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The Inventive Work of the Christian Mind

Jeff Ringer

Abstract: *Responding to Bizzell's 2008 JAEPL article, this article argues that the intellectual work of religious minds involves inventing arguments grounded in the religious community's ethos that advocate for new perspectives within that community. Using Katharine Hayhoe's evangelical Christian environmentalist rhetoric as an example, this article prompts rhetorical educators to rethink approaches to teaching ethos.*

What if there is intellectual work to be done that can only be done by what [Shannon] Carter calls the "Christian mind"—or Jewish, Muslim, or Buddhist mind?

—Patricia Bizzell, "Faith-Based World Views as a Challenge to the Believing Game"

The epigraph comes from Patricia Bizzell's contribution to the 2008/2009 special issue of *JAEPL* about Peter Elbow's believing game. In her essay, Bizzell praises the intellectual work that Elbow's believing game can accomplish while raising a key question: What happens when the believing game encounters sincere religious faith? For Bizzell, religious faith presents the believing game with its "greatest test" (30), because faith represents more than "a skeptical thought experiment in which consequences are deduced from premises" (32). Faith demands that rhetoric come to terms with emotion, which, citing Lynn Worsham, Bizzell defines as a "tight braid of affect and judgment that is socially and historically constructed and bodily lived" (qtd. in Bizzell 31). Bizzell argues that intentional strategies like Elbow's believing game cannot access religious faith's tight braids of affect and judgment, because doing so requires immersion within "a powerful web that seeks to impact every aspect of one's life" and thus exceeds the bounds of a skeptic's game (32). To demonstrate the difficulty of accessing those features of religious faith, Bizzell discusses the work of Shannon Carter and Sharon Crowley, each of whom explores the intersections of faith and invention. Carter is interested in helping evangelical Christian students engage with academic discourse; Crowley is interested in helping secular rhetors convince fundamentalist Christian citizens to change their apocalyptic ways. Neither, according to Bizzell, is able to access fully the web of affect and judgment that marks the faith of committed evangelical Christians. They can view such faith as outsiders, but they cannot inhabit it.

It is this line of thinking that leads Bizzell to frame the question I included as the epigraph. This question is provocative for a number of reasons, not the least of which is the possibility that religious minds—minds, as I'll discuss below, that are shaped by immersion within their religious communities—have access to rhetorical material bound up in tight braids of affect and judgment that other minds might not be able to access, or at least not access in the same way. As such, her question prompts rhetoricians to rethink existing assumptions about invention. While rhetorical education generally forwards invention as outward-looking—students analyze audience, purpose, *kairos*,

and other components of situations or ecologies—Bizzell's question suggests that students might look into their own braids of affect and judgment, which are shaped by embodied experiences within the communities to which they belong. That notion of belongingness brings us to a conception of ethos often ignored in rhetorical education. While ethos is generally taught in terms of whether the rhetor *seems* to be knowledgeable or credible, it can also be understood as the "dwelling places" or communities rhetors inhabit (Hyde; Perkins). Rhetors' minds are formed by these communities and the relations that comprise them.

Bizzell's question, though, also implies that religious minds remain relatively untapped in terms of the intellectual work they might be positioned to do, and so my purpose in this essay is to tease out an answer to her question. There is intellectual work that can best be done by religious minds, and it involves inventing arguments grounded in the religious community's belief system that advocate for new perspectives within that community. I make this argument by first exploring the possibilities for invention that religious minds can leverage and then discussing rhetorical theory about invention and ethos as located (Hyde; Jarratt and Reynolds; LeFevre; Simonson). To demonstrate the inventive work of one Christian mind, I investigate the rhetorical action of Katharine Hayhoe, a climate scientist who speaks from her evangelical Christian ethos to likeminded audiences about the dangers of climate change. Specifically, I explore how Hayhoe's ethos offers inventive possibilities for persuading evangelical Christian audiences to take climate change seriously. Hayhoe's example underscores the importance of thinking through the implications of Bizzell's question for contemporary public discourse. Climate change is one of the greatest dangers to society, and yet large segments of the population, including many evangelical Christians, view it as little more than fake news. Public rhetoric made by an evangelical Christian climate scientist aimed at persuading an evangelical Christian audience to take climate change seriously thus offers an ideal test case to explore Bizzell's question.

To benefit fully from Hayhoe's example, rhetorical studies must rethink current approaches to rhetorical education, and so I close by arguing that rhetorical educators should invite students to look inward and consider how immersion within their own dwelling places might open up paths of invention unavailable to other rhetors (Perkins 75). This argument extends work I began in *Vernacular Christian Rhetoric and Civil Discourse*, where I considered the possibility that evangelical Christian students might be able to argue from their positionality about issues of public concern in ways that foster deliberative discourse (Ringer 83-113). Such students need to be taught how to do so, though, and rhetorical education generally has held religion at arm's length, especially evangelical Christianity. Religion, the thinking goes, might serve as a worthy object of inquiry, but certainly not as a source of public argument that can serve democratic ends. However, recent scholars like Mike DePalma and Chris Earle, among others, have argued that rhetorical education should view students' religious identities as powerful resources for inventing and delivering public arguments. Realizing that potential means teaching for it, though, and in the present case it means helping students know how their own dwelling places might offer inventive means for arguing deliberatively within the communities to which they belong. While it certainly is concerning that contemporary public discourse is marked by in-group thinking (Daniell 86), rhetorical educators must

perceive such realities as constraints that can be leveraged for deliberative ends. In the early twenty-first century, that is one form of intellectual work religious minds are best positioned to do—leverage the constraints of in-group thinking to invent and argue deliberatively for new perspectives.

Christian Minds, with a Difference

Understanding this intellectual work necessitates defining “religious” or “Christian” minds. On the one hand, doing so is impossible. While Christian minds certainly would hold beliefs derived from Christian faith (Medhurst “Filled”; “Religious”), there is no single conception of Christianity, and so there is no one way to define *the* Christian mind. I am not, however, attempting to make any definitive claim about what constitutes Christianity. Rather, I use the term “Christian mind” synecdochally to name individuals who have been formed by Christian communities. Religious minds are embodied and have inhabited the socio-cultural contexts, material spaces, belief systems, and braids of affect and judgment that align with a specific religious tradition and practice. This approach is consistent with Carter, who defines her use of “Christian mind” by drawing on William G. Pollard’s *Physicist and Christian: A Dialogue Between Communities*. Community is the key term. Pollard notes that “all knowledge is really imparted through community, and cannot be had in isolation or alienation from the community within which a particular segment of knowledge is known” (qtd. in Carter 583-84). Carter sees Pollard’s thinking as consonant with rhetorical education and explores how Christian communities are organized around shared faiths and orthodoxies that can be known but must also be applied or lived (584-85). To illustrate this difference, Carter references the words of a case study participant who distinguishes between merely going to church and being a “churchly child” (585). Community belonging constitutes the difference. Religiously committed individuals do not simply go through the motions or assent to “consequences [...] deduced from premises” (Bizzell 32). They are immersed within communities of faith in ways that shape their entire being.

This definition of religious minds—those embodied minds that are shaped by the religious communities in which they have been immersed—is consonant with Bizzell’s understanding of religion, emotion, and identity. Bizzell, however, is not alone in raising the possibility that immersion within religious communities might position rhetors to do certain kinds of intellectual work. C. Jan Swearingen writes that “[s]ome of the workings of rhetoric within religion really should be explained and analyzed by the believer,” because skepticism offers its own constraints that might limit what such academics can perceive (137). Similarly, Thomas Lessl argues that insiders to religious discourse “bring to [public] debate a greater depth of understanding regarding how religious minds come to grips with civic concerns” (195-6). He writes that religiously-committed rhetoricians possess a “peculiar advantage when it comes to understanding such intersections of the sacred and the secular,” because they participate meaningfully within a faith tradition and community (196). Lessl likens nonreligious rhetoricians investigating religious discourse to “ethnographers who have ventured onto some remote Pacific island without being able to speak the language of the tribe they wish to study” (196). Writing about evangelical Christianity in particular, Mark Allan Steiner argues that evangelicals are

“uniquely positioned” to promote civil discourse because they have at their disposal a range of values, including humility, that could inform deliberative rhetoric (291, 310-11). Swearingen, Lessl, and Steiner thus agree with Bizzell that some intellectual work might best be performed by religious—even evangelical Christian—minds.

At the end of *Toward a Civil Discourse*, though, Crowley offers a different take as to who can perform the intellectual work she calls for. Crowley invents arguments grounded in biblical values (e.g., “loving one’s neighbor”) that she hopes will persuade fundamentalist Christians to change their apocalyptic ways. She envisions secular, liberal academics as conducting such invention, because, in Crowley’s estimation, they comprise the group of rhetors who would want to disarticulate fundamentalist Christians’ destructive views. As Bizzell suggests, though, Crowley is ultimately frustrated by her task, a frustration that emerges from the binary she employs to define the two groups (DePalma, Ringer, and Webber). In Beth Daniell’s words, “Crowley seems unable to use [her theorizing] to reach her stated goal of opening up space for civil exchange” (86). *Toward a Civil Discourse* is largely regarded as a tour de force of rhetorical invention, and so the fact that she admits defeat by the end should be concerning for rhetorical educators. If Crowley cannot open paths of invention through the religiously-inflected deliberative impasse that marks public discourse in the early twenty-first century, who can? Elsewhere, I have argued that evangelical Christian student writers are well-suited to do such work (Ringer 1). I make that case by theorizing vernacular religious creativity, the idea that religious believers adapt their faiths in relation to their pluralistic contexts. The upshot of vernacular religious creativity is that even devout evangelical Christians espouse perspectives that depart from what society assumes evangelical Christians believe, and that those differences can inform deliberative ends.

In one case study, I argue that “Kimberly” had the potential to argue from her ethos to convince other evangelical Christians of the importance of the HPV vaccine, which is controversial in evangelical communities. HPV is a sexually-transmitted disease, but because the vaccine is best administered to girls around age eleven, some evangelicals interpret its use as license for premarital sex. Kimberly, however, embraced a nuanced position. She was personally committed to abstinence but also believed in the importance of the HPV vaccine because she knew many girls who were sexually active. Writing for her FYW course, Kimberly argued that parents should vaccinate their daughters against HPV, though she does so without positioning herself as an evangelical Christian committed to abstinence. I argue that if she had positioned herself as an insider to evangelical Christianity due to her personal stance on abstinence, she might have gained a hearing for her argument with a family-values audience. She might then have been able to “enact deliberative discourse within [her] own enclaves” by arguing for a perspective not commonly shared within the evangelical Christian community (Ringer 110). Kimberly, however, did not fulfill that potential. She was not taught how to do so and feared that writing from a faith-based perspective at a public university would get her in trouble.

My sense when writing Kimberly’s case study was that who she was as a rhetor—an evangelical Christian who supports the HPV vaccine—opened up lines of argument that would be unavailable to rhetors who do not share her faith and positionality. She struck me as the opposite of Lessl’s ethnographer: fluent in the language and values of

her faith-based community—and recognized as such—she had the potential to argue deliberately for an uncommon perspective within her faith communities. But because Kimberly's case study reveals a missed opportunity, I could not make any claim about how her rhetorical action might reveal the inventive work of the Christian mind. Questions thus remain. What might such inventive work look like in actuality, particularly when it entails arguing deliberately within a likeminded community? While Kimberly's case study underscores the possibility that invention might be tied to the rhetor's identity, what relationships exist, if any, between ethos and invention? Before offering an example that illustrates the inventive work of the Christian mind, I take up this theoretical question.

Ethos—and Invention—as Located

In his introduction to *Ethos: New Essays in Rhetorical and Critical Theory*, James Baumlin explores two schools of thought concerning ethos. The Aristotelian view emphasizes the constructed nature of ethos as a product of language and not a reflection of the rhetor's standing in society. Common in composition textbooks, this is the version of ethos which Priscilla Perkins likens to method acting (75). By contrast, the Isocratean view emphasizes the character of the rhetor as it exists prior to rhetorical action, a view that would later inform Quintilian's famous dictum of a good person speaking well (Baumlin *xiv-xv*). This second notion of ethos reflects its shared etymological root with our terms for habitus and inhabit, which is why ethos can also be defined in terms of rhetors' dwelling places (Hyde). Baumlin suggests that the complexity inherent in the two notions of ethos demands that rhetoricians ask questions about where ethos is located. Does it precede rhetorical action, or does it emerge from the rhetorical action itself?

One contribution to Baumlin's collection that explores ethos's location is Susan Jarratt and Nedra Reynolds's "The Splitting Image: Contemporary Feminisms and the Ethics of *êthos*." Responding to feminist criticisms that poststructural conceptions of the self can reify "traditional notions of the subject" (39), Jarratt and Reynolds theorize a feminist conception of ethos that values the positionality of the rhetor. They do so by responding to George Yoo's argument about ethical appeals wherein he reaffirms the "gap between the speaker and his words" that Plato advanced in *Phaedrus* (Jarratt and Reynolds 41; Baumlin *xi-xii*). Jarratt and Reynolds take issue with Yoo's appeal to "a stable, moral Self" and seek to understand ethos in ways that emphasize "the speaker having been created at a particular site within the contingencies of history and geography" (47). Emphasizing such positionality underscores "a constant awareness that one always speaks from a particular place in a social structure" (47). While Jarratt and Reynolds do not completely collapse the gap defined by Yoo, they underscore how rhetors can and should speak from their particular positionalities. Citing Fredric Jameson's standpoint theory, Jarratt and Reynolds define the difference from which rhetors speak as the "capacity for ... seeing features and dimensions of the world and of history masked to other social actors" (qtd. in Jarratt and Reynolds 52). While Jarratt and Reynolds view ethos as partially constructed in discourse, they also define it as a product of the situated, embodied knower, which resonates with Worsham's conception of emotion as "socially and historically constructed and bodily lived" (qtd. in Bizzell 31). Speaking

from within one's ethos or dwelling place in a likeminded community offers a degree of authority and credibility that might be unavailable to other rhetors. As Jarratt and Reynolds put it, rhetors can "speak artfully to those around them" (57).

But how does invention relate to this notion of ethos? The answer might lie in the fact that both are located. In "In[ter]vention: Locating Rhetoric's *Ethos*," Judy Holiday writes that "location underwrites all rhetorical situations, shaping and circumscribing knowledge, perception, and invention" (389). Location can be understood as material as well as social, and invention, as rhetors have long maintained, is inherently social (Lauer; LeFevre; Zulick). In *Invention as a Social Act*, Karen Burke LeFevre links invention to both notions of location. Regarding social location, LeFevre states that "the inventing writer [is] part of a community, a socioculture, a sphere of overlapping (and sometimes conflicting) collectives" (93). But LeFevre also emplaces invention within material locations, noting that "writers invent not only in the study but also in the smoke-filled chamber" (93). Rhetors are thus positioned within social and material locations, and that positionality occasions and constrains invention. In that sense invention can be understood as arising from embodied immersion within the material settings, social contexts, and discourse communities to which rhetors belong (LeFevre 93). Invention, like ethos, is located.

More recently, Peter Simonson has defined a number of interrelated media that comprise invention, including bodies, minds, experience, place, time, physical and geographic space, the social, and the cultural. Simonson defines the social as composed of "interactions, relationships, roles, social identities (e.g., race, class, gender, sexuality), small groups, publics, formal organizations, movements, communities, and institutions (e.g., educational, political, legal, religious)" (314). His acknowledgment of religion as part of the social component of invention is important as is his emphasis on culture. The cultural media of invention include "cultures and subcultures" as well as "meanings, values, ideologies, common opinion (*doxa*), rituals, genres, traditions, formalized practices, and conceptual schemes" (Simonson 314-15). Simonson's emphasis on ideology as pertinent to invention is significant in consideration of the inventive work of religious minds. But so, too, is his use of terms associated with ethos, namely "habits," which are formed by rhetors' experiences; "habitus," which is composed in large part by individuals' interactions within social contexts; and "habitats," which follow from social relationships and help to generate "words, ideas, countervailing arguments, emotions, and bodily expressions" (314, 317). Connecting several of Simonson's media allows us to define invention as the product of embodied minds situated in particular contexts that have become habitualized into ways of thinking, knowing, and doing as a result of immersion within those contexts.

What connects these conceptions of invention and ethos to the intellectual work of evangelical Christian minds is the concept that evangelical Christianity functions as a subculture (Cope and Ringer), which Simonson links to the cultural medium of invention. Evangelical Christian minds can be defined as products of evangelical subcultures and extensive experience within evangelical socio-cultural contexts. Additionally, evangelical Christian minds form ideologies or belief systems particular to those communities and the experiences and commitments that such communities privilege. Those ideologies feature certain ideologics, which Crowley defines as "connections that can be

forged among beliefs within a given ideology” (75). Over time, ideologics gather into belief systems that can be woven more or less tightly (75). While Crowley does not speak favorably of densely articulated belief systems—the “more densely” they are articulated, the “more impervious they are to rhetorical intervention” (78)—she also acknowledges that “rhetorical power can be activated by people who are equipped to articulate available openings in discourse” (52). By “articulate,” she means forming arguments and making connections between and among beliefs, which can serve as premises for arguments (Crowley 52, 75).

If it is true that evangelical Christian belief systems are densely articulated, then it is possible that someone who shares that belief system might be specially “equipped to articulate available openings in discourse” in arguments for a likeminded audience. An argument grounded in the particular ideologics that comprise evangelical Christian ideologies made by someone who inhabits that ethos would resonate within those densely articulated belief systems (Crowley 78-79). Certainly, a rhetor who does not inhabit an evangelical Christian ethos would be able to invent arguments drawing on similar premises. But given how densely articulated evangelical Christian ideologies tend to be, the particular ideologics would be difficult to name, identify, leverage, or channel without having formed the tight braid of affect and judgment that comes from belonging to that community. Even a non-believer who embeds herself within an evangelical Christian social context to conduct ethnographic research would lack the *habitus*—the “dynamic being-in-the-world” (Simonson 313)—that allows rhetors to speak authoritatively within likeminded communities. Who the rhetor is—the dwelling places she inhabits—matters for invention.

One further point about Crowley’s notion of densely articulated belief systems: while the density of such belief systems suggests that they are difficult to change, it is not impossible to do so (Crowley 79). Crowley argues that “beliefs encompassed within densely articulated ideologics resonate more sympathetically, and with more intensity, than do beliefs operative within ideologics that are less tightly woven” (79). If, as is the case with evangelical Christianity, those ideologics are woven tightly into a belief system that “explains everything,” then rearticulating any belief within that system represents a tall order (Crowley 79). Crowley explains: “Once one becomes a member of a desired community, the community itself offers little internal impetus for change” (195). Part of the reason why is that the rhetoric generally featured within a community is more likely to be epideictic, which praises community values, rather than deliberative, which might call those values into question (195-96). The only hope Crowley identifies for changing densely articulated beliefs is to change the context itself. However, what if an insider espoused a perspective that differs from what is commonly accepted within that community? What if such a rhetor were to reflect the community’s values epideictically while also arguing deliberatively for a new perspective? This is the possibility I perceived with Kimberly, an insider who shared much of the densely articulated belief system of her faith community but who espoused a novel perspective that could be argued for from the vantage of a shared ethos. Rhetors with similar positionalities might be able to rearticulate beliefs in ways that resonate with the belief system without threatening to upend it.

The Inventive Work of Hayhoe's Christian Mind

I suggest that one such rhetor is Katharine Hayhoe, a climate change scientist and professor at Texas Tech who is also an evangelical Christian. To explore the inventive work of Hayhoe's Christian mind, I discuss representative anecdotes that feature Hayhoe, including the first episode of Showtime's documentary *Years of Living Dangerously*; a YouTube video produced and posted by Nova Science Now; and a book called *A Climate for Change: Global Warming Facts for Faith-Based Decisions* that Hayhoe co-wrote with her husband, evangelical pastor Andrew Farley. I highlight anecdotes that reveal Hayhoe's immersion within evangelical Christianity and analyze arguments about climate change she invents from her ethos as an evangelical Christian.

Viewers gain a sense of Hayhoe's Christian mind in the first episode of Showtime's documentary, *Years of Living Dangerously*, which investigates climate change as a global phenomenon with localized effects. Actor Don Cheadle, who co-hosts the episode, explores the conflict between science and faith. He travels to Plainview, Texas, a rural community dealing with the economic effects of climate change. Cheadle introduces viewers to Hayhoe, who lives in nearby Lubbock, and talks with Hayhoe about her research. As Cheadle returns to Plainview, viewers hear him say, "As I leave town, I wonder how people in Plainview would react to what she just told me." They also see a warehouse in the distance with the words "Jesus is Lord over Plainview" painted on the side, which announces a belief articulation prevalent in the community. Cheadle asks, "Would they see a conflict between her science and their faith?" The episode cuts to a scene of a lively worship service in what appears to be an evangelical church. A praise band plays on stage, while scores of worshippers sing along with lifted hands. The next scene shows Hayhoe and her husband sitting at their table, heads bowed in prayer. Cheadle continues: "But Katharine doesn't see a conflict." Viewers then hear Farley praying, "Father, thank you for this morning..." Cheadle concludes: "She's a devout Christian herself."

Viewers gain a deeper sense of Hayhoe's Christian mind when next they see her in the episode. Hayhoe states,

Many people view science and faith as deeply divided. But for me growing up with a dad who was a scientist who was also a missionary and who was very active in the church, I grew up with the understanding that there was no conflict. By studying science, we're studying what God was thinking when he created the universe.

Hayhoe's narration provides viewers with a sense of her immersion within evangelical Christianity: she grew up in a Christian home, is the daughter of a missionary and active church member, and believes that God created the universe. Such beliefs and experiences are common within evangelical Christianity. Even if most evangelical Christians are not children of missionaries, they likely know missionaries and "missionary kids." While the belief system from which Hayhoe speaks reflects evangelical Christianity, Hayhoe links to this belief articulation the view that science and faith are complementary. Hayhoe forges this ideologic by framing her belief in terms of a common evangelical Christian view of creation, namely that the universe is a product of God's creation:

“By studying science,” she says, “we’re studying what God was thinking when he created the universe.” While Hayhoe’s Christian mind is distinctly evangelical, science is welcome within it. It is this difference that constitutes a line of argumentative force for Hayhoe’s evangelical public rhetoric.

Perhaps the fullest statement about Hayhoe’s Christian mind appears in the preface to *A Climate for Change*, which she co-wrote with Farley:

Bike to work. Hug a tree. Eat granola. Live off the grid. Wear hemp. Bathe in a stream. And worship the earth.

We often find ourselves labeled—just because we think global warming is a serious problem people should know about.

But here’s who we really are.

We’re Christians. We don’t worship the earth. We worship the Creator of the Universe. We believe that God spoke the world into existence and sustains it by His power. We believe that Jesus Christ is the way to eternal life, that the Bible is God’s Word, and that nothing compares to the importance of the gospel message.

Now for what we *don’t* believe. We don’t believe the universe came into existence through random chance. We don’t believe that life came from nothing or that humans evolved from apes.

We don’t believe in government running our lives or in destroying the economy to save the earth. We believe in common sense. We believe in the sensible progression from older to newer technologies. (xi)

Here we see one of the clearest iterations of Hayhoe’s positionality as an evangelical Christian who speaks through the densely articulated belief system she shares with many others in the evangelical Christian community. She is not just a climate scientist attempting to persuade evangelical Christians of the dangers of climate change. She is an evangelical Christian herself, someone who is able to speak directly from her ethos (“we”) about her faith in ways that reflect evangelical Christianity. Like Hayhoe’s statement about science and faith, this preface reflects ideologics consistent with evangelical Christianity. Those ideologics exist among religious beliefs (e.g., God created the universe, the Bible is the Word of God) and between religious beliefs and politically conservative perspectives (e.g., government should not interfere in citizens’ lives). Such ideologics comprise the densely articulated belief system held by many evangelicals, and it is through that belief system that Hayhoe and Farley invent the argument they forward in their preface.

That argument basically asks for a rearticulation of beliefs. Hayhoe and Farley want their audience of evangelical Christians to accommodate the idea that climate change is a problem and should be taken seriously. They make that argument not only by drawing on evangelical Christian premises, but also by accessing the tight braid of affect and judgment consonant with evangelical Christianity. The proliferation of short sentences—“We worship the Creator of the Universe. We believe that God spoke the world into existence and sustains it by His power. We believe that Jesus Christ is the way to eternal life”—aims to evoke in readers a shared sense of commitment. Hayhoe and Farley know who they are as evangelical Christians, and they foreground their affective

connection to that tradition's belief system in the preface. In doing so, the passage takes on the feel of a creed, a statement of beliefs that for many Christians elicits a sense of devotion and belonging. The passage also prompts evangelical Christians to formulate what Gerard A. Hauser calls "practical syllogisms," enthymematic statements that elicit emotional responses (*Introduction* 169, 174-75). Because practical syllogisms provide a referent that prompts audiences to think, "I am the kind of person who believes x, therefore I should do y," Hayhoe and Farley tap into the tight braid of affect and judgment that comes from being an evangelical Christian. Reading this preface, an evangelical Christian audience might form the following practical syllogism:

- *Personal major premise:* I am an evangelical Christian, the kind of person who believes that God created the universe and that Jesus Christ is the way to eternal life.
- *Minor premise:* Hayhoe and Farley are evangelical Christians who believe that God created the universe and that Jesus Christ is the way to eternal life, but they also believe that climate change is a danger that should be taken seriously.
- *Conclusion:* Therefore, as an evangelical Christian, I should view climate change as a danger that should be taken seriously.

Certainly, this conclusion represents a partial realignment of the audience's values, but that's the point—Hayhoe and Farley want their audience to rearticulate their beliefs. They are not asking for a full restructuring, though. By arguing from a shared ethos, they hope that their audience feels comfortable hearing a perspective they might otherwise deem as alien. They also hope that their argument resonates with the audience's belief system, much of which Hayhoe and Farley share.

That rhetorical strategy emerges frequently throughout their book. Hayhoe and Farley ground their argument that evangelical Christians should be better stewards of the planet within the densely articulated belief system they share with their audience. In the introduction, for instance, they acknowledge that "As Christians, we're naturally suspicious of people who believe differently from us" (xv). They then note two evangelical Christian organizations that call for action on climate change. The first comes from the Evangelical Climate Initiative, "which state[s] that our moral convictions as evangelicals demand a response to the climate change problem" (xvi). Hayhoe and Farley write that a wide range of churches, denominations, and other organizations endorsed the initiative. The second call comes from the Southern Baptist Convention, a conservative evangelical Christian denomination. That call "declared that we as Christians should take responsibility for our contributions to environmental issues" (xvi). Toward the end of the book, Hayhoe and Farley ask for a "faith-based response": "Love God, love others, and remember the poor: this was the unwavering mandate of the early church more than two thousand years ago. And this is our solidly biblical motivation for caring about climate change today" (127). Through arguments grounded in their ethos as evangelical Christians, Hayhoe and Farley propose a rearticulation of beliefs wherein care for the planet can be linked to evangelical Christianity.

Other anecdotes reveal Hayhoe as an embodied, emplaced rhetor inventing arguments from within her ethos as an evangelical Christian. Hayhoe's narration in a YouTube video called "Secret: Climate Change Evangelist" begins with the following anecdote:

One of the first times that we went to church in Texas, I met a couple and we were introducing ourselves. They asked, "What do you do?" I explained that I studied global warming. And they said, "Oh, that's wonderful! We need somebody like you to tell our children the right things. You would not believe the lies that they're being taught in school! They told us that the ice in the arctic is melting and it's threatening the polar bears." And I said, "Well, I'm afraid that that's true!" (Nova Science Now)

Viewers see Hayhoe initially claim authority as a churchgoer. "One of the first times we went to church" suggests that attending church is habitual, and Hayhoe alludes to a level of comfort by interacting casually with fellow churchgoers. Hayhoe's embodied presence within that sacred space offers an important opening for invention (Simonson 314). The physical space invites pleasantries between churchgoers who do not know each other, and Hayhoe's embodied presence announces that she inhabits or is interested in inhabiting the same dwelling place as regular attendees. By virtue of the fact that she is attending church, the couple reads Hayhoe as someone who shares their beliefs. And in many ways, she does, albeit with a difference: Hayhoe views climate change as a problem that evangelical Christians should take seriously. When the couple makes a statement to the effect that global warming is a hoax, Hayhoe sees the rhetorical opening and takes it (Crowley 52). She challenges the assumption that climate change is fake and invites a subtle but significant rearticulation of beliefs: evangelical Christians who attend church can and should view climate change as real. Hayhoe is able to do this rhetorical work because she is "equipped" to do so (Crowley 52). An evangelical Christian attending church interacting casually with other churchgoers, Hayhoe's embodied, emplaced positionality invites pleasantries from other churchgoers, which affords her Christian mind the opportunity to invent an argument that calls for a rearticulation of her interlocutor's belief system.

Still other anecdotes demonstrate the extent to which Hayhoe invents arguments from within the complex and "powerful web" of beliefs she inhabits as an evangelical Christian (Bizzell 32). Towards the end of the YouTube video, Hayhoe states the following:

With climate change, much of our response to this issue is emotional. The fear of how our lives would be irrevocably changed if we uprooted our entire economy, and how our rights to enjoy the luxuries of energy and water might be ripped away from us.

Well, as a Christian, we are told that God is not the author of fear. God is love. When we're acting out of fear, we're thinking about ourselves. When we act about love, we are not thinking about ourselves, we are thinking about others. Our global neighbors. The poor and the disadvantaged. The people who do not have the resources to adapt. And so I believe that we are called first of all to love each other, and second of all, to act. (Nova Science Now)

Within the space of a thirty second clip, Hayhoe weaves together a range of beliefs that function as powerful assumptions within evangelical Christian tradition. These assumptions include the beliefs that "God is not the author of fear," that "God is love," that

Christians are “called [...] to love each other,” and that loving one’s neighbors means caring for our “global neighbors.”

Hayhoe’s inventive work reflects the densely articulated evangelical Christian belief system she inhabits, and one way to reveal those articulations is by naming her biblical allusions:

- Mark 12:31-32: “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.’ The second is this: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ No other commandment is greater than these.”
- Luke 6:20: “Looking up at His disciples, Jesus said: ‘Blessed are you who are poor, for yours is the kingdom of God.’”
- 1 Corinthians 14:33 (NKJV): “For God is not the author of confusion but of peace, as in all the churches of the saints.”
- 2 Timothy 1:7: “For the Spirit God gave us does not make us timid, but gives us power, love and self-discipline.”
- 1 John 3:1: “For this is the message you heard from the beginning: We should love one another.”
- 1 John 4:8: “There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment.”
- 1 John 4:16b: “God is love; whoever abides in love abides in God, and God in him.”

Hayhoe’s allusions to these passages would be familiar to an evangelical Christian audience and would resonate with an evangelical audience’s belief systems (Cope and Ringer 119-20; Crowley 78-79). What’s most striking, though, is the manner in which Hayhoe weaves together a wide range of beliefs in a brief argument about why climate change should matter to an evangelical Christian audience. Hayhoe demonstrates in this passage the extent to which her faith reflects the densely articulated evangelical Christian belief system, with the difference that climate change exists and should be taken seriously.

Notably, Hayhoe begins her argument by invoking a sentiment that would elicit an emotional response from an evangelical Christian audience. When Hayhoe states that “God is not the author of fear” but of “love,” she connects her argument directly to the tight braid of affect and judgment shared by evangelical Christians who likely have had the experience of fearing a negative outcome but then finding comfort in God’s promises. Worth noting here is the fact that by beginning with the personal premise—“When *we’re* acting out of fear”—Hayhoe taps into the evangelical Christian belief that what matters most is personal salvation. Hayhoe later shifts from personal salvation to social concerns by listing the “others” who are affected by selfish thinking: “[o]ur global neighbors,” the “poor and the disadvantaged,” and so on. But beginning with her audience’s personal sense of fear, comfort, and connection to the divine is a move that would resonate with an evangelical Christian audience. Finally, Hayhoe indirectly communicates an emotional subtext, one that again would be unavailable to a rhetor who has not inhabited an evangelical Christian ethos. The subtext of Hayhoe’s message is that she understands the experiences of evangelical Christians because she has had similar experiences. As an evangelical Christian, she knows what it means to “act out of fear,” and

she knows what it means “to love each other” and “to act.” Hayhoe’s Christian mind allows her to invent arguments that resonate with her audience’s densely articulated belief system.

Again, a rhetor who does not inhabit an evangelical Christian ethos would be able to invent arguments that draw on similar premises. Crowley, in fact, identifies love as a value that can be used in arguments supporting progressive agendas, and love is clearly featured among the biblical passages listed above (201). However, Crowley also acknowledges that the arguments most likely to resonate within densely articulated belief systems are those that already participate within that belief system. Because Hayhoe has inhabited evangelical Christian communities and thus formed the tight braids of affect and judgment consistent with that tradition, she can invent arguments and articulate openings that resonate within the belief system shared by many evangelical Christians. Hayhoe can draw on the full imaginative and emotional resources of evangelical Christianity in order to invent arguments about the consequences of climate change. Crowley viewed the densely articulated belief systems of evangelical and fundamentalist Christians as impediments to be overcome, but the inventive work of Hayhoe’s evangelical Christian mind leverages those ideologues for deliberative ends.

One scene from *Years of Living Dangerously* illustrates the persuasive potential of Hayhoe’s inventive work. Don Cheadle introduces viewers to Kevin Carter, a resident of Plainview, who is on his way to hear Hayhoe speak at a public forum. Carter tells Cheadle the following:

You’d have to be a little bit crazy not to at least wanna know a little bit more about [what she has to say]. I mean, she certainly to me is somebody is more credible than somebody like Al Gore, if we’re gonna pick on Al Gore, but she has, ah, the same beliefs as I do, as far as from a Christian, you know, base deal.

Carter knows Hayhoe shares his evangelical Christian faith, and her situated ethos predisposes him to listen to what Hayhoe has to say. Using Bauman’s terms, we might describe such ethos at work here as that which preexists rhetorical action (xvi). At the same time, Hayhoe’s message demonstrates the inventive work of her Christian mind, as she again invents arguments from within the ethos she shares with her audience. Hayhoe tells an audience of Plainview residents the following:

What’s happening is we have this natural greenhouse effect here with this natural atmosphere, and we are adding an extra layer to it that was never intended to be there. When I look at the information that we get from the planet, I look at it as God’s creation speaking to us. And in this case, there’s no question that God’s creation is telling us that it is running a fever.

Hayhoe describes earth as “God’s creation” that is speaking back to “us,” which includes Hayhoe and her audience, many of whom, like Carter, espouse some form of Christian faith. In doing so, Hayhoe links to the densely articulated evangelical Christian belief system the idea that care for the planet matters.

That act of articulation appears to work, at least for Carter. After Hayhoe’s talk, Carter says the following: “You know, when you have somebody that believes the same way as you, and is from this part of the—or has lived here for quite awhile and is teach-

ing at Texas Tech—you know, you see that conservative side of that, telling you the message, it sure makes a lot of difference.” Certainly, what Carter references as persuasive is Hayhoe’s situated ethos. But Carter also suggests that Hayhoe’s “message” resonates with him. While it is not clear what Carter means by the “conservative side,” it is possible he’s referring to Hayhoe’s inventive work of articulating arguments about climate change to the densely articulated evangelical Christian belief system he shares. If Carter is persuaded, it possibly results from who Hayhoe is—her “dynamic being-in-the-world” (Simonson 313)—as well as what and how she argues. What is ultimately noteworthy is the fact that Hayhoe’s argument, grounded in her ethos as an evangelical Christian, resonates with Carter. Crowley theorized that densely articulated belief systems would be impervious to change, and that if they did change, then they might unravel. Neither seems to be the case for Carter. Granted, all we have is Carter’s brief response to Hayhoe’s talk, but the initial returns suggest that Hayhoe was able to rearticulate Carter’s belief system in subtle but significant ways without undermining his identity as an evangelical Christian.

Hayhoe thus demonstrates the intellectual work that can best be accomplished by the evangelical Christian mind: inventing arguments from within one’s ethos or dwelling place in ways that resonate with the densely articulated belief systems of other evangelical Christians. While arguments derived from such inventive work do reaffirm existing beliefs, they also ask for a reconsideration of others—in this case, the importance of care for the planet. And the context in which such inventive work takes place is that of ethos-as-dwelling place, the fact that, in this case, Carter and Hayhoe share a common faith and are located in the same geographic region. As such, Hayhoe is able to do what Crowley found elusive, namely open “paths of invention” for addressing the public divide between conservative religious and secular perspectives (201). Because Hayhoe is immersed within the densely articulated belief system of evangelical Christianity, she can speak from within its imaginative and emotional resources in ways that resonate with audiences that traditionally have rejected climate change.

Implications for Rhetorical Education

What implications does the inventive work of Hayhoe’s evangelical Christian mind have for rhetorical education? Hayhoe’s example prompts rhetorical educators to revisit core assumptions about rhetorical education. In recent decades, the purpose of rhetorical education has been to help students communicate effectively across difference (Carter; DePalma; Earle). That goal is a noble one, and I am not suggesting that rhetorical education abandon it. But Bizzell’s question and Hayhoe’s example prompt us to emphasize an aspect of rhetorical education that often goes overlooked, namely that of helping students argue from their own dwelling places to deliberate with likeminded audiences. Doing so would involve asking students to understand a different conception of ethos than that which rhetorical educators generally teach. Instead of promoting ethos as a form of method acting wherein students attempt to seem credible and authoritative about a topic they know little about, rhetorical educators can help students understand ethos in terms of the dwelling places they inhabit. Students developing arguments from within their dwelling places might be well-positioned to produce more compelling writ-

ing than they might otherwise produce. More importantly, they would be well-positioned to work productively within the contemporary constraints of in-group thinking that mark public discourse. Mike DePalma has argued that "rhetorical education must be adapted to address the exigencies of particular cultural and historical moments" (252-53). Given that our current historical moment is marked by in-group thinking that is deeply suspicious of perceived outsiders, it makes sense to equip students to recognize this constraint and leverage it for deliberative ends.

Rhetorical educators can achieve this goal by first introducing students to the two primary conceptions of ethos that Baumlin discusses. This theoretical instruction could focus on the difference between arguing to create an ethos versus arguing from within one's ethos. Using an example like Katharine Hayhoe, instructors could show how rhetors who make arguments for likeminded audiences invent from within their dwelling places. Instructors could also show how a rhetor like Hayhoe serves as an example of someone who espouses the views of a community, but with a difference. She is an evangelical Christian who believes in climate change, and that articulation affords her a line of argument unavailable to many other rhetors. The class could analyze Hayhoe's multimodal and print-based arguments to map her particular belief articulations in order to understand better how her perspectives align with and depart from traditional conceptions of evangelical Christian faith. Students could then be asked to identify a different rhetor who makes arguments for likeminded audiences, conduct their own analyses of that rhetor's work, and share their findings with the class. The object of such a unit would be to help students see whether rhetors who belong to a community hold novel beliefs that can be argued for on the basis of a shared ethos.

After completing those analyses, students could be asked to look inward at the communities to which they belong and the commitments they value. Here, students of faith should be encouraged to explore their faith communities, while students who do not subscribe to a faith could explore political, ideological, or other non-religious commitments. Students could conduct a kind of discourse community analysis wherein they define their community and explore its values. Instructors could then ask students to think about the perspectives they hold that differ from the community norm. To help them understand what these differences may look like, students could be introduced to the concept of vernacular religious creativity, which I define as the negotiations that religiously individuals make in relation to their pluralistic contexts (Ringer 20-35). I have taught this concept in undergraduate rhetoric and writing courses, and in my experience students have little difficulty grasping the concept. They can also readily name perspectives they hold that are not in lockstep with their communities (Ringer 31, 163-64; see also DePalma 256-60). Students could be asked to read Kimberly's case study (Ringer 83-113). While that case study demonstrates a missed opportunity, it also speaks to the possibilities implicit in arguing deliberatively within a community. It also serves as a model for helping students think about their own communities, the belief articulations they hold in common that would resonate with those communities, and the perspectives they hold that differ from what is commonly believed.

Students could then be asked to develop arguments grounded in the dwelling place they share with their community that argues in favor of the different perspective they hold. Like Hayhoe, students should not ignore their positionalities. Instead, they should

speak from the places they inhabit and “own’ their arguments” (Perkins 75). Such ownership would entail writing from the “I” or “we” and locating their arguments clearly within the belief structures shared by the community. Students could develop their arguments using modes, media, and genres best suited to reaching their communities. At the end of *Vernacular*, I discuss a student named Kristen who wrote an open letter to her campus ministry and a personal letter to her pastor wherein she argued for a difference grounded in her ethos as an evangelical Christian. She called on members of her faith communities to rethink their approaches to the LGBTQ community, in part because her brother had just come out as gay. She chose the genres she did because she knew they would help her reach her intended audience, but other situations might call for students to produce social media campaigns, video PSAs, podcasts, infographics, or even sermons.

Certainly, there are risks to asking students to explore their own dwelling places in order to invent arguments. One risk is that the difference students argue for would represent perspectives that forestall rather than promote deliberative discourse. The difference students inhabit might align with positions many rhetorical educators would find repugnant, like white supremacy or anti-Semitism. This concern reflects one I have raised when I observe that vernacular religious creativity can function either to foster or hinder civil discourse, and that we always run the risk of students using what we teach them for purposes with which we disagree (Ringer 161-62). What I argue there pertains here as well: those risks are real, but they are risks we must take. Students can always choose to say or write something offensive or exclusionary, and sometimes instructors need to persuade students of the importance of arguing in ways that promote deliberative discourse. The larger risk as I see it, though, is that by ignoring the creative ways whereby religiously committed students adapt their faith in response to their social contexts, we miss out on the chance to help such students learn how to advocate for new perspectives within their communities. Kimberly was dissuaded from making an argument grounded in her faith, and as a result she was not trained to do the kind of inventive work her Christian mind has positioned her to do. We lost an argument we sorely need.

Another risk is that rhetorical education might become reduced to identity politics wherein evangelical Christians develop arguments for evangelical Christians, political liberals for other political liberals, and so on. This is a fair criticism, and one that the emphasis on in-group thinking within American politics prompts us to consider deeply (Daniell). It seems hard to imagine our democracy surviving if all we do is talk with those who share our beliefs. And yet if rhetoricians perceive the move towards in-group thinking as a constraint emerging from the current socio-political scene, then the question becomes not just how to change the scene, but also how to leverage its constraints for democratic ends. At the current political moment, when issues like climate change threaten our very existence, we would do well to explore every avenue for addressing such problems. While it is certainly not the only means available, one way to do so is by teaching students how to develop arguments from their own dwelling places that advocate for a just and sustainable future. If rhetorical educators can help students learn to argue deliberatively within likeminded communities like Hayhoe does, perhaps we can play a role in breaking down in-group thinking or at least opening lines of communication across groups. While it might be disturbing that Kevin Carter in *Years of Living*

Dangerously would be persuaded by Hayhoe but not by Al Gore when both make the same argument, the fact of the matter is that Hayhoe seems to have changed Carter's mind. Perhaps Carter would be less dismissive of other arguments regarding climate change by virtue of the fact that Hayhoe was able to reach him via shared ethos. And in that regard, Hayhoe seems to have achieved what Crowley seeks: the rearticulation of a densely articulated belief system that might represent a small but significant step toward a better world.

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