Non-military weapon holders, undisciplined (Total Repetitions: 19)
Libyan Soldiers, undisciplined (Total Repetitions: 18)
American President (Total Repetitions: 4)
American War Plane (Total Repetitions: 2)
Destroying American Flag (Total Repetitions: 2)
Images of Beaten Ambassador Stevens (Total repetitions: 2)

Google Worldwide:

News/Op Ed with Benghazi Attack Content (Total Repetitions: 18)
U.S./British News Outlets (Total Repetitions: 29)
News Article/Opinion Ed w/ Ongoing Conflict Content (Total Repetitions: 21)
Informational Sites About Benghazi, Location (Total Repetitions: 4)
Maps of Benghazi/Libya (Total Repetitions: 4)
Mention of "Terrorist" "Militant" or "Islamist" (Total Repetitions: 12)
Arabic Language Use (Translation of "Benghazi" only) (Total Repetitions: 3)
Weather Forecasts (Total Repetitions: 2)

Google UAE:

Informational Sites About Benghazi, Location (Total Repetitions: 9)
News/Op Ed with Benghazi Attack Content (Total Repetitions: 9)
Mention of "Terrorist" "Militant" or "Islamist" (Total Repetitions: 9)
U.S./British News Outlets (Total Repetitions: 11)
News Article/Opinion Ed w/ Ongoing Conflict Content (Total Repetitions:11)
Maps of Benghazi/Libya (Total Repetitions: 3)
Local time (Total Repetitions: 2)
Flight Information (Total Repetitions: 2)
Sales/Marketing (Total Repetitions: 5)
Weather Forecasts (Total Repetitions: 3)
Benghazi Government Addresses (Total Repetitions: 2)

Google Images UAE:

City Landscapes (Total Repetitions: 53)
Burned out Buildings (Total Repetitions: 55)
Maps (Total Repetitions: 12)
Protests (Total Repetitions: 30)
-Violent (Total Repetitions: 9)
- Peace Messages (Total Repetition: 3)
Fire (Total Repetitions: 23)
Burned out Vehicle (Total Repetitions: 16)
Non-military weapon holders, undisciplined (Total Repetitions: 16)
American soldiers, ritualistic discipline (Total Repetitions: 7)
American flag coffins, those killed in Benghazi attack (Total Repetitions: 5)
Streets in disarray (trash, mortar graffiti) (Total Repetitions: 33)
Maps Marking Violence (Total Repetitions: 4)
Libyan Soldiers, undisciplined (Total Repetitions: 18)
American President (2,3,4) (Total Repetitions: 3)
Images of Ambassador Stevens (Total Repetitions: 2)
American War Plane (Total Repetitions: 2)
Destroying American Flag (Total Repetions: 2)
Images of Beaten Ambassador Stevens (Total Repetitions: 2)
American Propaganda Poster (Total Repetions: 2)
Western Documents (Total Repetitions: 2)

Google Plus

News Article/Opinion Ed w/ Ongoing Conflict Content (Total Repetitions: 5)
Mention of "Terrorist" "Militant" or "Islamist" (Total Repetitions: 6)
American Themed Comics referring to Benghazi Attack (Total Repetitions: 2)
Articles related to Ambassador Stevens (Total Repetitions: 7)
Images of Ambassador Stevens (Total Repetitions: 2)
American Propaganda Poster (Total Repetitions: 3)
Images of The American President (Total Repetitions: 5)
City Landscapes (Total Repetitions: 2)
Protests (Total Repetitions: 2)
Non-military weapon holders, undisciplined (Total Repetitions: 3)
U.S./British News Outlets (Total Repetitions: 13)
Natural Landscapes (Total Repetitions: 3)
Children in Military Uniform (Total Repetitions: 2)
News/Op Ed with Benghazi Attack Content (Total Repetitions: 16)
American soldiers, ritualistic discipline (Total Repetitions: 2)
American flag coffins, those killed in Benghazi attack (Total Repetitions: 2)
Commentary on failed politics in Libya (Total Repetitions: 2)
Posts by U.S. Institutions (White House, State Dept, etc.) (Total Repetitions: 5)
Article/Posts that refute claims of deteriorating Libyan security (Total Repetitions: 2)

Figure 14: Repeated Markers Sorted by Interface in Order of Prioritization

The next new category of marker that appears is "Mention of 'Terrorist,' 'Militant,' or 'Islamist,'" and so on. This organization shows not only how these markers are repeated, but also how they are prioritized in search results. Prioritization in search results can account for how meaning is made in particular returns – earlier search returns based on relevance might reveal how closely an ideological marker supposedly indexes a location.

Figure 14 might seem to fulfill expectations based on the imaginative geography established in Chapter 3. The ideological markers that are most often repeated across the interfaces are those same markers that exist at the boundary of the imaginative geography. However, there are several trends in these repetitions that complicate the perspective established in Chapter 3, as patterns of repetition reveal how meaning is being made around Benghazi in these search results. First, the category of marker that is prioritized first in both the Google Worldwide Images and Google UAE Images are "City Landscapes," a category of marker that on its surface may seem to exist outside of the imperial topography that the other repeated markers may indicate. The same can be said of the second category in Google Worldwide Images and the third in Google UAE Images, "Maps." But from an imperial perspective, these prioritized and often repeated ideological markers fulfill an important role in defining the "our land-barbarian land" dichotomy. While these markers do not index Benghazi citizens as violent, uncivilized, or pre-democratic, they also do not index them as civilized or peaceful. They are seemingly neutral. Yet when associated with the exponential repetition of imperial ideological markers that occur soon after, these markers can be thought to provide an indexical representation of the physical location of Benghazi so that Western users can "obtain" the location before associating that physical place with violence and destruction. Following the immediate concentration of images of the physical location, the results return 13 and 16 imperial

categories of ideological markers that are repeated in Google Worldwide Images and Google UAE images, respectively. In these interfaces, there are not repeated ideological markers that challenge the imperial topography. The pattern in both interfaces is beginning with images of the physical location of Benghazi followed by repetitions of ideological markers that define that location and its people as violent, uncivilized, and pre-democratic.

Because the patterns of repetition in these two interfaces are so similar as demonstrated by Figure 14, it is worth noting that the Google Worldwide Images and Google UAE Images interfaces returned results that varied very little. Identical markers appeared in both locations and very few alterations of order and prioritization occurred throughout. One test that I wished to conduct was to attempt to discover if an interface based in Arabic-language use might result in different rhetorical patterns of meaning making accompanying a potentially different cultural perspective. In the case of these Image search results, the change of national-language of the associated nation had little to no-impact on the patterns of search results[5].

However, the same cannot be said of the search results in Google Worldwide and Google UAE. Notably, the Google Worldwide search results are overwhelmingly characterized by ideological markers that reveal an imperial topography. The first three prioritized categories are "News/Op Ed with Benghazi Attack Content," "U.S./British News Outlets," and "News Article/Opinion Ed w/ Ongoing Conflict Content." These ideological markers are repeated 18, 29, and 21 times, respectively. However, in the Google UAE search returns, these same categories drop to 9, 11, and 9, respectively (a full 39 less occurrences total), and all are prioritized under the category of ideological marker "Informational Sites about Benghazi,

[5] Though I used the Google UAE interface, I also searched in my native language, English. This may have been a contributing component to the similar results I found in these interfaces.

Location" (a category that I argue fulfills much the same role as the "City Landscapes" and "Maps" in the images interface). Since I analyzed the same total number of hyperlink results in each of these interface (50) the categories of repeated ideological markers must be more widely distributed in the Google UAE interface, a fact that Figure 14 bear out. While the imperial categories of ideological markers still make up the majority of the search results in Google UAE, the imperial topography is challenged by categories of ideological marker that are lower prioritizations in the results. "Sales/Marketing," "Flight Information," and "Weather Forecasts," while not explicitly contradicting the violent, uncivilized, or pre-democratic perspective on Benghazi existent in general topography of these results, do serve to offer a different narrative of the Benghazi: one of economic market characterization, inhabitability, and travel. These infrequent deviations provide a useful way for understanding that the object of investigation in this analysis is an event of interaction with several units that influence the construction of meaning. In this case, the interface being associated with another country of origin outside of the West likely impacted the results that were returned while searching. Furthermore, this lends credence to the idea that patterns are of prime importance when searching, as many factors including changing information and interface algorithms will influence how Google results occur. Persistent results will not exist in a single interface or across interfaces. But overwhelming patterns of meaning can lead us to understand how ideologies are being created and sustained. In this case, while there are infrequent challenges to the imperial topography of meaning, the patterns of repetition in these search returns are overwhelmingly imperial. Repetitions begin to imply other similar images in the same category, lending preliminary classification of repeated markers as topoi of meaning.

3. From Repetition to Connection: Tracing Networks of Meaning

Repetitions can reveal how a specific user during a particular search event is inundated with cultural markers that pose an ideological topography and begin to see how topoi serve to fix a location when they refer to a single, stabilized meaning. However, as I argued in Chapter 1, Lev Manovich identifies that the "flat" digital environment online means that information is constantly added, impacts the information already found online, and comes from a variety of sources with no single rhetorical purpose. But unlike Manovich, I argue that patterns of meaning that occur in this dynamic, ever-changing environment have rhetorical impact on the way we understand a location; these patterns are part of what Colin Brooke calls "the order we regularly impose on it" (Brooke 91). In order to understand these patterns, I thought of ideological markers as initiating networks of connection in the interface that are both theoretical and visual. These networks, following Rice's definition, are "a variety of information systems encountered on the web… and in rhetorical expression" (Rice 10). While Rice sees in these systems the possibility of "movement, not fixity," the possibility remains that these networks will reveal patterns that establish a topography with a singular meaning. For Detroit, "the…narrative… sees and works with what is already there to produce something called Detroit. It does so by excluding, among other things, personal interaction with space; that is, it excludes certain kinds of rhetorical relationships. It excludes a specific way of inventing new relationships" (Rice 50). In this section, I trace networks of meaning initiated by single ideological markers in order to see what other ideological markers they connect to and imply, rendering them topoi of meaning. Despite the possibility for these networks to bear out multiple meanings of a location, I show that they actually exclude multifarious rhetorical relationships and reveal the sustenance of the imperial topography already established.

As a place to begin tracing these networks of meaning, I looked at individual ideological markers that I identified in my first layer of analysis. Figure 15 is one of these ideological markers, an entry from Google+ in the category "The American President." This image, important in and of itself, is connected to other ideological markers in its network of meaning.

Figure 15: Image of President Obama and Secretary Clinton at the transfer of the victims of the Benghazi attack. Source: *commons.wikimedia.org*, September 14, 2012

The first connections I searched for were those that occurred in the same interface. "Connection" takes on a more material meaning than that discussed in Chapter 3, where the interaction between ideological markers was largely theoretical. By searching for connections in the same interface, I mean to show the visual affinities drawn between images and hypertext links in their location on the material screen of the computer in which I constructed this search event. In this

particular instance, not only is the image of President Barack O'Bama defining Benghazi, Libya from a distinctly Western political perspective, this image is visually connected to other imperial ideological markers in same screenshot of search results. Beginning with this ideological marker, I traced connections to all those ideological markers that existed in the same screenshot of the results. To represent these connections, I placed these in vertical, linear order, representing which occurred closest in the interface closest to the original marker. Figure 16 shows a graphical representation of these visual connections. Beginning with example of the category "the American President" that appears in Google+ screenshot five, visual connections are drawn to the categories "American Themed Political Comic," "Ongoing Conflict Content," "Attack Content," "American Soldiers, Ritualistic discipline," "U.S. News Outlets," and "Return of Coffins." This process was followed for several ideological markers in the Google+, Google Worldwide, and Google UAE interface. In both images interfaces, I also drew visual connections to those ideological markers that appear in the "Try these too" section that appears when an image is clicked and enlarged.

After establishing the visual connection to the individual ideological marker, I followed links associated with the ideological marker to see which categories of ideological markers existed across network pathways. For the image in Figure 15, I followed the link with which it was most closely connected to a news story falling into the category "News/Op ed. With Benghazi Attack Content" published on Newsweek's world news blog, the Daily Beast, falling into the category "U.S./British News Outlets." On this blog site there were further links to U.S. political news stories and editorials, substantiating the definition of Benghazi, Libya as defined from a distinctly Western perspective. These hyperlinked connections were added horizontally and linearly to the previous visual representation.

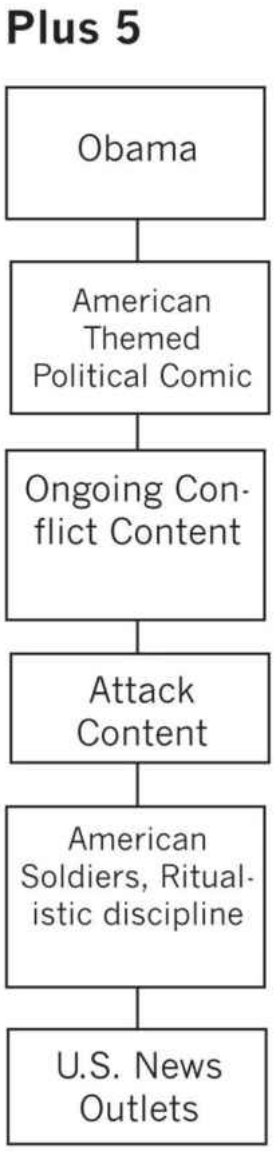


Figure 16: Representation of Visual Affinities within Search Results

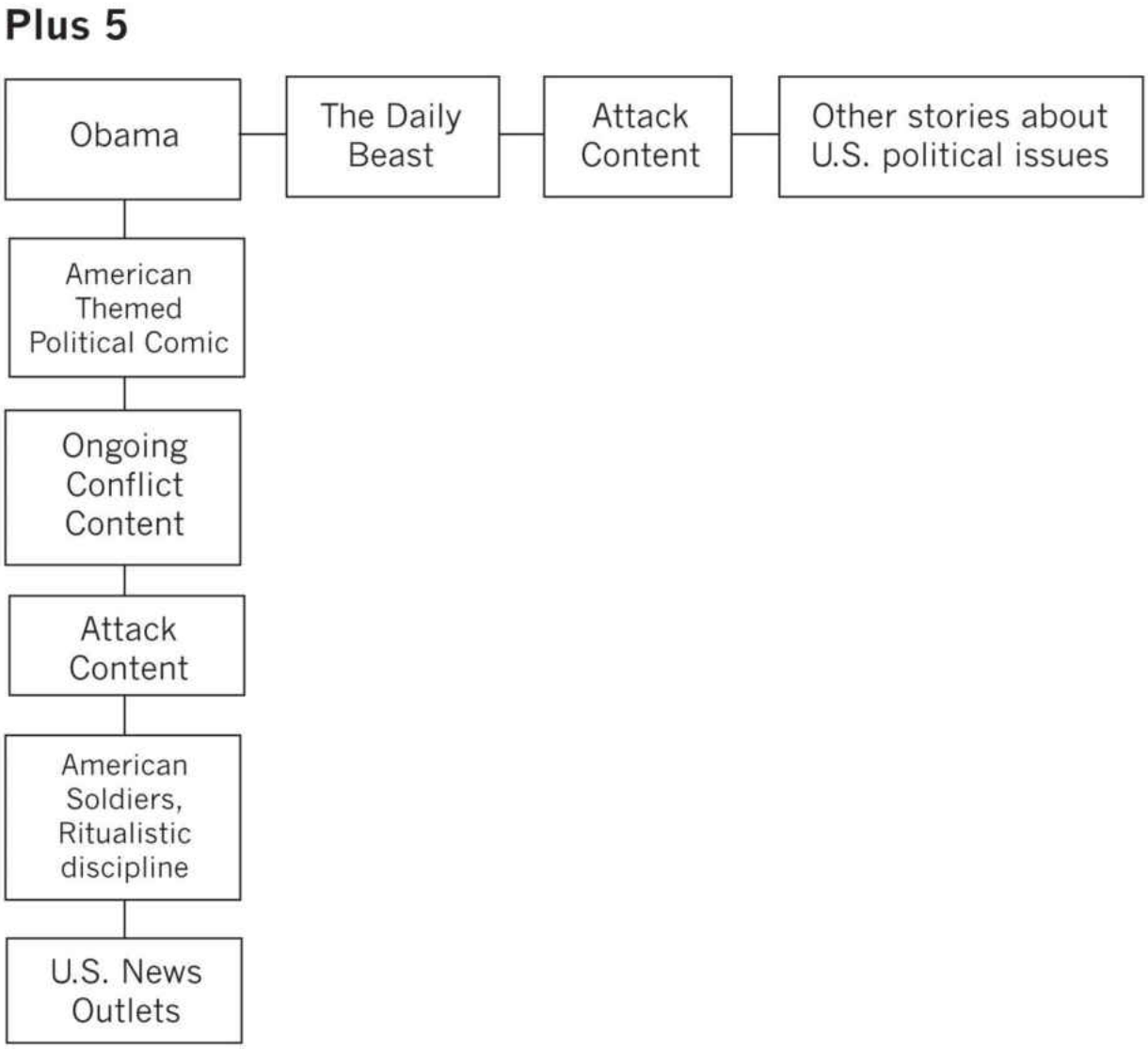


Figure 17: Representation of a Network of Meaning

Figure 17 shows a graphical representation of the network as far as I traced it, though certainly not to its exhaustion. I stopped after this first hyperlink because of my understanding that prioritization plays a key role in the way that meaning is made in digital environments – just as the hyperlinks that appear on the fifteenth page of Google search results will have potentially less impact than those that appear on the first page, so too does the impact of connected

ideological markers have less of an influence the farther they are from the original. The graphical representation of a network as shown in Figure 17 was the unit I used to search for patterns of meaning in the Google search results. As these units of analysis repeated similar patterns of connection initiated from ideological markers in the same category, I was able to establish certain ideological markers as topoi of meaning.

4. Repeated Imperial Patterns of Connection

Appendix A shows several graphical representations of meaning from each of the five interfaces. None of these is an exhaustive list of the patterns of connection propagating from the interface; that is, I did not trace networks of meaning from all of the 1,000 or so ideological markers that I identified. Rather, these particular networks were selected in an effort to trace the patterns of connection from those ideological markers that appeared most often or were prioritized in these interfaces.

The repeated patterns of connection in these networks of meaning support the imperial topography of meaning established already in Chapter 3. 634 of the repeated markers fall into categories that support an imperial ideology. Because these markers are proliferated throughout the search results, it is these markers that appear most often in each interface and are also prioritized in these interfaces. Many of the networks of meaning below reflect this abundance of imperial ideological markers; several networks begin with an imperial ideological marker. Because these ideological markers are repeated most often in the interface, it follows that the visual connections between these markers would also be abundant, a proposition that Appendix A supports. Furthermore, the hyperlink connections to the initial ideological marker repeatedly support a stabilized topography of Benghazi. As these patterns are repeated, the individual

markers are established as topoi of meaning implying other ideological markers and weaving together a singular, stabilized, imperial meaning of the location. Through repeated patterns connections to other imperial ideological markers, this topography seems both natural and inevitable.

For example, the twelfth image on the first screenshot of the Google Worldwide Images search results is of the burned out U.S. consulate building in Benghazi. This image serves as a useful example of a topoi because burned out buildings are often repeated throughout the search results and each follows similar patterns of connection. Tracing the connections of the topoi, we find that the image originates from an Orthodox Jewish Community website, a group other than that which might provide the cultural perspective of the largely Islamic population of Benghazi. The image itself was captured by the Associated Press, a U.S. based news outlet and itself a topoi of meaning (those who have the right to characterize the location are Western). The content of the story refers specifically to the attack on the U.S. consulate, which can be found in its entirety at the linked, UK based Independent.com. This link leads to an image of Benghazi civilians attacking an unidentified building along with the full story about the Benghazi attack and its influence on American politics. At this site, we see three more topoi that are connected to form an imperial topography of meaning surrounding Benghazi. This is facilitated by the interactivity associated with the Google Images interface. Visually, this image is linked to topoi that also help form this imperial topography (protests and fire) as well as maps and city landscapes, images that seem to make the space obtainable as an object and has little to do with the cultural characterization of Benghazi. In the "Try these too," the image is connected with topoi such as other burned out buildings, civilian weapon holders, and fire.

Yet the establishment of this marker as a topoi of meaning and further support for the imperial topography occurs when comparing the network of meaning of this example of a burned out building to another example from the same category. The twenty-ninth image on the sixth screenshot of Google Worldwide Images is also an example of the "burned out building" category and a repetition of the burned out U.S. consulate building in particular. The picture is traced to an Australian-based newspaper website and attached to a story about the attack on the U.S. consulate that was published by the U.S. based Associated Press. The visual connections in the interface are also similar to the previous example. Images of fire, protests, and civilian weapon holders are visually connected to both initial images of a burned out building (as well as city landscapes).

These two ideological markers initiate similar patterns of connection. Together, these two networks of meaning may be viewed as the beginning of a topography that excludes certain types of rhetorical connection. But two examples are not enough to result in a totalizing imperial topography of meaning in these search results. Appendix A reveals patterns of connection initiated by several markers that create and sustain an imperial topography of Benghazi, Libya. Together, these patterns of meaning result in a singular, stabilized narrative of Benghazi, one which is defined from distinctly Western perspective and which results from the majority of hyperlinks being posted by U.S./Western media online. The narrative is defined both visually and theoretically by an apparently violent, pre-democratic, and therefore uncivilized citizenry. Such characterization of this population justifies the subjugation of Benghazi and its citizens as below the West in an imperial ideological hierarchy. Furthermore, this characterization is defined with an American political lens that operates to define the space only as it influences American politics and interests. The rhetorical arrangement of these markers exemplified by these repeated

patterns of connection dictate a singular topography of Benghazi, rather than facilitating multiple meanings through random connection and interaction.

5. Limited Impact of Challenges to an Imperial Topography

But just as was the case in the analysis in Chapter 3, there are notable exceptions to the imperial topography that are initiated from ideological markers that provide a different narrative of Benghazi. Appendix B traces the network of meaning associated with three of these potential challenges to the imperial topography. These markers are infrequent, and, when viewing their connection to other ideological markers in the search results, their influence becomes minimal at best. Several hyperlinks to markers that seem innocuous or seem to challenge the imperial topography actually lead to markers that fall into imperial categories (see the Wikipedia page for Benghazi and its initiated patterns of connection, Appendix A, Google UAE 1/2). But even when these hyperlinks lead to material that provides a varying narrative of Benghazi, they often form visual affinities with imperial ideological markers in the initial search results that undermine their ideological influence.

For example, when tracing the ideological marker of an image of a man selling birds at a Benghazi street market from Google Worldwide Images screenshot three, its self-contained ideological impact defines Benghazi as a place of commerce and civilized interaction. Its hyperlinked content leads to a photoblog of a photographer attempting to capture the everyday lives of Benghazi citizens. But in the initial search results in Google Images, this image is visually connected to imperial ideological markers ("Streets in Disarray," "American War Plane," "Civilian Weapon Holder," etc.). The same can be said for the connected images found in the "Try these too" section when the image is enlarged. Considering the initial image is one

that shows Libyans in acts of commerce and everyday interaction, it seems to follow that "Try these too" images would show similar types of activity. However, with one exception, these associated markers fall into imperial categories such as "Fire" and "Civilian Weapon Holder." Therefore, while this individual marker has the potential to be a topoi of meaning that initiates a new topography of Benghazi, the ideological markers to which it is connected undermine its ability to do so. Instead it exists as only a single ideological marker that operates against the imperial topography, and loses influence as it is drowned among the myriad of imperial topoi in an imperial narrative.

6. Implications of Patterns of Connection in Digital Contexts

The above analysis of search results for the term "Benghazi, Libya" can help us understand the importance of tracing patterns of connection in digital contexts. While the internet provides an environment where information is always changing and new information is constantly appearing from a variety of authors with different purposes, this investigation can help provide insight into how ideology is nonetheless created and sustained in the temporary and "stable for now" search events that characterize our interaction with information online. Patterns between types of information and the repetition of these patterns might lead to a single, stabilized topography of the search term. Alternatively, they might reveal multiple perspectives and dual meanings, as networking can lead to arrangement of this information in new and interesting ways (Rice; Brooke; Garrett, Landrum-Geyer, and Palmeri). In these particular search events, the patterns revealed a singular topography of Benghazi, Libya that often excluded rhetorical connections that could lead to new or alternative meanings. In this way, an imperial ideology was created by and reflected in these search results. Continuing in the tradition of interface

scholars such as Selfe and Selfe and Nakamura, searching for patterns of meaning in new media interfaces can lead us to understand the way the colonial and imperial dominance is continually perpetuated online. But the value of searching for patterns in search results extends beyond the particular circumstances of these search events that revealed an imperial ideology. Tracing patterns of connection serves as a useful tool for discovering whether the potential for duality of meaning that networking provides is being realized in a particular interactive, digital event. And, as seen in this particular data set surrounding a search for Benghazi, Libya, these patterns allow us to see the ways that rhetorical connections are potentially limited, dictating the meaning that can be made based on a particular ideology.

CONCLUSION: TOWARD A CRITICAL MEDIA LITERACY OF SEARCH EVENTS

The prior analysis investigates how ideologies are formed in new media contexts, develops an understanding of continued colonial dominance in a digital age, and provides a method by which to examine Google search results for their influence on users' ability to invent new meanings online. While the conclusions of this study found a limiting, imperial ideology present in these lists of search results, by no means is it meant to conclude that all search results of othered locations will sustain the same ideological position. These results revealed the construction of ideology that problematically hierarchized groups of people and locations from a Western-imperial position. But other search events may return results that construct other ideologies or facilitate multiple meanings. Instead of trying to convince readers that this construction of Benghazi, Libya is the permanent one in the digital environment, it is my hope that this method of analysis will provide a frame for understanding Google search results as influencing the ways that users invent meaning. Understanding how patterns of ideological markers influence how we perceive locations outside the West can lead to useful interventions as we come into contact with search events much like the ones I have constructed during our everyday lives.

For Colin Brooke and Jeff Rice personal preference in the patterns of information and order that we impose on information to form patters are of prime importance. Users make connections between pieces of information online, leading to the development of networks that carry with them a rhetorical meaning and utility for the individual user. Bre Garrett, Denise Landrum-Geyer, and Jason Palmeri argue patterns of information are constantly changing as new information is presented online and can potentially alter user perspectives by leading to the

formation of new ideas. The above analysis contributes to this ongoing conversation concerning arrangement of information by offering an alternative perspective on how order is imposed on the continually changing online dataset. By investigating search results that are stabilized momentarily in a search event to present an indexical representation of that term, the user imposition of order and pattern is only one of several factors that lead to online meaning making through arrangement. My method of analysis takes into account how we distribute some meaning making capabilities to the Google interface. The search event takes over how information is arranged in regard to other information. In this way, we see not only how users might arrange information online to reach a particular conclusion or form new ideas, but also how information stabilized into patterns in search events can enforce certain limitations and affordances for users' ability to control this arrangement. Furthermore, the ideas of these authors stop short of identifying particular ideological impacts of the patterns of arrangement. My research extends their useful identification of rhetorical arrangement in online environments in order to understand how these patterns contribute to systems of meaning making. These systems remove control from the user. Users are only able to place new information into the already-established system of meaning making.

Based on my analysis, I argue that Internet users need a new type of critical media literacy: one in which the user develops an awareness that search results carry with them particular meanings below the level of common sense that often emerge from theoretical and visual patterns among individual returns. In their review of critical media literacy scholarship, Donna E. Alvermann and Margaret C. Hagood reveal one definition of critical media literacy that develops from cultural studies: "From a cultural studies perspective, critical media literacy is concerned with how society and politics are structured and work to one's advantage or

disadvantage… and how issues of ideology, bodies, power, and gender produce various cultural artifacts…" (194). This cultural studies perspective contributes to their definition of critical media literacy, which ideally posits cultural difference as a positive occurrence of digital interaction. "…[A]ny reference to critical media literacy should be understood to reside within theoretical perspectives aimed at engaging students in the analysis of textual images (both print and nonprint), the study of audiences, and *the mapping of subject positions such that differences become cause for celebration rather than distrust*" (194, emphasis added). The investigation in this study suggests that search results surrounding locations that have been the site of Western military intervention may be promote distrust between multiple subjects. By developing a critical lens that reveals the ideology in these search results as problematically imperial, users may become more aware of the existing limitations in their ability to invent meaning regarding other cultures. They may develop a clearer cultural understanding once ideological biases are revealed and removed. Hagood argues that "…in order to move the field of reading research forward, researchers need to examine the ways that old and new ideas [about literacy] merge and clash across contexts" (390). While the scholarship of Edward Said, Mary Louis Pratt, and Anne McClintock is not distinctly about literacy, all three provide a cultural studies perspective on ways to understand textual, theoretical, and material artifacts. I argue that search results are an important location in which to teach individuals to become critically aware of how rhetorical meaning is made in digital environments; the result is a critical lens for understanding ideological patterns in the context of new media.

This critical approach requires time and attention to use. Singular, ideological systems of meaning are impactful when they go unnoticed (Hall), and shifting attention from location to location, from artifact to artifact, or from ideological marker to ideological marker at high speeds

might not give users the time necessary to perform such rhetorical criticism of patterns. In *Now You See It*, Cathy N. Davidson argues that the speed with which computer technology changes impacts how we focus our attention in digital environments: "…we live in a time when everything is changing so radically and so quickly that our mental software is in constant need of updating" (17). For Davidson, the need to update our "mental software" implies that we cannot just rely on old methods of understanding in order to make new meanings and experience new interactions. "Unlearning is required when the world or your circumstances in the world have changed so completely that your old habits now hold you back. You can't just resolve to change. You need to break a pattern, to free yourself from old ways before you can adopt the new" (19). Google interfaces as interactions are characterized by a constant change in information. In addition to constantly novel or updated technologies, new cultural information is added into already present sites of interaction, impacting and being impacted by the information already located there. In order to make new meaning in this shifting environment, unlearning is a required activity. Without unlearning previous ways of making meaning about people, places, artifacts or phenomena, users may recycle them when encountering new information.

But it is the speed of both technological change and addition of information in Google databases that inhibit the unlearning activity necessary to break down old habits of mind. As technologies change rapidly, repetition of our current state of being in online spaces occurs without criticism (Gurak 9, 32-33). Googling remains a ubiquitous method of navigating cultural information while users lose track of how the results influence our cultural practices. Designers develop new technologies that are adopted by users before either is able to break patterns of web searching. Users may not criticize the impact of ubiquitous technologies that remain in use across new platforms (such as Googling); focus has shifted to new technology design and

adoption. Googling is *the* method of searching online. Furthermore, expectations that meaning should be made quickly and easily in digital search activities leads users to often overlook any repeated patterns of visual or theoretical meaning that may implicitly affect their understanding of places or people that are geographically far from them. To be specific, users need a better understanding of what kinds of patterns and arrangements may emerge from Googling and how such patterns and arrangements influence their knowledge surrounding artifacts, people, places, and events. The critical lens that I suggest users bring to this task requires a slowing of the break-neck pace of online navigation in order to unlearn stabilized narratives and to allow for new and multiple meanings. And the search event as a unit of analysis is a useful way to facilitate such slowing while still remaining pragmatically aware that some of what is useful about digital contexts is speed and efficiency. The search event as a unit of analysis can usefully account for these individual components while simultaneously helping users see that the event including all of its components has a rhetorical impact on the way they make meaning online. It is a pragmatic approach to understanding ideological construction that takes into account speed and mutability of digital environments. It might also act as a foundational unit of analysis for researchers interested in tracing how users react to ideological constructions online.

In addition to making this critical stance more present for users in our pedagogies, I also suggest that we need more studies of how Googling and other forms of information search online contribute to the construction of meaning. Researchers need to investigate just what activities we are asking Google (and other) search engines to perform and what impact on construction of ideologies this performance entails. In "Mixing Human and Nonhumans Together: The Sociology of a Door-Closer," Bruno Latour argues that users "delegate" certain activities to nonhuman actors in order to avoid the unnecessary disciplining of a human actor to carry out the

same task. Users delegate the task of providing information that defines the search term in a manner that is both efficient and presumably quick to the Google search engine. In so doing, users also delegate some of their ability to forge personal connections between cultural objects. For example, I have shown that searching for "Benghazi, Libya" in Google Worldwide will return a list of search results that includes particular patterns. Google is thus delegated the task of defining Benghazi and has a profound impact on how meaning is made surrounding it.

Latour defines this influence as "prescription" (301). Because Googling acts to assist users navigating a vast amount of information, certain tasks are delegated to it; the interface then prescribes the best way to accomplish the tasks that it has been assigned. In this way, Googling is an actor that operates with users to determine what can be accomplished and what meaning can be made. This process of prescription and delegation is often naturalized; users no longer focus on delegated tasks and do not challenge the interface's prescriptions. The result of such naturalization is that the users no longer recognize that the meanings they encounter in Google search results are constructed.

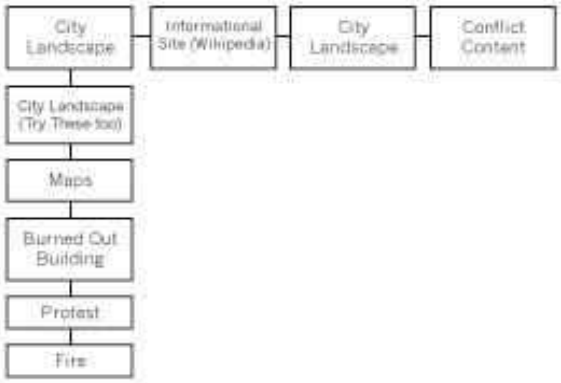
In order to understand the full ideological influence of delegation to and prescription by Google interfaces, we need more rhetorical studies that look closely at the precise ways that Google algorithms determine how results are returned, in what order they are returned, and how they make particular connections. My study accounts for both the ideological markers and the fact that interfaces are interactions, focusing on how the rhetorical arrangement of markers influence meaning making, but it is not of scope to account for the ways in which particular computational technologies act upon this information through the fulfillment of its delegated tasks. While my study can help users develop a critical understanding of the results that are returned to them, it takes into account the algorithms that determine these results only to

understand them as one of many influential units on the search event. In order to fully understand how ideologies are created and sustained online, rhetorical studies needs better approaches for accounting for the multiple computational components that intersect in search interfaces as actors on the data.

For now, the above study is a useful tool for understanding patterns of search results as supporting ideological ways of inventing meaning online. As a critical media literacy, it is might be used to understand other search events and determine how patterns of markers translate into stabilized and interested narratives of the search term or how patterns facilitate multiple meanings. Capturing the ideality of celebrating difference between cultures requires first that we develop the tools necessary for unlearning powerful yet problematic ideological systems of oppression and dominance.

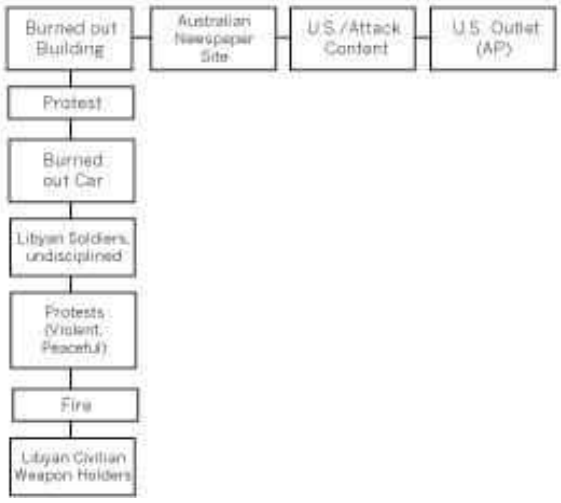
APPENDIX A:
IMPERIAL NETWORKS OF MEANING

Images 1



Images 1

Images 1



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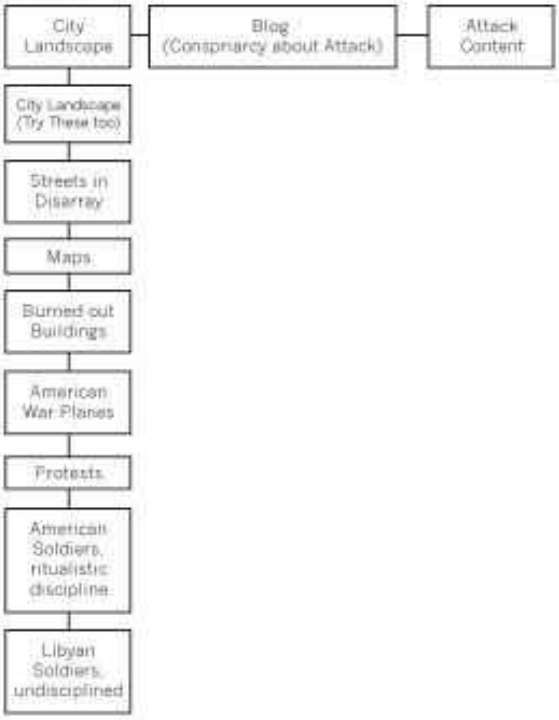

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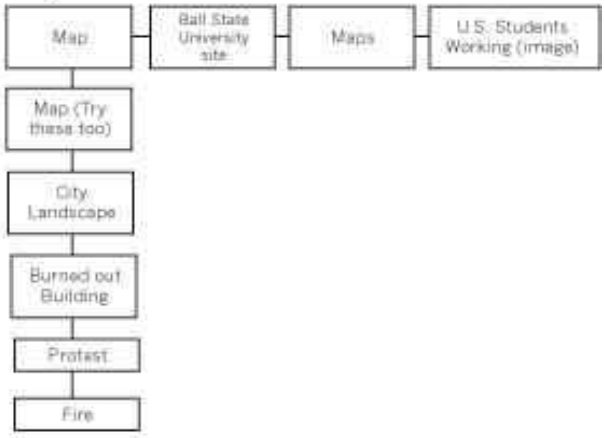

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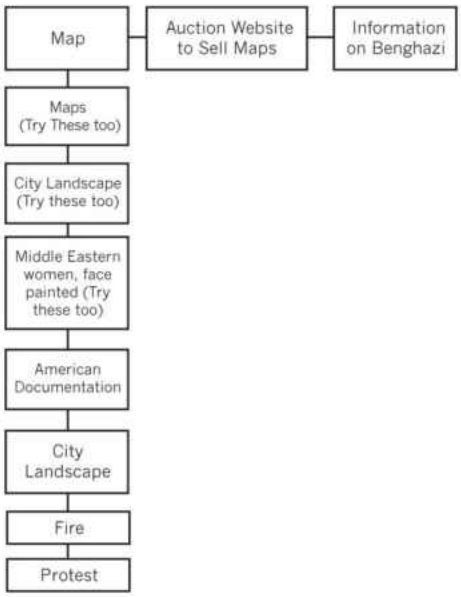

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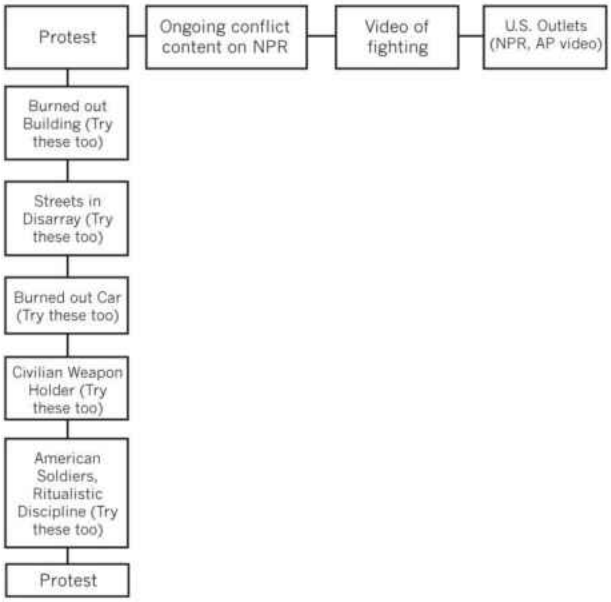

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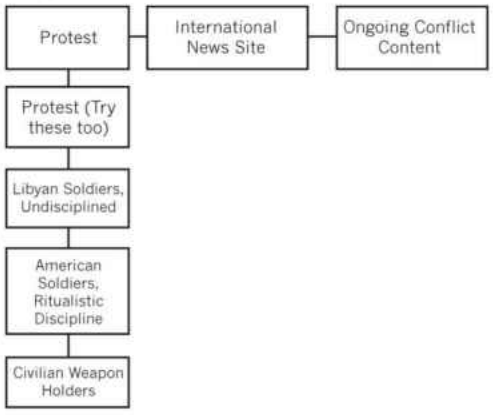

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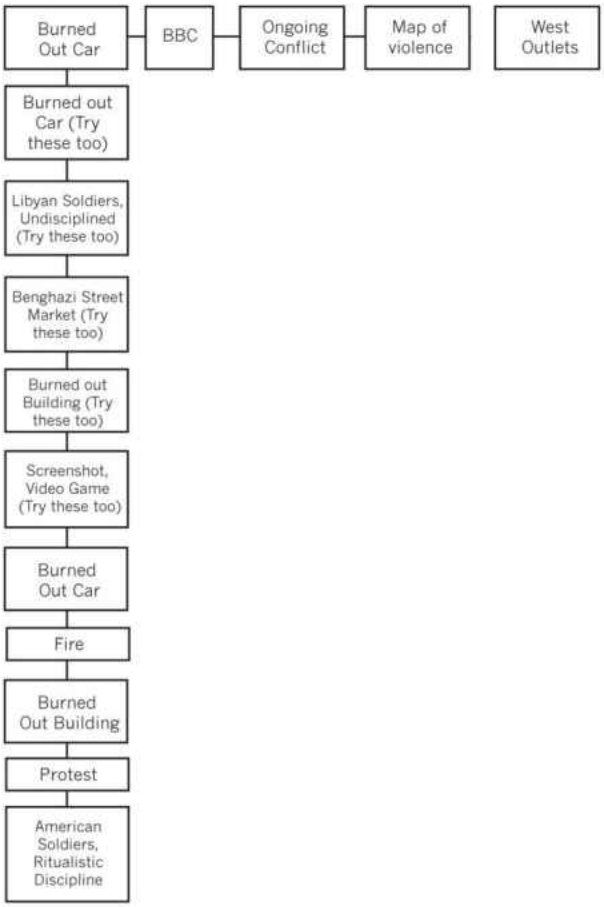

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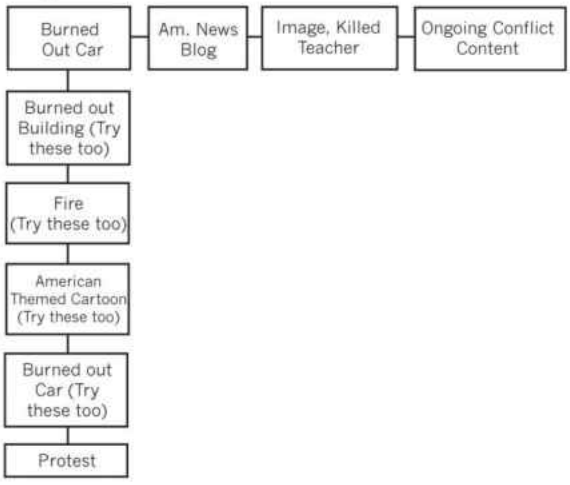

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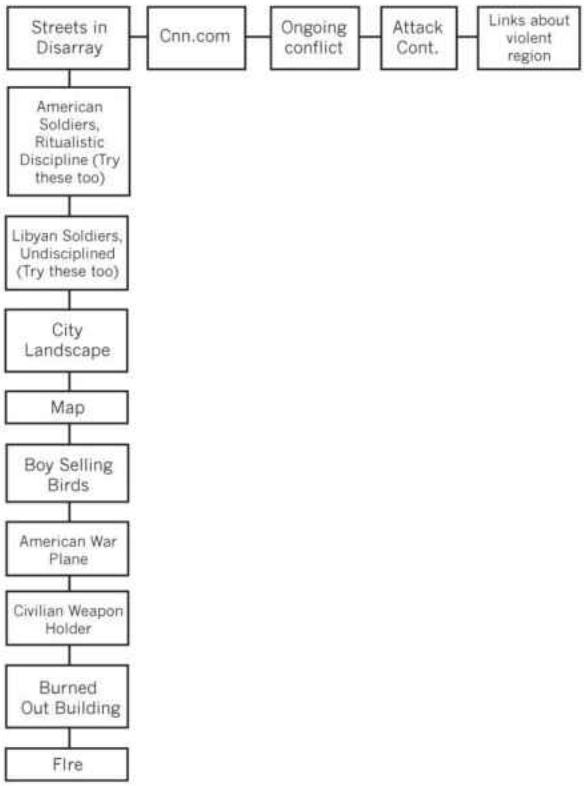

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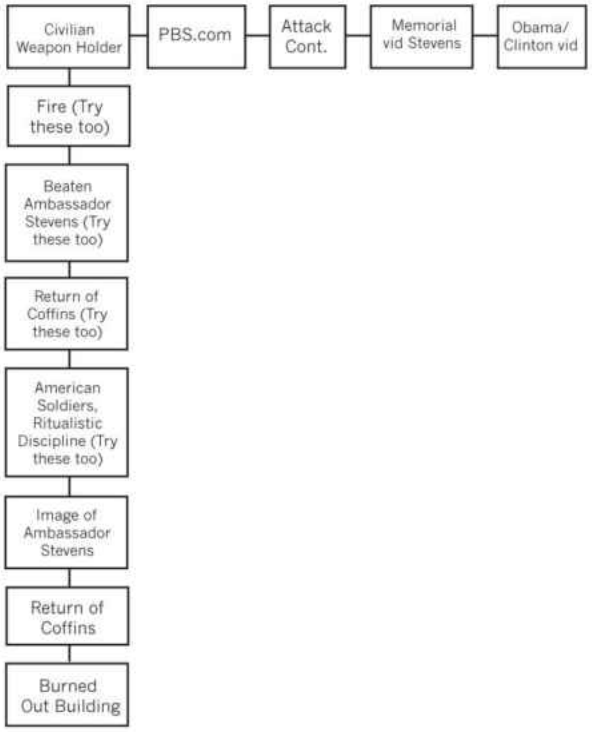

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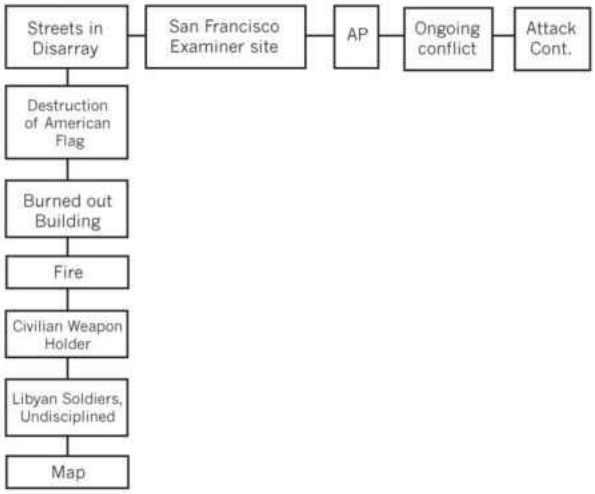

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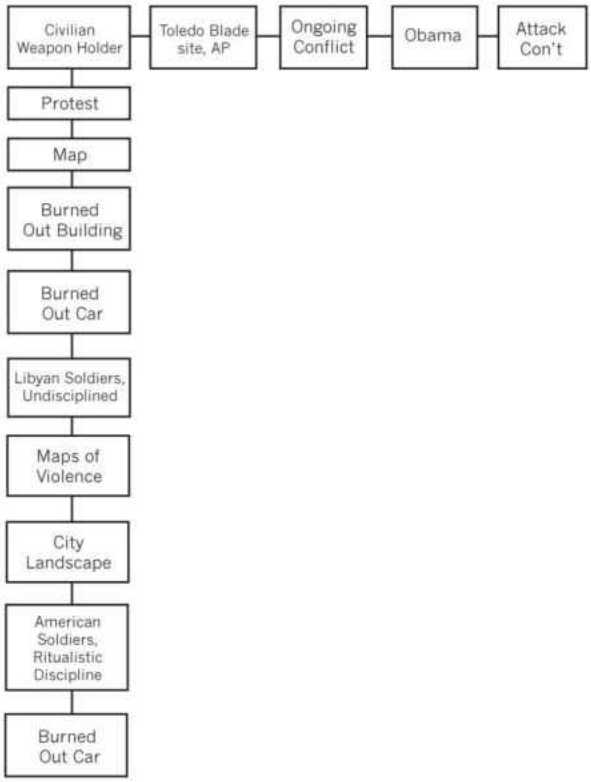

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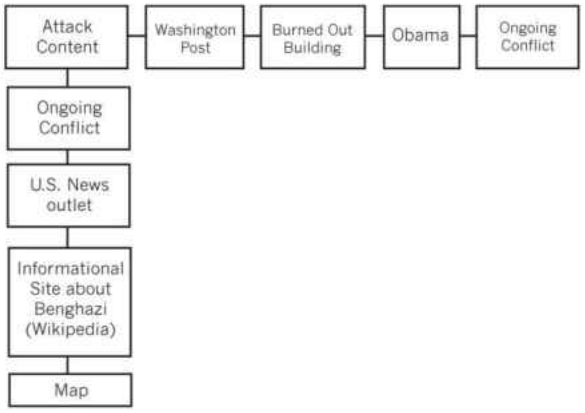

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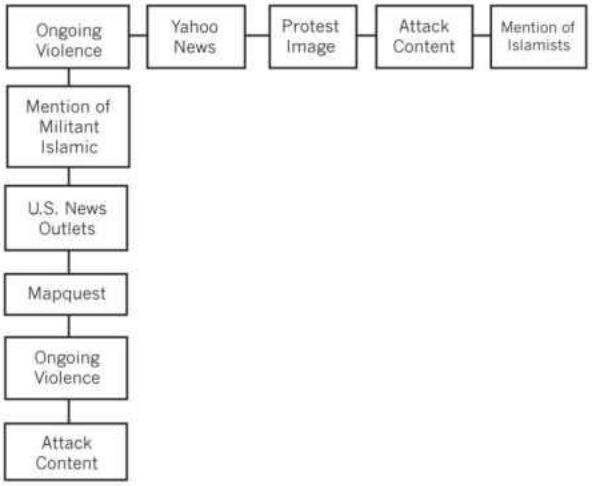

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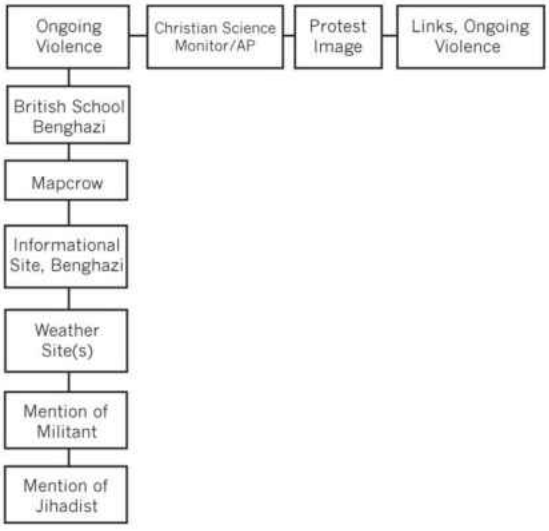

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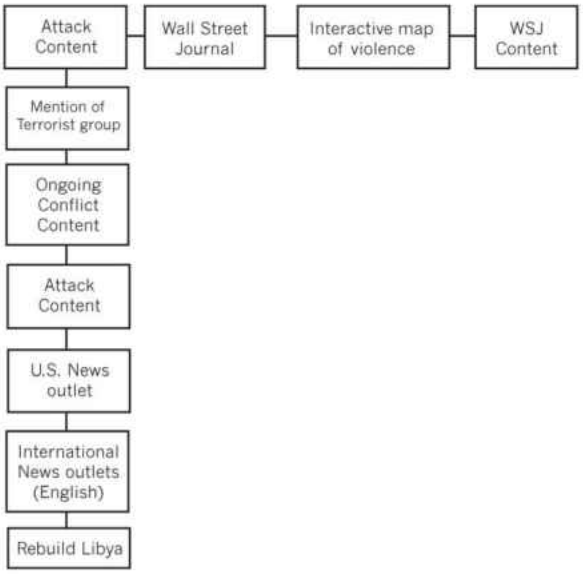

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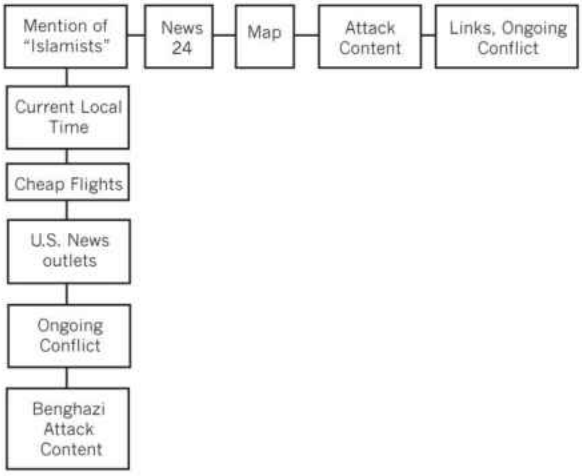

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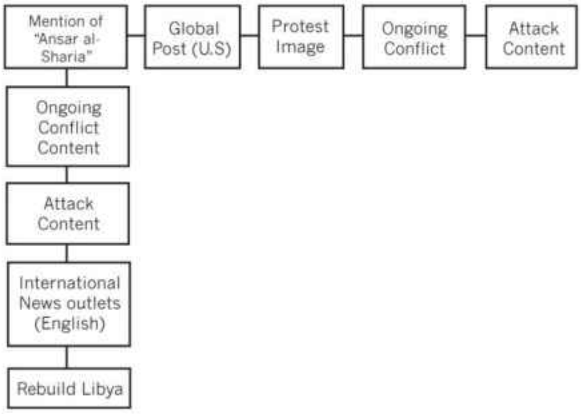

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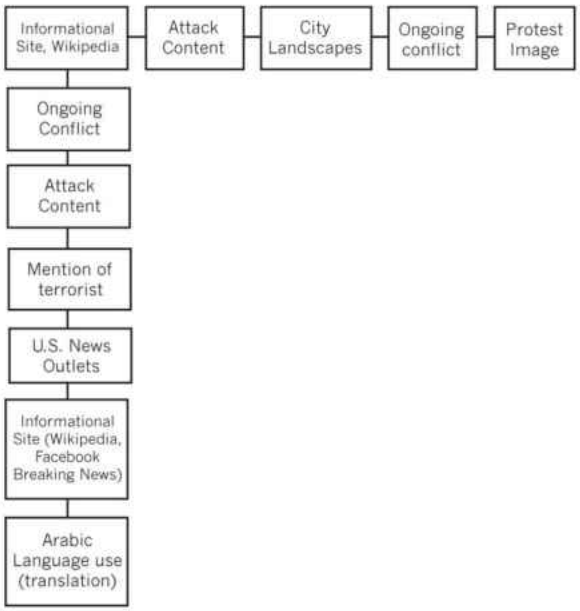

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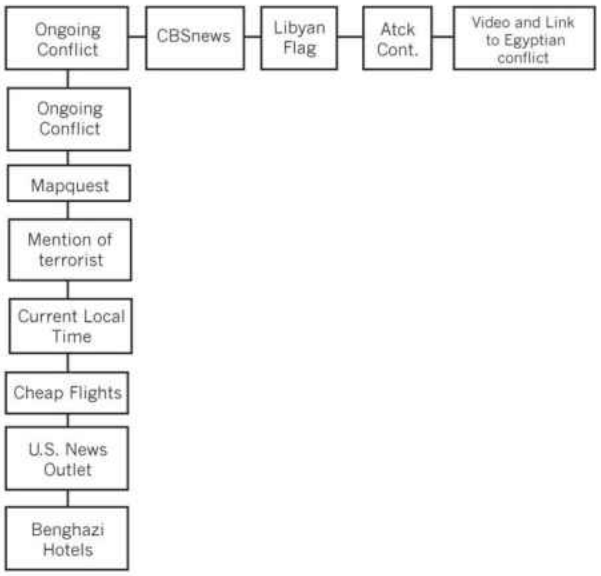

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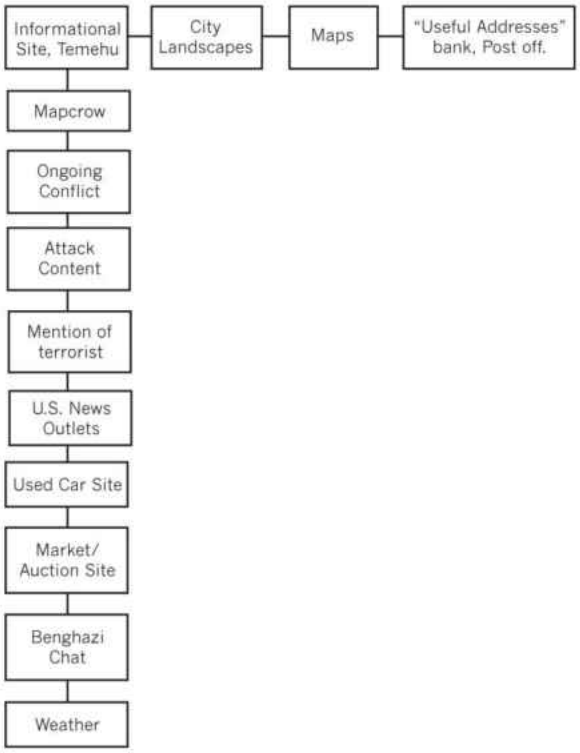

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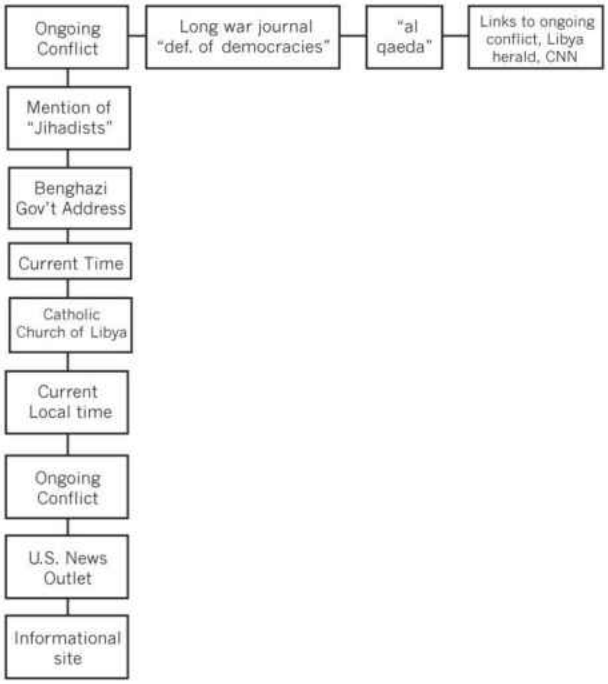

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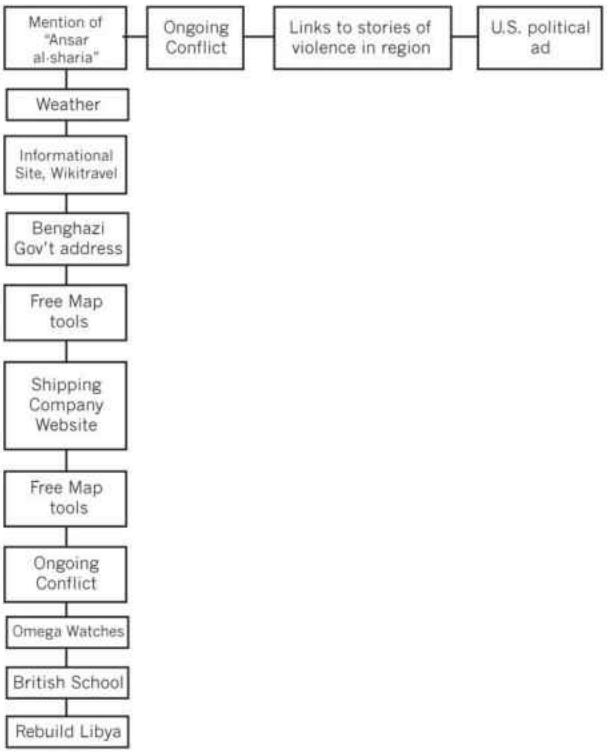
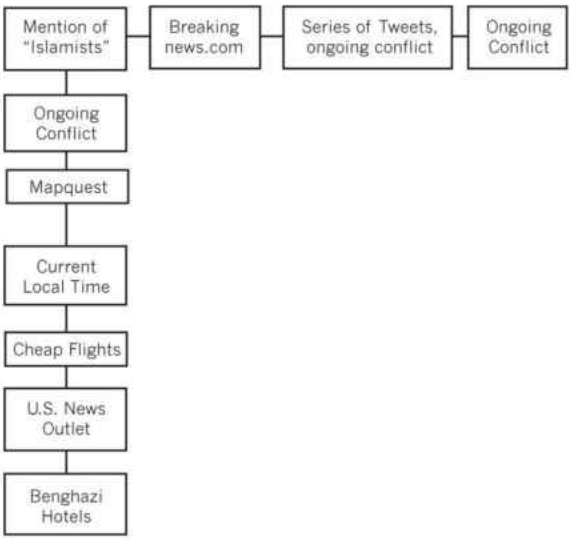


Google UAE 1/2



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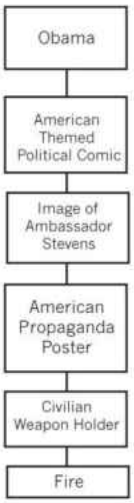

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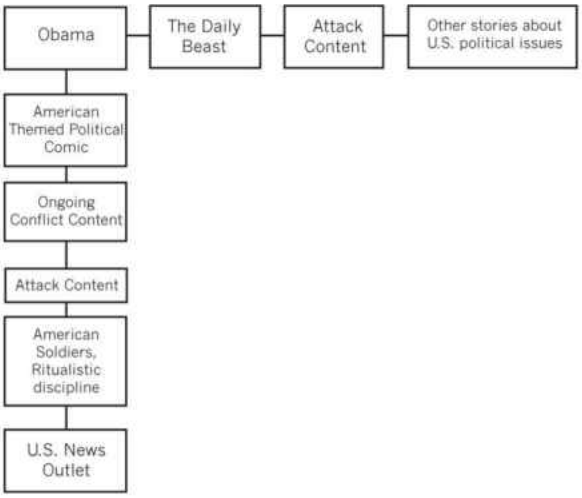

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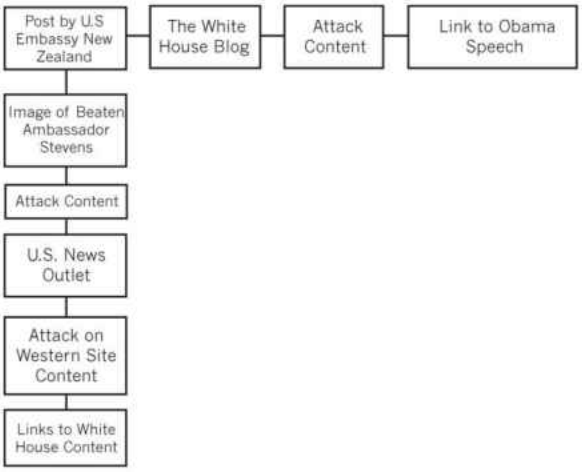

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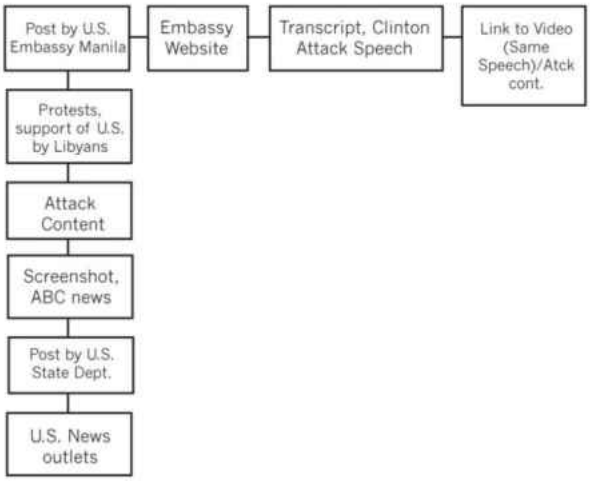

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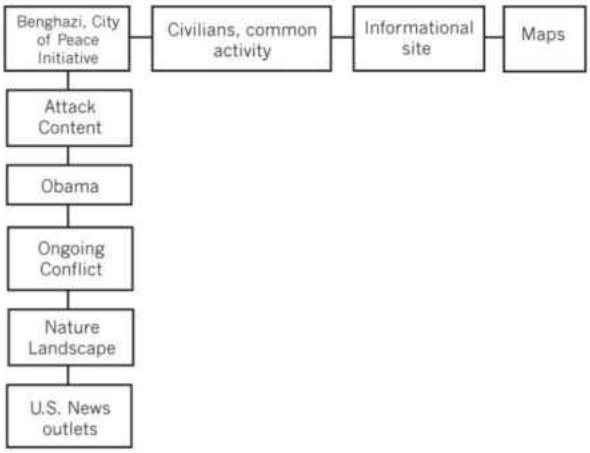

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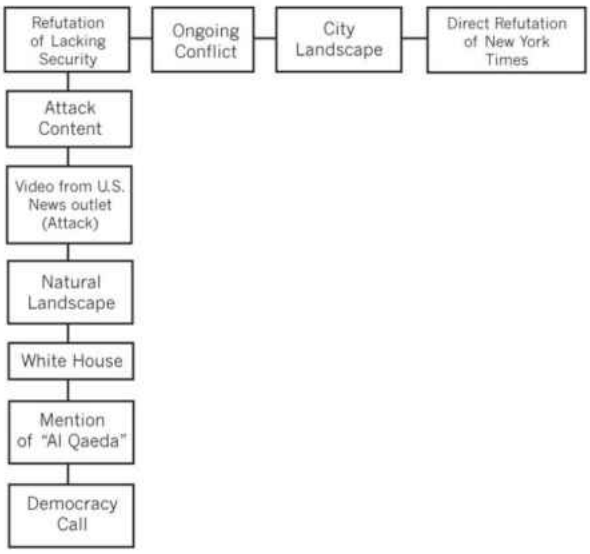

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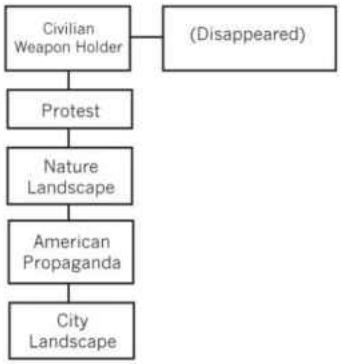

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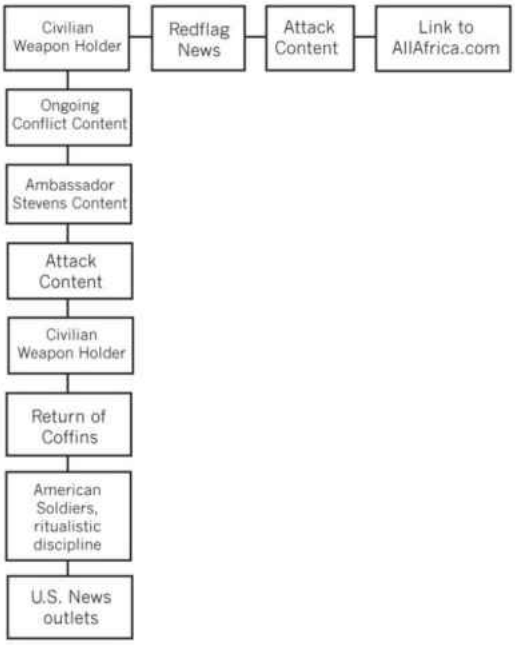
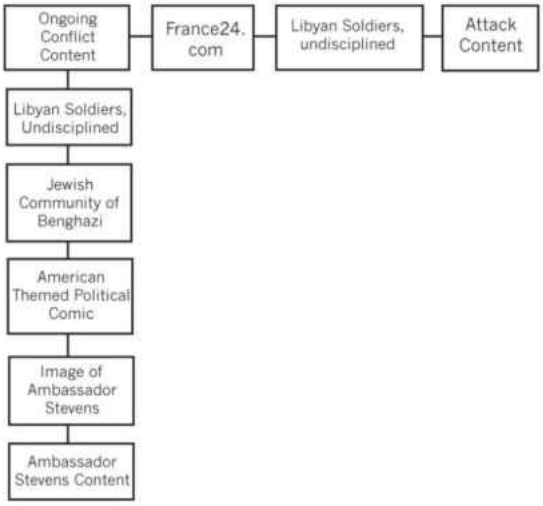


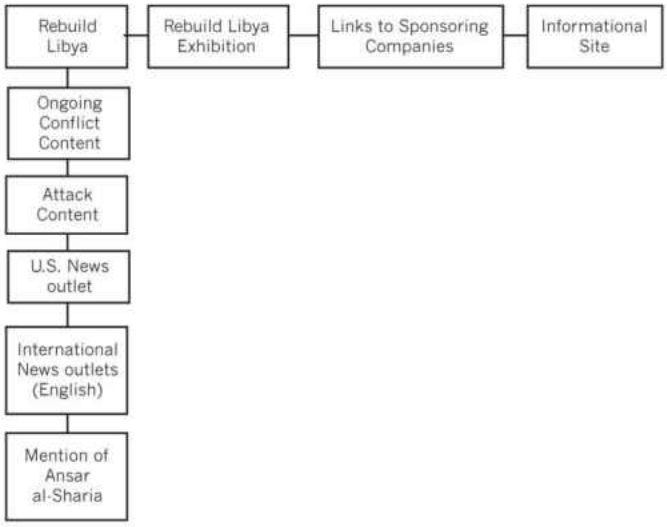
Plus 1



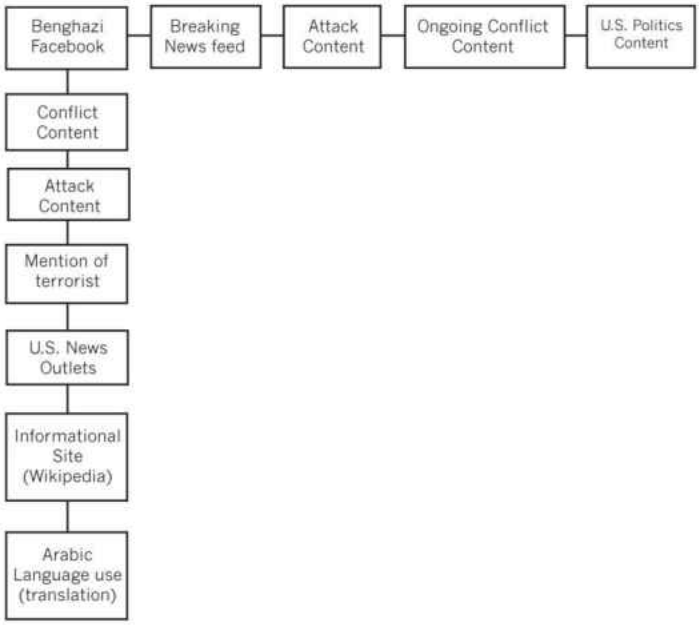
APPENDIX B: CHALLENGING NETWORKS OF MEANING

Google Images 3

Google WW 7/8



Google UAE 1/2



APPENDIX C: IMAGE INVOICES

Invoice #1104307009

» back to purchases

Order Date: Feb 28, 2014 04:50AM

Order Status: Complete

Order Total: $5.50

ORDER SUMMARY

Subtotal	$5.50
Shipping	$0.00
***Sales Tax**	$0.00
Total	**$5.50**

SOLD TO
Guest User
jacstewa@gmail.com

SOLD BY
Scott Nelson
Scott Nelson, Photographer
nelsonphoto@gmail.com

ITEMS

Image & Crop	Description	Price	Quantity	Total
	SN_Libya_Benghazi008.JPG Personal Use Download 1500 pixels	$5.50	1	**$5.50**

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A Libyan man waves his rifle during attacks on the U.S. Consulate in Beghazi. Getty Images. n.d. *The Guardian*. 12 Sept. 2011. Web. 15 Dec. 2013.

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