

ARCADIA



Special Issue:
High School
Essay Contest Winners
and Freshman Studies Essays

The Journal of the
Catholic Studies Program
Vol. IX—July 2019

Volume IX - July 2019

“ET IN ARCADIA
EGO.”

E D I T O R I A L B O A R D

Msgr. Richard Liddy, Ph.D.
Director, Center for Catholic Studies

Ines Murzaku, Ph.D.
Director, Catholic Studies Program

James P. McGlone, Ph.D.
Professor Emeritus,
College of Communication and the Arts;
Faculty Adviser, Catholic Studies Program

Mrs. Gloria Aroneo, M.B.A.
Administrative Assistant

Maura Grace Harrington Logue, Ph.D.
Editor, *Arcadia*

Illustrations in this issue are by Seton Hall University
student Monet S. Watson.

Front and back cover images are photographs from the
Catholic Studies Spring 2019 Italy trip,
taken by Seton Hall University student Nicole Alves.

Front cover artwork:
Basilica Papale di San Francesco, Assisi

ARCADIA: A Student Journal for Faith and Culture



Arcadia - A Student Journal for Faith and Culture offers a vehicle by which University Undergraduates can contribute to the ongoing "dialogue between the Catholic Intellectual Tradition and all areas of contemporary culture." Special issues showcase the fruits of the Catholic Studies Program's many initiatives. *Arcadia* is published annually at Seton Hall University in South Orange, New Jersey.

Volume IX - July 2019

CONTENTS

How Does a Saint Inspire You to Live the Faith Today?	9
A Constant Call to Holiness by Katharine O'Connor.....	10
The Inspiration of Compassion by Elena Allen.....	12
A Saint at My School by Molly McKenna	14
Introduction to Freshman Studies Essays by Marian Glenn, Ph.D., and Lisa Rose-Wiles, Ph.D....	17
Part 1: Responsible Stewardship Begins at Home.....	21
A Cat Walks Into Your Life by John Crean.....	22
Saving Frogs by Elena Howe	25
Clean up After Your Messes by Kathleen Preis	27
Zig-Zags by Meghan Murphy.....	30

Volume IX - July 2019

A Dedication to Convenience, a Responsibility to Nature by Wesley Kopituk	33
Playground Reflections by Elizabeth DePinto	35
Part 2: Grace and the Wider Community	37
Dishes in the Sink by Annabel Edie von Schickh	38
Trash Talk by Taylor Russell	41
Responsibility as a Call to Action by Alijah Vanterpool	43
Saving Summer Camp by Kellyanne Murphy	46
Saving Killer Whales by Veronica Lomangino	49
A Leap of Faith by Aimee de Blaauw	52
More Than a Simple Cup of Coffee by Michael Durkin	55

ARCADIA: A Student Journal for Faith and Culture

Part 3: Responsibility as a Soul Force.....	59
Expressing Values Through Action by Michael Lewandowski.....	60
Fixing What Is Left by Jessica Grove.....	63
Essay is withdrawn	65
The Buck Stops Here by Elizabeth Kuriakose	68
End the Blame Game by Zainab Ali.....	71
Lost in Technology by MiRae Ryu.....	74
Part 4: The Life You Save May Be Your Own.....	77
History Repeats Itself by Briana Carril.....	78
The World Is Not Too Old and Large to Change by Christine Connelly	81
Cultivating Empathy by Belen Gamarra.....	83

Volume IX - July 2019

A Bridge Between Worlds by Muireann Carmody	85
Leaving Neverland by Arifa Nagim.....	87
References for Freshman Studies Essays	90

How Does a Saint Inspire You to Live the Faith Today?

In 2019, the Catholic Studies Program essay contest invited New Jersey's Catholic High school students to reflect on how one North American Saint or Blessed inspires them. The impressive collection of submitted essays explored the particular qualities of the Saints and Blesseds, revealing keen insights about how they lived holy lives in their specific time and place. Reading these essays is truly inspiring; the submissions show that the Faith is alive and well in New Jersey, being lived out by young people who sincerely desire to follow in the footsteps of saints who trod the same ground we tread today.

The following essays showcase the wisdom and insights of the students of New Jersey's Catholic high schools. The sincerity and hope of these young people reassure us that the 21st century will give us even more great North American saints!

2019 Essay Contest Winners

First Place: Katharine O'Connor –
Immaculate Heart Academy

Second Prizes: Elena Allen –
Koinonia Academy

Molly McKenna –
Academy of Saint Elizabeth

A Constant Call to Holiness

Katharine O'Connor
(First Place)

On January 15, 2000, my older sister Danielle was born. Within minutes of birth, she was in crisis and it was determined she had bacterial pneumonia. Danielle was in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit for almost a week. Even though she was a full-term baby, her chest heaved up and down with every breath. The doctors told my parents that they were doing everything they could, and time would tell if the baby would beat the infection. My grandmother's first cousin Lucita was a religious sister in the Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament. Sister Lucita knew of its founder, now Saint Katharine Drexel, then Blessed Katharine Drexel. Blessed Katharine was in the process of being canonized by the Catholic Church. Katharine was from a wealthy Philadelphia family and influenced by her parents' faith and example. She spent her entire life and fortune helping the American Indians and African Americans in the west, who were afflicted by extreme poverty. Sister Lucita told my grandmother she would pray and leave a note on her grave as Blessed Katharine was entombed in the Church in Philadelphia.

My mother and father prayed constantly for the intercession of Blessed Katharine for Danielle's full recovery. My mom made a promise that if Danielle was healed, and if she were blessed with another daughter, she would name her Katharine. The next morning, after Sister Lucita left her note of intercession, Danielle's pneumonia receded, and the doctors knew she would recover fully. My mom feels that this is one of the miracles that was performed by Katharine. Later that year, Blessed Katharine Drexel became Saint Katharine Drexel, through her canonization by Pope John II. Exactly 2 years after the birth of my sister, I was born. My name is Katharine O'Connor.

Names are reminders of our purpose here on this Earth. Saint Katharine Drexel has been a constant reminder of the life God calls me to live. The love Katharine had for the Lord was stronger than anything else in a world driven by money and power. As well as establishing the Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament, she created 50 missions for Native Americans and founded Xavier University, the first Catholic University in the United States for African Americans (St. Katharine Drexel). While she spent most of her life helping those in

ARCADIA: A Student Journal for Faith and Culture

need, she grew up very wealthy and decided to drop everything to listen to God's call. This choice was selfless, purely done out of love.

Saint Katharine's dedication to service helped thousands of people. Although I was born 47 years too late to actually meet her, she helped my character develop greatly. If I could sum up the great lesson Saint Katharine's life has taught me, it would be to let my faith drive my life. She has inspired me to take my struggles, worries, and fears and place them in God's hands. After all, His plan for us is far greater than we could ever imagine. Luckily, God gave me a glimpse of His plan the very second I was born: through my name. Every time I see it printed at the top of a page or hear it said by a friend, I am reminded of the impact one woman had on this world.

Reference

"St. Katharine Drexel - Saints & Angels." *Catholic Online*. Retrieved from www.catholic.org/saints/saint.php?saint_id=193.

The Inspiration of Compassion

Elena Allen
(Second Prize)

Everyone needs help in life. Whether for serious struggles or if one just needs a little encouragement, everyone at one point in life needs someone to turn to, someone who inspires them. While most people would choose a celebrity, a sibling, or some relative, the people who inspire me are the saints. There are many saints whom I look up to or admire, but Saint Katharine Drexel in particular is an inspiration to me.

Saint Katharine Drexel grew up in a healthy, positive, and Catholic environment. She was born in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, on November 26, 1858 to a very wealthy family. Her father, Francis Drexel, was a banker and a faithful Catholic. Her mother died a few weeks after Katharine was born. A few years later, Katharine's father married Emma Bouvier. Together, Katharine's parents raised her and her two sisters as educated, faithful, and obedient children. They were taught by the finest private tutors and grew to have a love for learning. Katharine grew up to be an excellent example of a good passionate Christian, and she never let her money affect her way of living or being. After watching her stepmother suffer from terminal cancer for three consecutive years and pass away, she learned what it meant to feel pain and sorrow. She learned that no amount of money could save her and her family from suffering. After her stepmother's death, Katharine devoted her life to loving God and spreading His love to others. She especially became interested in doing so by taking care of the material and spiritual needs of black and native Americans.

Years later, after her father had passed as well, she took her religious vows and became a nun. She started an order called the Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament for Indians and Colored. She then helped found the first mission boarding school called St. Catherine's Indian School in Santa Fe, New Mexico. Soon, she opened other schools for Native Americans and African Americans across the country. In 1915, Katharine founded the first Catholic university for African Americans in the United States: Xavier University in New Orleans. When Katharine died, she had more than 500 Sisters teaching in 63 schools across the country. Unfortunately, Katharine suffered a heart attack at the age of 77, forcing her to retire. She

ARCADIA: A Student Journal for Faith and Culture

spent the rest of her life in intense prayer and died on March 3, 1955.

Saint Katharine was most well known for her love of the Eucharist and the unity and equality for all people. Her story and life really inspire me and are so encouraging to me because she shows not only the importance of love of God but also the love of His people. I have realized over the past few years how much I love unity, friendships, fellowships, and truthfully just Communion in Christ, and I realize that she really loved that, too. Every year, I go to a summer camp, and one night we have Adoration where everyone has their arms around each other and are singing out and giving their all to the Lord, despite their differences. That is one of the highlights of my year, simply because of my love of the Eucharist and how God brings us all together through His body, blood, soul, and divinity. Saint Katharine Drexel clearly had that same love through the way she brought all people together, no matter the amount of money they had or the color of their skin, to worship and learn about the Lord.

Another way Saint Katharine Drexel inspires me is by her passion for knowledge and using that knowledge not only in secular ways but also in spiritual ways. I think God has given me a natural love of knowledge. I have always loved learning, reading, and wondering. I believe Saint Katharine had that same love. She inspires me to use my knowledge and love of learning for good. Her example shows me how I can use my knowledge and wonder not only for my own gain, but to help others as well.

Saint Katharine Drexel was an amazing woman who loved God with all her strength, mind, heart, and soul. She devoted her life to caring for everyone, despite their differences. Her life inspires me even now because of her love of Christ, unity, and knowledge. She showed many her compassion and care, and through her example, today she inspires many more to do as she did.

A Saint at My School

Molly McKenna
(Second Prize)

I resolved to enter this contest thinking it would be quick—just skim through a Wikipedia page and bang out a few hundred words. It wouldn't be hard for me to pick a saint, for my mother and all six of her siblings were named for saints, and I even go to a school named for a saint. All I had to do was throw a proverbial dart and choose one.

I cast a glance at the list of saints provided to us. The obvious choice would have been Elizabeth Ann Seton, but I've always been one for making things more difficult than they need to be. I landed on Blessed Sister Miriam Teresa—a choice which contradicted my original resolution, for she was not a saint I could name by glancing up at my family tree or down at my uniform shirt. Regardless, there was something about her which struck a chord with me. This was a child of immigrants, like my grandmother; a girl with six older siblings, like my mother, who taught at the very school which I now attend and who studied the very subject which I wish to pursue to the highest degree I can.

She had mousy brown hair, rounded spectacles, and an intelligent gaze which seemed to surpass the limits of the screen. There was a lack of information about her on the internet, but that wasn't a hurdle I hadn't jumped before. I decided to search for her book, and that morning I stepped off the train determined to venture into my school's seldom-used library and inquire about it. As the train pulled out of the station and the white bell tower came into view over the trees, the early morning sun glinting off the golden cross atop it, I found myself wondering what Miriam Teresa thought the first time she saw that tower, a full century ago now.

As it happened, my principal had a copy of the book in her office and was willing to lend it to me. The book advertises itself on the cover as "a means of achieving union with God through prayer," and I think that in and of itself describes why Miriam Theresa speaks to me. She did something so seemingly simple, and yet here I am a century later, seeing her name with "blessed sister" attached to it. It inspires me that "greater perfection," as she calls it, really is that attainable. She asserted that "to find this perfect life, you have only

ARCADIA: A Student Journal for Faith and Culture

to keep the ways of the Lord,” and never has something encouraged me to practice my faith more.

Sometimes the deeds of saints seem so monumental as to make your actions seem piddly at best. While we should celebrate the people who give their lives to improve those of others, for truly, those who do should be hailed as heroes, not everyone has the means to make such contributions. This is why I find the life of Miriam Teresa more inspiring than that of any other saint, for she makes being a good Catholic seem so much more achievable. Miriam Teresa shows that the day-to-day ways in which a person practices his faith, no matter how negligible they may seem, are just as significant.

More than that, there's just something about Miriam Teresa that makes her seem so much more real. Maybe it's that she walked the same halls down which I meander daily. Perhaps she too became winded traipsing up and down those abominable stairs, or had classes interrupted by the blowing of a train's horn, or scolded girls for pushing their socks down. She certainly impacted on the school, as I realized some days after beginning this essay that there is a portrait of her hanging in the front hall. I was strolling down the hallway when I passed the portrait I had passed dozens of times before. I read the name "Teresa," but it didn't register until after I passed the portrait, at which point I froze and backtracked like a cartoon character. It was she indeed, Sister Miriam Teresa, gazing out from behind her round spectacles with a book in her hand. I pass that picture every day, but it's become something more than what it was. It's a promise—a promise of a chance to achieve something bigger than myself, though I never really thought myself capable. That is how this ordinary girl with her Harry Potter glasses and writing flair has inspired me to live my faith today.

Volume IX - July 2019

Introduction to Freshman Studies Essays

Marian Glenn, Ph.D., and Lisa Rose-Wiles, Ph.D.

“We must never forget that the natural environment is a collective good, the patrimony of all humanity and the responsibility of everyone.” Pope Francis

At Seton Hall University, each incoming first-year class is assigned a book to read over the summer, and Freshman Studies sponsors an essay contest about the book. The summer reading for 2018 was *Coming of Age at the End of Nature: A New Generation Faces Life on a Changed Planet*, a collection of essays by 22 young writers “belonging to a generation that grew to maturity inundated with news and personal experiences of unprecedented environmental change” (Dunlap & Cohen, p. xi).

This special issue of *Arcadia* contains 24 essays written in response to the following prompt:

In *Coming of Age at the End of Nature: A Generation Faces Living on a Changed Planet*, James Orbesen writes:

“Weren’t children instructed, over and over, by their elders to pick up their toys and to clean their room? Those lessons came from some deep-seated impulse of taking responsibility for messes and spills” (58). Describe a time in your own life when you challenged yourself and/or others to take responsibility for your/their own messes and spills. Based upon your experience of trying “[to take] responsibility for messes and spills”—and making connections to the perspectives from two or three of the essays from the book—develop your own idea about what taking responsibility means. Respond in an essay of 2-3 typed pages.

This topic is particularly timely in view of the escalating environmental crisis. The call for personal and collective environmental responsibility is clearly articulated in Pope Francis’s encyclical, *Laudato Si: On Care for Our Common Home*, and an understanding of Nature, all things created by God, is fundamental to the Catholic Intellectual Tradition.

The environmental crisis also resonates with Jesuit theologian Bernard Lonergan’s cultural sequence of progress—decline—redemption. In his mammoth work *Insight: A Study of Human Understanding*, first published in 1957, Lonergan describes progress,

Volume IX - July 2019

decline, and redemption as a “tripolar dialectic of history” (Lonergan, 1992, p. 749). Mark T. Miller, associate professor of systematic theology at the University of San Francisco and the inaugural Toth-Lonergan endowed visiting professor at Seton Hall University, explains this eloquently in his book, *The Quest for God and the Good Life: Lonergan’s Theological Anthropology*. In particular, he recasts the typical bipolar way of thinking about good and evil to include the concept of redemption through the goodness of Grace, actuated through the direct action of people. “Lonergan sought a comprehensive philosophy of history that would do justice to these elements in order to ground an authentic Christian praxis, and to promote transformative progress on a global level” (Miller, 2013, p. xiii).

The current environmental crisis seems to us to be a product of progress and decline, and the solution lies in the concept of redemption—and of God’s Grace, actuated through people, that brings redemption. As Mark Miller (2013) explains, “while redemption is intensely personal, it is not merely an individual affair—it takes place in and through a Graced community” (p. xv). Many of the essays written by our young Seton Hall scholars emphasize personal and/or communal responsibility. While the action of Grace is not explicitly referenced, it seems to us that it permeates their responses and transforms them into acts of redemption, despite the fact that the current “mess” (decline) is not of their own making. Responsibility as redemption is the common theme among the 24 essays that we selected for publication.

We undertook this project both as environmentally concerned educators and as GEM fellows of Seton Hall University’s Praxis Program of the Advanced Seminar on Mission. Initiated in spring 2013, the Praxis Program is sponsored by Seton Hall University’s Center for Vocation and Servant Leadership (CVSL), the Center for Catholic Studies, and the Bernard J. Lonergan Institute. The program focuses on Lonergan’s Generalized Empirical Method (GEM) as an effective way to analyze and apply the mission of the University to academic disciplines and professions. As a cognitive framework for reflective thought and intelligent decision-making, “GEM also leads to questions of meaning, community, progress and decline in history, religion and revelation” (Praxis, n.d.).

As the project unfolded, we realized that the essays should be published, and we sought a partner with a suitable publishing venue.

ARCADIA: A Student Journal for Faith and Culture

We were delighted to receive enthusiastic support from the [Department of Catholic Studies](#) at Seton Hall, along with an invitation to publish in this special issue of *Arcadia*. We gratefully acknowledge the support and assistance of Dr. Ines Murzaku (founding director of the Department of Catholic Studies), Dr. Maura Grace Harrington Logue (*Arcadia* editor), and Gloria Aroneo, M.B.A. We are confident that this is the beginning of a long and fruitful partnership, and we hope to continue publishing selected first year-essays in the future.

The essays are presented in four sections. “Responsible Stewardship Begins at Home” includes six essays, each set within a family. *Grace and the Wider Community* extends responsibility beyond the family, and includes the essay contest winner, “Saving Summer Camp” by Kellyanne Murphy. The seven essays in “Responsibility as a Soul Force” examine responsibility as personal redemption. This section includes the two runner-up essay contest winners, “Expressing Values Through Action” by Michael Lewandowski and “Fixing What Is Left” by Jessica Grove. The fourth section, quoting Dorothy Day, *The Life You Save May Be Your Own*, includes five essays about taking responsibility to redeem human misfortune. We are delighted by the illustrations, and gratefully acknowledge the talented artist, Monet S. Watson. Monet is an Anthropology, Sociology, and Philosophy triple major with a passion for art and illustration. She used Paint Tool SAI to create the illustrations included in this journal and hopes that the essays are as moving for the readers as they are for her.

References

- Dunlap, J., & Cohen, S. A. (Eds.). (2006). *Coming of age at the end of nature: A generation faces living on a changed planet*. San Antonio, TX: Trinity University Press.
- Lonergan, B. J. F. (1992). *Insight: A study of human understanding*. F. Crowe & R. Doran (Eds.). Toronto: University of Toronto Press.
- Miller, M. (2013). *The quest for God & the good life: Lonergan's theological anthropology*. Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press.
- Pope Francis (2015). *Laudato Si': On care for our common home* (encyclical). Retrieved from http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco_20150524_enciclica-laudato-si.html
- Praxis Program of Advanced Seminar on Mission. Retrieved from <https://www.shu.edu/vocation-servant-leadership/praxis-program-of-advanced-seminar-on-mission.cfm>

Part 1:
Responsible Stewardship
Begins at Home

A Cat Walks Into Your Life

John Crean

When I first read about the topic for this essay I began to think about responsibility, and I came to the conclusion that responsibility can be broken down into two categories: personal responsibility and duty. Personal responsibility can be defined as taking responsibility for your own actions, such as accepting punishment when you break rules. Duty can be defined as responsibility that is taken by choice, such as becoming a police officer and now being responsible for upholding the law. Thinking about responsibility made me come to the conclusion that I wouldn't go so far as to call myself a responsible person; however, I am willing to take responsibility for my actions to a degree that others might not. As far as the second category of responsibility is concerned, I haven't taken on many responsibilities in life, but I'm sure that as I grow older, my responsibilities will increase.

Coming of Age at the End of Nature: A Generation Faces Living on a Changed Planet is about how a generation is dealing with the responsibility of cleaning and preserving our planet. What's strange about the responsibility of taking care of our planet is that rather than being responsible for our actions we are responsible for the actions of past generations; it's a duty that we did not opt into but cannot ignore or opt out of.

I began to think about the strangeness of a duty that one didn't choose, and two things came into my mind: Spider-Man and my pets. As a child I was a big Spider-Man fan. Spider-Man's uncle tells him: With great power comes great responsibility. People often take on power through choices they make: they choose to be a police officer, or they chose to become a parent; but in Spider-Man's case his powers were thrust upon him, only Spider-Man can stop the super-villains that plague New York City, and if he chooses not to, it would be morally wrong of him. Even though this sounds rather cheesy, we have the power to protect the Earth and therefore we have the responsibility to protect it.

I thought of my pets because although I didn't ask for them, I still have to take care of them, or suffer consequences. Although I like my dogs and cats, my sister was the one who wanted them; yet I'm the one stuck with feeding them and letting them outside each day.

ARCADIA: A Student Journal for Faith and Culture

If I wanted to I could just not feed them and not let them outside, but it would be morally wrong of me, and I'm sure my parents would punish me. In comparison to the entire planet falling apart and everyone dying, I'm sure that my parents grounding me seems rather low stakes but the fact that I must take care of my pets even if I don't want to is comparable to how we must take care of the Earth even if we don't want to.

An example of me taking responsibility is when my family took in a stray cat and I was the one who ended up taking care of her. When I was around 11 or 12 a cat began to show up in my family's yard and at first, she refused to go near anyone and would just watch us from behind trees and rocks. Being young and never having owned a cat before, I took this opportunity to try and get closer to her, and after a while she would let me feed and pet her. My parents weren't as keen on getting a cat as my sister and I were, but anything can be accomplished with enough begging and guilt tripping. The cat made a close connection with me because I was spending the most time with her, but the problem with being the only person that the cat likes is that much of the cat-related responsibility falls to you. As winter began, I was able to coax her into the basement, and I now had even more responsibility for the cat. Figuring out what kind of food she likes and where I can and cannot pet her without being attacked took some time, but it was worth it because not only do I now have a cat, but I get to lord it over my sister how she likes me more than her. So, now I have the responsibility of taking care of a cat, but at the same time the joy of owning an animal.

I felt my own experiences were related to those described by Abby McBride in the essay "To Love an Owl" in that they both involve animals. However, they are opposite in the way our reactions would affect the animals. By becoming involved with my domestic cat I was helping her, but for McBride the opposite was true: the more she became involved with watching the owl, a wild animal, the more at risk she put it. "Two days later, we read on the email list that it had died" (McBride, 2016, p.53). Like my cat, the owl was sick and wounded, but she couldn't get involved due to her lack of knowledge and the risk the owl, a wild animal, posed to her. McBride felt responsible for the owl's death because she couldn't do anything to help and because people took advantage of its state to take pictures they couldn't easily get otherwise. Where I had the ability to help, McBride didn't; she felt that the animal was being taken advantage of and she wasn't able to help it.

I could also relate my personal experience to the essay “The Lives of Plovers” by Sierra Dicky. Both of our experiences relate to animals; however, hers is on a much larger scale as she was fighting for a large population of birds and I was trying to convince my parents to allow me to take in a single cat. “In 2010, conservationists and citizen ornithologists—the people who worry most about plovers—had their concerns confirmed by national news: the birds’ winter hideaways would be among the first areas to get sloshed with oil from the deep-water horizon spill” (Dicky, 2016, p. 147). The animals these people were fighting to protect could go extinct because of human meddling. This relates to my experience because my cat had previous owners who abandoned her in an unfamiliar area. Obviously, the life of a single cat is not as important as an entire species of birds, but we both had to react to the actions of other people putting animals at risk.



Saving Frogs

Elena Howe

I've lived my whole life in a suburb of St. Paul, Minnesota, where my siblings and I experienced the joyous extremes of each season. The crisp, fresh air in autumn; the smells and sounds of flowers being pollinated in the spring; the treacherous tundra that makes Minnesota winters; and our favorite, summer, full of blue popsicle-stained tongues, tanned skin, and playing outdoors.

With four kids and no cable TV, my parents practically shoved us out the door right after breakfast in the summer. We tried to find new ways to entertain ourselves, and each other, by playing new games or exploring uncharted territory in our neighborhood. However, we did have some staple favorite activities that we routinely enjoyed. We would swim in the backyard and play the "tee" game.

The concept of the game was simple; someone would squeeze a golf tee in between their big and second toes, jump off the diving board, and drop the golf tee at the bottom. They would swim out and join the rest of us waiting for it to float up so we could screech, "TEE!" and jump into the water, confidently reaching out to grab it. If I didn't get it on my first jump, my strategy was to splash around it while still in the water to give myself time to hop out and try again. The only things that interrupted our intense competitions were our mom calling us in for chores, or storms, or frogs.

The frogs would hop from the ponds and lakes around our neighborhood and we would find them in our pool. Sometimes they were alive, but more often than not we found them floating face down in our skimmers. When we were younger, the shock of dead animals in the same space where we were playing was upsetting. However, as we got older, we got more comfortable with the circle of life. When we found frogs still swimming in the pool, we would let them go, but somehow they always ended up right back in the harsh chlorinated water. So we made a home for them.

Thinking about, "But it's even more than just simple appreciation,"

Volume IX - July 2019

in the essay “Could Mopping Save the World? How Day-to-Day Chores Can Bring Big Change” (Schosid, 2016, p. 102) led me to the realization that by caring for these frogs we were building a community and connecting nature with ourselves. We cared about the frogs and did what we could to help them stay alive. We emptied out my old crab-shaped sandbox and filled it with everything we could imagine that a frog might need, water, grass, leaves, and toys. We played with them and thought we were keeping them safe from our pool. When it started getting too hot to keep them in the sandbox, we brought them back to the lake down the street, so they could have a better chance of survival. As the years progressed, we still played with frogs and cared for them; however, the number of dead frogs in the skimmers was ten times greater than the number swimming in the water next to us.

I’ve never looked into the reason why there were substantially more dead frogs than live ones, but I do know that each summer we would look at the weather to help us decide what we were going to do that day. The temperatures kept getting hotter each year, so we started spending more and more of our time in the pool and in the air conditioning, doing chores. If we couldn’t handle the heat and humidity some days, how could the tiny frogs? The saddest days were when we found them dead and melted into the street.

As we’ve all grown up and gone to school, we have passed on our frog loving tradition to our 5- and 7-year-old cousins. I closely connect this with Henry David Thoreau’s journal entry in the introduction to *Coming of Age at the End of Nature*: “All things in this world must be seen with the morning dew on them. Must be seen with youthful early-opened hopeful eyes” (Dunlop & Cohen, 2016, p. 11). When my siblings and I first encountered the frogs in our pool, we were hopeful and excited to help them. As we grew up our excitement for the frogs changed, but hopefully we can pass on our interest and love for the frogs to our cousins. I wonder how the ratio of dead frogs to live frogs will change as they grow up. Probably drastically, with how hot the temperatures are getting, but hopefully my cousins will be able to endure the heat and still get to experience the joys of the “tee” game and playing with frogs.

Clean up After Your Messes

Kathleen Preis

We are told at a young age to “clean up after ourselves” and to remain respectful of our surroundings. Even when we are not home, in other places we always hear, “Is this how you treat your home?” These are two statements that coincide with each other, but their meanings change as we grow. Mother Earth is good to us—she feeds us, shelters us, and keeps us safe from the open terrain we have come to know as space. The question becomes: If Earth is our home, then why do we not treat it the same way as our houses? The focus for *Coming of Age at the End of Nature: A Generation Faces Living on a Changed Planet* is the changing of the planet, the horrors Mother Earth had to face from the past generations and ours, and how we can change the fate of our beloved home. Each essay within the book gives a different and refreshing insight to the wonders of the world and the role we play in the Earth’s welfare.

My Hometown

I grew up in the borough of Staten Island. Sadly, my home borough has a reputation that always comes to everyone’s minds once I say the name—the garbage dump. It is true that Staten Island used to be the garbage dump for New York City, but what some people don’t know, and that I only learned a few years ago, is that my borough used to be known for agriculture. Whether you believe me or not, the question turns into: Then how did an island that was a big farm colony turn into the most proclaimed disgusting place in the state? There are some answers, including the economy, legislative laws, and other factors that play a role in using this island as a dump. However, I think the result is right in front of us: humans don’t take care of what is around them.

The Hippie

When I was younger, an ecologist came to my school to give the normal speech about how we should take care of the Earth. They talked about how the Earth was basically failing, and the little things that we do every day contribute to it. Most of my peers hated this and saw it as a waste of time, but I left with a different view. I wanted to show my family a way of living that would positively impact the Earth. With that, we started recycling regularly and at-

Volume IX - July 2019

tempted to use eco-friendly things whenever we could. Although the ecologist was a catalyst for my interests in the welfare for the Earth, the presentation also helped me to change my view on the possibilities of humans. We are not as small as we think, nor are we as weak as we believe. Look around and see the cities, communities, monuments, even countries that humans have built. Yet, we have the audacity to say we do not have the strength to save our home. There are small things that we can do to help give our mother strength to get through another day.

Take Responsibility

As defined by the English Oxford Dictionary, the word responsibility means “a moral obligation to behave correctly towards or in respect of” (Oxford University Press, 2018). This does not just go for people; it holds for our relationship with everything. Yes, this even includes the Earth.

Our Nature

In Amy Coplen’s (2016) “Tamale Tradition” the idea of community is very well expressed: “By community, I mean a sense of place, a bond with people, and a connection to nature. I believe we cannot have one without the other, for we make up our place. We are nature” (p. 89). The beauty of word choice shows the passion within the truth that it is in our nature to be one with nature. To take responsibility for the caretaking of Earth is to be there through thick and thin.

Our Mistakes

In the Christian religion, it is made very clear that we were not, are not, nor ever will be perfect. For this instance, the emphasis should be put on the “were.” “Post-Nature Writing” by Blair Braverman and “But I’ll Still Be Here” by James Orbesen both speak of the negligence of past generations: Our predecessors never promised to make the world perfect for the next generation. However, they also never promised to help us clean up the mess they made. As Braverman (2016) stated, “I am a grandchild, an infant when Bill McKibben declared in 1989 that humans had ‘stepped over the threshold’ to the end of nature, and nobody has ever apologized to me” (pp. 6-7). Orbesen (2106) said something similar, “Why should my generation be left to clean up the mistakes of our parents and grandpar-

ARCADIA: A Student Journal for Faith and Culture

ents?” (p. 58). The past generations did damage to the Earth, but even if they did work to try to correct their mistakes, the actions of corporations damaged the land further. Instead of the next generations being left with the job of fixing the Earth, we should take the lesson of community and work together to better the world.

Our Changes

The way we perceive the world has changed over the years, but we still do not see eye to eye. In that same way, the way we want to save the world differs as well. The barricades we have made to force nature away from us are tumbling down whether we like it or not. We must face our mistakes and make the change that our Earth needs—this is truly what taking responsibility means.

Conclusion

Communal acceptance of our mistakes, as well as the acceptance of our situation, is what responsibility is. The idea of us making a change is not throwing things into windows or yelling on tumblr about how terrible this world is. Peaceful groups that clean up messes will be heard louder than tweets. We need to make a serious difference within this world here and now.

Zig-Zags

Meghan Murphy

I am supposed to be writing an essay about how I have challenged myself or others to take responsibility, but as I stared at a blank sheet of paper while trying to formulate a list in my head, all I could think of were all the times I have failed at holding myself to a certain accountability. However, I think that there is a certain importance of failure that helps create a definition of responsibility and accountability that I have been slow to learn over the years. Failure as a whole is essential to any type of learning, though there needs to be some sort of lesson learned in order for it to be effective. This book has become my lesson, and this essay my loose collection of thoughts to hopefully spur myself into the important action of living a “greener” way of life.

I have been learning about global warming and climate change ever since I could comprehend what these phrases meant. When I was younger, we would spend a few days or a week in class talking about pollution and littering, and I would always be concerned for about a day or so, creating posters with my friends advertising the concept of Reduce, Reuse, Recycle and urging people to stop and pick up their trash. However, I would ultimately end up forgetting what I had learned a few days later, these posters getting pushed under my bed and accumulating dust. As I got older, the idea of a global climate change was impressed more heavily upon me, with more daunting statistics and a desperate plea for a universal lifestyle change. During my senior year, I learned that the meat production industry was not only inhumane slaughtering animals, but also using huge amounts of our precious fresh water supply. Upon hearing this, my sister and I decided to go vegetarian, to try to do our part to “save the planet.” We cracked after about a month, when a plate of our dad’s famous steaming hot chicken wings were placed in front of us at dinner. By this time, over a month had passed since learning the disturbing fact about the meat industry, and we were craving wings.

When I think about this, I think about a concept that stood out to me from the essay “We are the Fossil-Fueled Freedom Fighters” where Bonnie Frye Hemphill (2016) discusses the concept of the Earth being “too big to fail” (162). Through our own dissonance, we convince ourselves that the Earth is stronger than we are, that

ARCADIA: A Student Journal for Faith and Culture

there is too much depending on it, and therefore it cannot fail. We find comfort in the “not-knowing” of things, and we allow ourselves continue living the lifestyle we were living before we were given the knowledge to change.

During the past year, I spent five weeks alternating between living in and just outside of Cape Town, South Africa. During the time I was there, this city was experiencing an intense drought, and just weeks after I returned home it was predicted that Cape Town would be the first major city to run completely out of water. During the time I was there, water conservation was at the forefront of my mind; everything I did revolved around using as little water as possible. I took impossibly short showers, always turning the water off while washing my hair or body; washed the dishes without rinsing each dish in between; and flushed the toilet as little as possible. I did these things because I had to, because the place that I was currently living was running out of the one thing I needed to live. However, when I returned home to New Jersey, it seemed like everything about water conservation vanished from my mind. This was no longer an issue that was affecting my immediate future; therefore, it was back to twenty-minute showers and leaving the water running while brushing my teeth. In the essay “Tamale Traditions,” Amy Coplen (2016) explains that “Our physical distance from production processes enables us to ignore the social, political, and economic causes of environmental degradation” (p. 162). In other words, if the issue is not immediately affecting us, it is extremely easy to forget about the affects it has not only on other countries but also on our impending futures.

I’ve been thinking a lot lately about how I have failed to hold myself accountable for the Earth’s climate change and the global warming that is taking place. I have been making more conscious efforts to do even the small things, though I constantly fear I will slip into the comfort of plastic and paper once again. Our planet is so unique, and whether you are religious or not it’s hard to argue against Earth being some kind of miracle. Though I have not done a good job holding myself accountable for the sustainability of this planet in the past, reading *Coming of Age at the End of Nature, A Generation Faces Living on a Changed Planet* has really changed my point of view.

I think one of the most influential things I read in this book was in the second to last essay, “Could Mopping Save the World?,” in

Volume IX - July 2019

which Emily Schosid (2016) describes the Lama group and says, “... they have created a place where it seems like the greatest possible tragedy would be the end of that place” (p. 206). That is what our planet should be to everyone who inhabits it, because truly the greatest possible tragedy *would be* the complete and utter destruction of Earth. My failures are hard to think about, but that in itself is a good thing, and my reflecting on them here has made me that much more inspired to learn from my past and continue to do better in the future. Taking responsibility is greater than just putting in effort when it’s convenient or imperative, but instead it’s coming together as a community on all levels to do our part and hold each other accountable for the preservation and protection of our home.

A Dedication to Convenience, a Responsibility to Nature

Wesley Kopituk

In today's society, the concepts of "convenience" and "environmental responsibility" no longer go hand in hand. While *Coming of Age at the End of Nature: A Generation Faces Living on a Changed Planet* has a strong message of environmental responsibility, another message hidden throughout the text is evident. This hidden message is the power that convenience holds over maintaining responsibility towards the environment. A quote from Emily Schosid's (2016) chapter "Could Mopping Save the World" represents this message perfectly: "They reduce, reuse, and recycle all they can. But...these things just aren't at the top of the priority list" (p. 199).

"Comfort, the enemy of progress," words spoken by P.T. Barnum in the 2017 film *The Greatest Showman*, reiterate this concept quite well: convenience finds itself the enemy of responsibility. It is easier to live blissfully in a society built upon abusing the environment to achieve convenience than to change our habits and live environmentally responsibly.

Growing up, every Monday night was a lesson in environmental responsibility's importance over convenience. Ever since I can remember, Monday night was the night when my parents and I would go through the house sorting out the recyclables from the trash waste and placing the articles into different bags. I remember as a young child I would wonder why we had to spend time sorting our waste instead of simply throwing it all together and getting the job done quicker. Before I could ask such a question, my parents were always quick to explain why completing this task is so important.

As I sorted out the plastics and papers my parents would explain to me that the Earth is fragile, and humans are its caretaker. In the same way, humans are dependent upon the Earth, and the Earth provides for our needs. If the Earth is damaged, so are we. These words, so simple yet so powerful, have stuck with me my whole life. In the chapter "We are the Fossil-Fuel Freedom Fighters" Bonnie Frye Hemphill (2016) writes: "People used to take security in the way things were because the world seemed too big and too old to change... The world was too big and old; we were too small and soft" (p. 162). This type of careless attitude that Hemphill speaks of

Volume IX - July 2019

is the type of attitude my parents fought to teach against. The world is not too big and not too old to be damaged by its caretaker.

Unfortunately, many of the world's population, myself included, choose to favor convenience over environmental responsibility. Every Monday I still sort through the recyclable waste and attempt to show concern for the environment, yet every day I drive a gas-powered vehicle, buy the products that I want, and use electricity and water resources carelessly. To truly begin to reverse the environmental damage being done, humanity must first prioritize environmental responsibility over convenience. While this is often an uphill battle and a seemingly insurmountable challenge, it is possible. "We who have come of age after the end of nature know that we have inherited damaged goods. But we're strong and we're smart, and we can and will rebuild" (Hemphill, 2016, p.170).

Playground Reflections

Elizabeth DePinto

The shade under the slide has become my only comfort in this scorching weather. The heatwave is only supposed to last a week, but it makes every minute at work nearly unbearable. I am a summer camp counselor at my old elementary school. I took part in this same camp that the kids I watch over are currently partaking in. The hallways, the gym, and the cafeteria are all the same: same paint colors, same smell, same feel. While kids run around me, my mind wanders, and I wonder how hot the world could get before we could not roam outside any longer.

It is easy to be disillusioned about changes going on in the world when your own surroundings stay the same. My family never travels much outside of New Jersey, and my part-time summer jobs rarely bring me outside of town. At first, I had trouble understanding how environmental changes could be so drastic around the world. Had nobody noticed? Why was nobody cleaning it up? Being an only child has effectively enforced the idea of cleaning up any mess all by itself. Did I leave my room a mess? Yes. Did I spill my drink all over the floor? Yes. Did I leave a bunch of trash on the side of the road where I walk my dog? No. Will I be the one responsible for cleaning it all up? Yes. It was always as simple as that for me, but the eight-year-old kids in my camp group have had very different experiences. Getting them to clean up, especially when the juice box on the ground is not their juice box, is a huge ordeal.

Out on the playground, I have seen countless kids spit out gum on the ground and let their wrappers fly away in the wind. This led to the first connection I felt to *Coming of Age at the End of Nature*. In the first essay, "Post-Nature Writing," Blair Braverman (2016) explains that "[a girl had] spit her gum into a bush during recess... and the teacher...took an opportunity to teach an afternoon lesson on littering" (p. 6). When I asked my camp kids why they littered, they explained that the thirty-foot walk to the trashcan was just too far. I know that my speech about why they should clean up after

Volume IX - July 2019

themselves and taking responsibility will not change them forever; as an eight-year-old, thinking about the world itself is too broad of a thought. How can I tell them that the fate of the world will be resting in their hands?

There is also a girl who loves bees and all the animals she has ever seen, but mostly bees. She wants to become a veterinarian and save all the animals in the world, but I think she should look into conservation, too. I asked her if she knew about the “save the bees” campaign and what she thought about it. In simple words she said, “Bees help us live so yes, we should save the bees.” Just then, another girl looked her in the eye and stepped on a bee. A light scolding and lecture put things back into place between the two girls, but the bee will never come back and that is a tragedy; we rarely realize that even the smallest choices that we make now could be the things to drastically change the future.

I get it: coming to terms with reality can be hard. It can feel like hitting a brick wall which, from my experience, really hurts—but it is necessary. Not only does each person need to come to terms with all their personal “baggage” but humanity needs to come to terms with baggage it places on the Earth; taking responsibility means owning up to the mess you left behind or took part in, even at the global scale. Is it too idealistic for everyone to care about their impact on others? Maybe so. As Elizabeth Cooke (2016) said in “Why Haiti,” “I’m struck by the yawning gap that exists between ambitious, world-changing visions and the backbreaking, tedious work required to realize them” (p. 14). Most people do want the world to change, but the steps required to reverse our actions are extremely daunting. So, as Alycia Parnell gracefully stated in “Sunset at Mile 16,” “Here is a story to break your heart” (p. 119). At some point in time, the kids at camp will be the adults creating the story of the future, and I will be wondering if I taught them enough about picking up their gum wrappers and saving the bees.

ARCADIA: A Student Journal for Faith and Culture

Part 2:
Grace and the Wider Community

Dishes in the Sink

Annabel Edie von Schickh

How often did someone tell you to take responsibility for your actions or their outcomes? I bet it has been too many times to even start to count. When I was younger, and I made a mess, my parents used to tell me that because I did whatever I did I also had to act and clean up the mess I made. I never asked myself what taking responsibility really meant—to be honest, I just cleaned up after myself because I didn’t want my parents to get mad at me. That’s certainly not what “taking responsibility” means, but then, what is it and why is it so necessary?

At age twelve, I changed schools to a boarding school 2 hours away from home. It was my first time moving out of home. At first, I thought of endless sleepovers with my friends—not going to bed until I wanted to, eating as many sweets as I could, and watching television. In short, I thought, I could do only things I wanted and nothing else. Soon I started to realize it wasn’t as easy as I’d thought. By having the freedom to decide about certain things, responsibility came along. There is one situation I experienced a lot throughout my years at the boarding school. It isn’t a special situation, but a good example when explaining what taking responsibility means.

We all lived in *Wohngemeinschaften*, which translates to “living groups.” That meant we were ten people who had to share a bathroom, a kitchen, and a living room. Of course, we could go to the canteen, but cooking for oneself was easier and a lot more fun, especially with a friend. The only disadvantage that came along was the fact that we didn’t have a dishwasher, meaning we had to clean all the dishes by hand. I hated doing the dishes, so I often decided to leave them in the sink to clean them “later.” Of course, I never cleaned them afterwards. But I wasn’t the only one who did it like this, so sometimes the whole sink was filled with plates, forks, and knives. However, one day in 11th grade our kitchen was so awfully dirty, there weren’t any clean dishes left; on the kitchen table were plates with leftover food from two days ago, and there was flour and dough on the table because two girls of my apartment decided to bake cookies and not clean up afterwards. All of us ten girls were arguing about who made all that mess and whose responsibility it was to clean up. At this point it seemed to be hopeless to even start

ARCADIA: A Student Journal for Faith and Culture

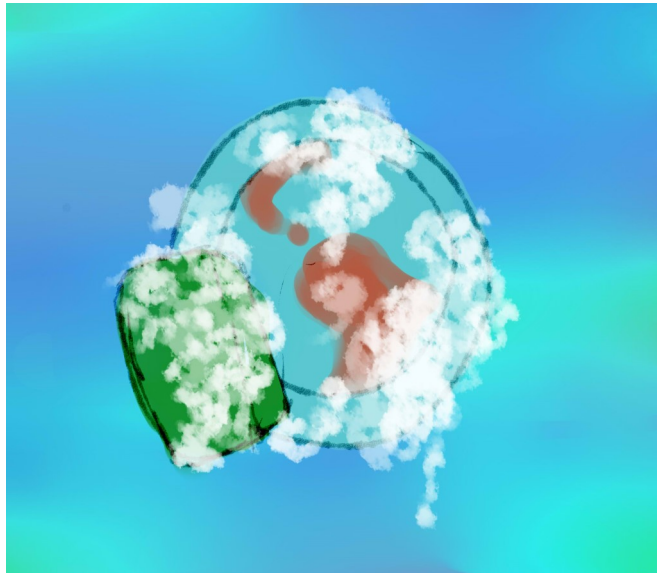
cleaning anything, so of course nobody wanted to be the responsible one. This whole mess wasn't only the fault of one of us. The whole living group was guilty, but no one wanted to be blamed. After a while, my roommate and I decided to take responsibility and clean up everything. We had to stand there for more than an hour and clean every plate, every fork and knife, and of course the whole kitchen table. It wasn't fun work to do, but in the end, everything was clean. We could finally use our kitchen again.

This is a very good example of how taking responsibility works and what it means. First of all, you need to recognize that there is a problem or a negative outcome of an action. In our case that meant to realize that without dishes we couldn't cook or eat—simply use our kitchen again. In "Post-Nature Writing," Blair Braverman's (2016) example is that climate change is affecting our nature and due to that we have the "knowledge, that we're running out of time" (p.10). She states that since not only her own actions but the actions of hundreds of thousands of people, some even before her time, have led to climate change and maybe to a "postapocalyptic world" (p. 7), it shouldn't be her grandchildren who have to clean up the mess, but everyone, even herself, should take responsibility. In a smaller dimension, our "kitchen problem" was similar. Though it wasn't only my roommates' and my fault, we took responsibility and a lot of time and cleaned up everything so that the rest could use the kitchen again.

Here we'll reach the next point of taking responsibility. Sometimes it might be a lot easier to just turn your back and not face the problem ever again. It would be less painful and you wouldn't need as much energy as when taking responsibility. That's basically what Emily Schosid (2016) writes about when she says: "It would have been so easy for people to give up and walk away from all of this" (p. 196). But then your problem wouldn't just vanish but would stay or even get worse. This means that even if there is short-term loss or no success at first, further action will be necessary in the long term—as Schosid says: "And here I was, not cleaning up after them, but renewing the space for the next set of memories to be made" (p. 204), and this is definitely a good thing to go after. It will not only be an advantage for yourself but for many other people as well. In "Post-Nature Writing" those people would be the grandchildren or children of the generation then: "Don't humans have a duty to pass on an unspoiled planet" (Braverman, 2016, p. 6); and don't we, as a living group, have a duty to pass on an unspoiled kitchen?

Finally, there is one point left which defines taking responsibility: taking precautions. That means to not let a bad thing happen and then try to take action and clean up but to “do whatever [you] can to prevent such a problem” (Schosid, 2016, p. 202). In our case that would have been to clean up the dishes right after using them instead of just letting them pile up. Further, Schosid tells the story of her going to the Lama community “to find out how a sustainable community worked” (p. 192). She realizes that one part of taking responsibility against climate change is to prevent it from getting worse, which doesn’t have to mean to take obvious steps but valuing the things we have. Had we just valued our kitchen more as a place we needed for cooking or studying, I am sure we wouldn’t have gotten to that point.

To conclude, taking responsibility means to recognize a problem and take action to make the situation better for everyone, even if it wasn’t only one’s own mess and even if it means temporary loss. It means taking control and not turning away. And in the end, also taking precautions to not let a bad thing happen to anyone, even if it doesn’t concern you directly. Taking responsibility is essential for living in a community, and that’s why the next time someone tells you to take it, you should do it, to assure you and others don’t have to face a major problem.



Trash Talk

Taylor Russell

I was taught to always take responsibility for the things I do, whether good or bad, even if the line between those two blurs at times. To fix the mistakes I made was not a foreign concept to me. Throughout my life, I found that that mentality assisted me in all that I attempted to do. Responsibility was key.

A situation where I took responsibility for something I contributed to, but not single-handedly caused, was when I cleaned the outside of the school with a club that I was in. It was called Girls' Club. We were doing a service project, to beautify our elementary school. At that time, I was in fifth grade. "Okay, ladies, take your parents or buddy up with a friend, pick up as much trash as you can and remember to wear your gloves or use your gator tool," he head of the club—Mrs. Hood—instructed, demonstrating by closing her grabber in the air. I grabbed my Dad and began to work my way around the large field we had located by the playground.

The hours dragged by; when it was finally nearing lunch, I could hear my tummy grumbling and we were only halfway through the campus. I felt icky from cleaning up the trash on the ground, sweat sticking to my skin. It wasn't like when I played and didn't care that I was sticky. I was touching undesirables, smelling revolting scents, and my mouth was dry because I didn't stop to get a drink. I was motivated to make the campus cleaner. Then, with my hands on my gloves, ready to take them off and start my lunch break with my dad, it hit me. *Why?* Why was I cleaning a campus when we already had a maintenance staff? Why is the only trash I remember ever having thrown on the ground, not even a day ago, not on the ground, while all these other stomach-turning objects were? Yet, all these girls and I are here picking them up with our parents because we are in a club. "...I am, rather, a cause of the problem, an inheritor of both the environmental crisis and the requisite senses of duty and guilt" (Braverman, 2016, p. 11.). This quote stands to indicate that by default, any issues caused by the people before us are now inherently our fault and we're just adding to the destruction.

I yanked my gloves off as the unfair thought continued to manifest and become negative. Dragging the long grabber behind me, I walked with my Dad, who carried our trash bag for us. We'd have to

Volume IX - July 2019

toss it and grab a new bag after lunch. We reached the group and were handed our lunches. "Alright girls, you all are doing so good, keep up the great work." A girl in the group raised her hand, "I have a question." She waited to be acknowledged before continuing, "Why are we doing this? I didn't throw all this trash on the ground." She had just asked the forbidden question we all were afraid of asking for fear of being lectured and punished by our parents. Her mom looked shocked she asked that and seemed ready to execute a proper lecture.

Mrs. Hood held up a hand and gave a knowing smile, as if she had known the thought had crossed all our minds within the last 3 hours we worked. "That's because if we all thought like that, the world would be very dirty. If not us, then who else?" Another girl cut in, "Why not the people who dirtied it up? I have to clean up my messes at home." Some of us nodded our heads in agreement, including me. "Have any of you cleaned up your trash outside every time you dropped it?" All of us shook our heads. "Did you think about going back to clean it after a while?" Once again, we all shook our heads. "Then why would the people who dirtied our campus think to do that?" We all glanced at each other, trying to come up with an acceptable answer. "What about the janitors?," another girl chimed in. Mrs. Hood didn't miss a beat. "They have to clean up all our messes inside. They aren't supermen and women; you saw today how hard it was to clean up even half this campus. Could *you* do this every day?" All of us frantically shook our heads, tired and dirty. "Exactly, that is why we do this. It keeps our campus pretty and makes the work easier on our janitors. Plus, we are saving our planet. Getting rid of this trash will make the world much healthier." She explained.

"At that moment, I'm struck by the yawning gap that exists between ambitious, world-changing visions and the backbreaking, tedious work required to realize them" (Cooke, 2016, p 14.). In this learning experience, I had found that I may not cause a problem, but I can always be the one to help fix it. At the end of the day, we finished tidying our campus. I have to say, it was satisfying to see the visible difference of the setting. The hard work we put in really seemed to help. Responsibility isn't who does this or who should do that; it's feeling like we should change something and making a conscientious effort to change it, no matter how painstakingly difficult it is.

Responsibly as a Call to Action

Alijah Vanterpool

Accepting responsibility can be an intimidating and daunting process. The prospect of taking responsibility can often lead to blame being shuffled around from scapegoat to scapegoat until the problem is swept under the rug, left for another to happen upon it and be forced to find a solution. After reading *Coming of Age at the End of Nature: A Generation Faces Living on a Changed Planet*, I was able to discern that to me, taking responsibility means that individuals must be equipped properly to accept any challenge posed to them, no matter how big or small, and even if the fault was not their own. As a member of the millennial generation being jettisoned into adulthood, it is my obligation to create a positive impact on the planet while also being responsible and educated enough to inherit an ever-changing world.

Human action accelerates the changes seen in nature. When activities become rushed and industrialized and the focus on craft is lost, the natural world is often the one to suffer. This process is seen in the mass deforestation in the rainforests, the unsustainability of the world's rice crops, and the loss of species and ecological diversity in our nation's forests. In the essay "Wilderness of Blackberries," Craig Maier (2016) describes the idea that industrialization leads to the destruction of nature's beauty. He tells of his father taking him to pick blackberries, without equipment, without farming tools, and the result is a delicious pie and Maier's increased admiration of what the natural world has to offer. Through this Maier gains perspective on humanity's impact on the world around us and sees how his actions can make a difference, even on a small scale. During my time in the Boy Scouts of America, I was instructed to follow a similar path. This was done through three simple words: "Leave No Trace." Much like Maier and my fellow scouts, using these words, I was able to recognize my footprint on the world and act in a way that I could preserve the beauty around me. By cleaning my campsite, leaving my path undisturbed, and respecting the life that surrounded me, I was able to take responsibility for my presence in a world that existed just beyond my tent.

In addition to being referred to as millennials, my cohorts and I have also been referred to as the "BuzzFeed generation." This name stems from the trend that media outlets hook a consumer with a

Volume IX - July 2019

title, while the body of the article is often ignored. As a result, many create assumptions on a topic without receiving the whole story, doing their own research, or fact-checking what they're reading. This is because a person with a computer, television, or phone is constantly bombarded with advertisements and media meant to be consumed as quickly as possible. A prime example of this is Vine, a social media platform designed to share 6-second videos of yourself, which was one of my generation's most popular phone apps. The short attention spans of many consumers, coupled with the fact that misleading information is often in the forefront of the media being presented, is leading to a miseducation of many people in the United States.

In order to be functional adults, competent to inherit the planet while also preserving it for future generations, we must be responsible enough to educate ourselves. As Blair Braverman (2016) states in her essay, "Post Nature Writing," "But my impatience—in this case, at least—is not the result of a carefully cultivated short attention span. It's a result of growing up with the overwhelming knowledge that we're running out of time" (p. 10). This remark echoes the importance of not accepting the status quo, and how key it is to act for what is important in order to make a difference in the world.

In 2017, a new Federal Communications Commission (FCC) chose to vote on changing net neutrality laws. The rules in place allowed for equal internet to all, fairly. With the upcoming vote, the FCC allowed the public to weigh in on their decision, as per the rules of democracy. However, as the true nature of net neutrality was not common household knowledge, it was the responsibility of those who were educated to lobby others into doing the right thing. I, and countless others across the country, worked to make sure that the people around us knew the impact that the coming vote would have on our lives, and the world around us. Through this education, it is possible to inspire others to educate themselves and be responsible enough to change the world in a positive way.

While admitting responsibility is often the more difficult path, it is important to accept the call to action. Without educated and responsible people there to solve the world's problems, we may all succumb to the issues that surround humanity. The solution lies within the use of technology with the natural world, not technology against it. The preservation of nature and humanity is not mutually

ARCADIA: A Student Journal for Faith and Culture

exclusive, and thus it is up to those who inherit the planet today to create a better one for those tomorrow. The challenge now falls upon the shoulders of millennials to accept responsibility for the world as it is and for what we will create going forward.

Saving Summer Camp

Kellyanne Murphy

It was the summer after my sophomore year, which is the best year of high school if you ask me. Why? I have three words: familiarity without responsibility. You're not the freshman who believes the pool on the roof actually exists, but you're not the senior who runs five different student organizations. As soon as my last exam ended, I headed to the place where I always looked forward to unplugging after a long school year: Camp K-20. For ninety-nine years families like my own have spent their summers swimming and paddling in the waters of Little Long Pond, separated from the real world by a thin metal gate and a small sign that reads "K20." No wifi, no television, no flushing toilets—the good ol' Earth maintains and entertains us, but what sustains us is the deeply rooted traditions which have been handed down from one generation to the next.

At least, that's how it was when I was a camp kid. One of the biggest traditions was the annual canoe regatta in which our camp competed against neighboring camps for the "Big Mac" trophy in a series of canoe races. The summer after my sophomore year, it was my time to lead our team to victory. I headed down to the lake at 9:00 a.m. for our first canoe practice and was surprised to see that I was the only one there. In my days, we all showed up ten minutes early to make sure we picked the best paddle and life jacket. Where were all of the paddlers? Those foggy-eyed camp kids straggled in all throughout the following fifteen minutes, but only because their mothers kicked them out of the cabin. This continued to happen at the next few practices.

At some practices, a handful of kids would show up, but no CITs (Counselors in training, meaning the camp kids older than fourteen), so the kids were unable to go out on the water. Did nobody care about the Big Mac anymore? No one wanted to wake up at 9:00 a.m. to paddle, especially after staying up until 3:00 a.m. watching movies in their cabins. The only reason CIT came down to the lake early in the morning was to snapchat their "streaks" because that's where the camp wifi worked best. Times were changing.

I had to revive my camp's sense of community and pride in tradition. It was vital to the continuation of the camp I knew and loved: "[My Children] will learn the food traditions that are so important

ARCADIA: A Student Journal for Faith and Culture

to my family, and in doing so they will not see themselves as separate from nature.” Just as Amy Coplen (2016) said in “Tamale Traditions,” I knew that the only way my camp family would stay connected to the land in which we referred to as our “summer home away from home” would be if we stayed connected to our traditions. These traditions were the foundation of camp. They were the reason our ancestors traveled back there summer after summer. The traditions connected us to the land, which connected us to each other. It was a full circle; losing this one silly little tradition meant losing everything.

In “We Are the Fossil-Fuel Freedom Fighters,” Bonnie Frye Hemphill (2016) writes, “People used to take security in the way things were because the world seemed too big and too old to change...we were small and soft. So surely the way things were would be the way they’d always be” (p. 162). However, change is inevitable, and we as a camp community dictate the direction in which that change occurs, whether it’s for the better or worse. In fact, humanity as a whole is a catalyst for the change the Earth undergoes. It is foolish to think that we are too small and soft when in fact we are the stewards of this Earth. We have to take responsibility for the past, present, and future. For me, that meant saving my camp—my little sliver of Earth that I hold myself responsible for. I believe we have the responsibility to care for the Earth not only because the livelihood of the Earth depends on it, but because our livelihood depends on it as well. Physically, we need the Earth to provide us with food and shelter; however, we need the Earth mentally and emotionally too. We can’t spend the rest of our lives being sophomores reaping the benefits, but instead we must step up to the plate and be the seniors. We don’t have to individually take responsibility for every mess made, but if we all took responsibility for the messes that were familiar and important to us this world would be a significantly better place.

By no means am I against modernizing camp. I have a DVD player in my cabin, and I appreciate my showers with heated water. I even use the camp wifi from time to time, including right now to submit this essay. What I’m against is change that results in the loss of tradition and the loss of who we really are. My name is Kellyanne Murphy and I am an 18-year-old young woman who came of age nestled under the deciduous trees of Harriman State Park, proving that this is not the end of nature, especially if I have anything to do

Volume IX - July 2019

with it. In fact, this is just the beginning. Oh, and by the way, we did win the Big Mac that year.

Saving Killer Whales

Veronica Lomangino

Frequently children learn important life lessons through songs and rhymes that embed themselves in the brain until they need to regurgitate to their children, their grandchildren, and so on throughout generations. For example, one song a child's parents may use to secretly persuade their children to start maintaining the right manners at a young age is, "Clean up! Clean up! Everybody do your share. Clean up! Clean up! Everybody everywhere." This simple rhyme teaches kids to take responsibility for the mess, most likely the toys on the floor, they made and not wait for their parents to clean up after them. The idea is that soon enough the child will know to clean their own room, then their own classroom, then their own dorm, and eventually their own house. Evidently, people are not taking the "Clean up!" message to the outdoor world. Parents should also be embedding this idea to take responsibility for the issues in nature like global warming, pollution, corrupting ecosystems, etc. Similar to the ideas to clean up nature before it's too late in *Coming of Age at the End of Nature*, I have been attempting to clean up the "mess" at SeaWorld with the orcas in captivity.

Even though SeaWorld can be argued as a positive experience that makes someone closer to nature by seeing these magnificent animals splash and jump, in reality, keeping these massive animals in a large tank is severely detrimental to their health. People can have different perspectives of SeaWorld, like Blair Braverman, a tour guide in Colorado, having different perspectives of land, and taking people "to the left side of the ridge because the right side told a different story" (Braverman, 2016, p. 5). Braverman took her tour group to the overlook that was serene and beautiful instead taking them to the side affected by parasites and climate change.

Similarly, the owners of SeaWorld only show customers the killer whales swimming, doing tricks, and receiving buckets of sardines. However, a customer will never be shown the tiny, floating shed where all the whales are kept, or the bloody scratches left in the whales because they are kept in such close proximity to one another. A customer along with SeaWorld trainers will never be told about the numerous deaths to other SeaWorld trainers caused by the same exact whales they are watching and swimming with. SeaWorld also managed to cover up the fact that orcas in the wild are

Volume IX - July 2019

supposed to live as long as humans, but their whales were dying at an average age of 30 years. Killer whales are dying at SeaWorld because of the terrible living, eating, and training conditions. Clearly, a different story is told once the truth is learned about this amusement park keeping marine mammals in tanks like bathtubs.

The orca whales at SeaWorld can easily be compared to the great gray owl in Abby McBride's essay, "To Love an Owl." McBride, a bird watcher, along with many other bird watchers, sees a misplaced gray owl that did not belong in Maine. This large owl should be living north of Maine. This poor owl ended up dying because of parasites. The bird watchers "shouldn't have exploited that gray owl's darkest hour" (McBride, 2016, p. 53), similar to vacationers watching the orcas being mistreated for entertainment. The massive gray owl is like Tilikum, the biggest orca at SeaWorld weighing 7 tons. Initially, Tilikum was friendly and the trainers loved working with him until he killed three people: two trainers and one trespasser that jumped into his tank. Tilikum was then considered aggressive and kept in a separate tank alone. This was severely detrimental to him because orcas are extremely social animals. Tilikum died a couple of years ago. People need to realize the damage SeaWorld is actually inflicting on their animals. Thankfully, the message is being spread and orca shows have stopped at SeaWorld because of the backlash from the documentary *Blackfish* and efforts to help the captive orcas. SeaWorld claims that the orcas will still be kept for 50 years until the last of them dies.

In the final analysis, people need to apply the message from *Coming of Age at the End of Nature: A New Generation Faces Life on a Changed Planet*, and clean up the problems with the world around us as well. I have convinced most of my family, friends, and coworkers to watch the documentary *Blackfish* to spread the message to clean up SeaWorld's mess. I have also purchased several bracelets from the company Pura Vida that has a specific bracelet you can buy that will donate half of your money to save the orcas from captivity. Along with bracelets, I have used the World Wildlife Fund to "adopt" a killer whale and donate money to keep them safe. I have signed multiple petitions online against SeaWorld. My pet betta fish is named Tilikum and my laptop has several stickers that read "Free the Orcas." Even though these are small steps to a solution, it is spreading the message to fix at least one problem in nature. Anyone that asks, "What's your fish's name?" or "What's a good movie

ARCADIA: A Student Journal for Faith and Culture

on Netflix?” will get a long-winded response from me on the killer whales at SeaWorld.

A Leap of Faith

Aimee de Blaauw

Responsibility seemingly lies with a single person—one who created a problem; but acts are not always the fault of a lone person. The overwhelming problem of climate change has been building up for years, with each generation adding its own catastrophic specialty (agricultural practices, coal mining, burning of fossil fuels) but this problem cannot be pinpointed to a single person, a single invention, a single generation. Instead, everyone needs to become proactive in order to reverse the effects that have been made apparent in the last hundred years. After four years of attending an environmentally focused high school, I was finally able to take my knowledge and commitment away from home and make a change elsewhere during my senior year. Throughout my high school education, I took part in many projects regarding environmental wellness in Marin County. Often, each project felt as if its results were taken for granted, due to Marin being a frontrunner in not just California, but also the United States, regarding environmental consciousness. After constantly second guessing the productiveness of my actions for most of my high school career, I took a leap of faith during the fall semester of my senior year by signing up to go on a trip to Ecuador to work on reforestation with local Ecuadorian students.

Almost two years to the day after the devastating Ecuadorian 7.8 magnitude earthquake, I walked the streets of Bahía de Caraquez in the Manabí province of Ecuador, still easily able to observe the damage of that 2016 disaster. Ben Goldfarb (2016) explains in his essay “Rebuild or Retreat” how “...climate change will spawn ultra-destructive super-storms more frequently...” (p. 28). With consistently rising temperatures, “ultra-destructive” earthquakes, typhoons, hurricanes, and other natural disasters are due to become much more frequent. Specifically, heavy rainfall—which is consistent even with the high temperatures in Ecuador—has proven to correlate with earthquake frequency, as the water seeping into the Earth’s crust likely causes the quakes (McGuire, 2016). After 700 casualties, 6,000 injuries, and many more people left needing basic survival aid, another earthquake would be devastating to Ecuador’s economy, infrastructure, and its citizens’ spirits. Since the earthquake’s epicenter was in the Manabí province, it was one of the hardest hit areas in Ecuador, leaving buildings in heaps of rubble. Emotionally, the cities were ill-equipped to face the horrendous

task of rebuilding. Without the proper engineering education, Ecuador rebuilt using cement mixed with salt water—inevitably duplicating the course to the original structural collapse.

The United States is the second highest emitter of greenhouse gases in the world. Many of the country's leaders and citizens alike denounce climate change, even going as far as bowing out of the first and only global effort to curb said emissions. Armed with this knowledge, it felt as if my country, and in turn myself, was at least partly at fault for damage brought to other countries who felt the climate change effects without being top polluters. In fact, the top three emitters—China, the United States, and the European Union—account for more than half of global emissions (Friedrich, 2017), while Ecuador contributes a mere .13% of global greenhouse gas emissions (“Global Carbon Atlas”). These facts contributed greatly to my decision to be a part of helping curb climate change's effects in Ecuador. Even though the country does not rank highly on the global emissions scale, it is not to say they do not have their own environmental problems: primarily deforestation, rising sea levels, and suffering agricultural practices from soil degradation. Regarding deforestation in Ecuador, the issue focused on by Global Student Embassy (GSE—the organization I travelled through), 21.5% of its forests have been lost, in the short span from 1990 to 2005 (“Ecuador,” n.d.). However, unlike the United States, they are actively working to change their ways, specifically, in 2008, acknowledging nature's rights by including them into their constitution (“Climate Change, Ecuador's Constant Struggle to Curb Its Effects”).

GSE currently sponsors programs in Cuenca and Bahía de Caraquez, Ecuador, Nicaragua, and Guatemala, each program working to restore the local environment. In Bahía, GSE works with four schools and over one hundred Ecuadorian students in what they call Eco-Action programs. Aside from meeting multiple times a week, running their school gardens, and learning about environmental practices, the students work with the visiting high school and college students from the U.S., including my high school group. The “Eco-Kids” think similarly to Amy Coplen in her 2016 essay “Tamale Traditions” when she states “Nature is embedded in everything we do. Nature is us, and we are nature” (p. 87) — why else would they spend countless hours working to restore their country's native habitats? The Eco-Club Students taught me, if nothing else, what taking responsibility really means. Responsibility is being a

Volume IX - July 2019

problem solver even though the problem, on the surface, doesn't seem like a particular person's fault; Working full days in the humid hundred-degree sun chopping weeds with a machete, or transporting stacks of bamboo to build garden beds; Standing by a non-profit organization which may not be funded to the following year, yet being sure the group will stick together and continue the legacy.

Each person I met in Ecuador reaffirmed my observations of the general kindness of the nation. Walking around town at night, amidst the crumbling buildings, we were always met by a chorus of "Hola's" from each family we passed. I felt welcomed by everyone, because even though my Spanish was rusty, each person shown with positivity, hoping to make me more comfortable in speaking their language. Besides introducing me to a wealth of wonderful new friends, opening my eyes to a country I fell in love with in an instant, my travels to Ecuador taught me that even the smaller actions I was taking at home were important; Doing what one can do to help—no matter how small— makes a difference. In order to make that difference, one must take a share of the responsibility of finding a global solution: this is our challenge.

More Than a Simple Cup of Coffee

Michael Durkin

Reading the numerous accounts of how a civically engaged youth is dealing with the continuous degradation of the environment brings the first time I became aware of our environment to memory. I was travelling to New York City with a group of older family members and friends to watch a boxing match. I spent most of the ride in silence, as there is little a fourteen-year-old child could contribute to thoroughly adult conversations about things like work and marriage. Eventually one of the adults in the car took pity on me and decided to try and engage me in a conversation. For a reason that remains a mystery to me, his topic of choice was the contemporary state of the environment.

He explained to me that human activity and industry has thrust Earth's climate into disarray and that significant environmental calamities were imminent. Of course, he did so in language my fourteen-year-old mind could process, but the point was not lost on me. Our conversation concluded suddenly when he was interrupted by another adult. He quickly forgot about our brief exchange, but I spent the rest of the evening in fear, having just been made aware that our planet was in jeopardy. On the brink of collapse, in fact.

My newfound anxiety was not helped by the fact that we passed several large industrial centers on the way to our destination. What I once viewed as interesting looking but ultimately innocuous factories became cold, steely monuments to humankind's impending demise. I decided that from then on, I would become "environmentally conscious," although I had no real sense of what that would entail.

The following day I found myself in a local coffee shop. As I completed my purchase the barista who took my order asked if I would like to donate an extra dollar to a rainforest relief fund. Of course, I responded with an emphatic yes. I finally felt as if I was doing something to save the world! The anxiety brought on by the previous night's conversation quickly dissipated as I sipped on my drink, which my donation had imbued with an air of righteousness. This feeling of elation was, however, squashed as I made my way back home. While I was waiting to cross the street, a hulking commercial truck whipped past me. It left behind a cloud of exhaust that

Volume IX - July 2019

choked out of me any sense that I had made a difference, or that I had done anything to stave off the impending death of our planet.

In that moment I realized that the exhaust that spewed from that truck was doing more damage to the environment than my petty donation could hope to rectify. Environmental degradation is not caused by the fact that too few people like me have donated their spare change to a rainforest relief program on a whim, as I would have liked to believe. The reality is far more complex than that. What this experience taught me was that being an environmentally conscious citizen does not just mean casually donating small sums of money to this or that corporate-sponsored charity so that you can feel nicer about yourself; it entails something more. Being environmentally conscious means taking decisive action to reverse the current trajectory of the environment. For instance, Elizabeth Cooke (2016) recounts her decision to leave the comfort of her home and aid Haitian disaster relief efforts. Despite her struggles when in Haiti, she is working to make qualitative change in a world being devastated by environmental decline. Of course, not everyone should take such radical action. After all, most people have significant responsibilities like family and work that prevent them from jetting off to a foreign country to combat the ravages of climate catastrophe, but there are many forms of more realistic activism one can engage in at home. Contacting representatives and encouraging them to adopt pro-environment policies is something that most citizens equipped with a cell phone and a few minutes can do, for example.

In my own life, I tried to take responsibility for the environment by becoming involved with my local chapter of the Sierra Club, a prominent environmental organization. I researched their program and attended lectures given by experts that gave me a more comprehensive understanding of how the environment is affected by government policies. I also had the opportunity to speak with seasoned environmental activists who gave me a better understanding of what it was like to fight for the environment and our planet. This is something that I was easily able to do and cost me nothing but my time, and it was certainly more worthwhile than a simple dollar donation I made while buying a cheap cup of coffee.

The most significant obstacle to people getting involved in environmental activism often is not cost, but apathy. In “But I’ll Still be Here,” James Orbesen (2016) explains how he felt that “adults were

ARCADIA: A Student Journal for Faith and Culture

on the job” of saving the environment when he was young (p. 57). This attitude is not exclusive to children, though. The idea that the environment is not something to be concerned about because it is an issue that other people are taking care of is one that persists in many adults and results in an apathetic attitude towards environmental problems.

Being truly environmentally conscious means taking decisive action to reverse the current trajectory of our planet. This first requires the recognition that decades of inaction have placed the onus of saving our environment squarely on the shoulders of the younger generations, who will inherit and inhabit the Earth for the years to come. It may not be fair or just, but it is the reality of the situation. No longer do we possess the luxury to passively watch as the fruits of the natural world are despoiled in front of us. It is not an exaggeration to say that what this generation does within the next several years will determine the future of our planet. It is crucial that we take responsibility ourselves and recognize that no one else is going to save the day; it is necessarily up to us.



Volume IX - July 2019

Part 3:
Responsibility as a Soul Force

Expressing Values Through Action

Michael Lewandowski

It is down to the wire now; it is two days before the culminating final for my computers class is to be submitted. Rewind three weeks; my peers and I had been given our final project, which was to plan out our custom-coded website. The project timeline required a healthy portion of the three weeks given; and to grant us independence, but more importantly, to teach us the life skills of responsibility and time-management, our professor gave us the project details and submission date and nothing more. As I began this project, I was not aware of the grand takeaway. Responsibility is more than just being subjected to my own values, but rather it's about how to utilize these components to shape myself as a better individual and to make a positive impact on the community.

Day one, shortly after receiving my project, out comes my calendar. There I set a timeline for what needed to be accomplished when so that my project does not become a product of slop put together at the last minute due to the all-too-familiar procrastination. I viewed myself as being a responsible student for doing so. Little did I know my true test of responsibility was yet to come, one that was to prove more difficult than the project itself.

Fast forward to crunch time, two days before that dreaded deadline. Frantic is the best word to describe the classroom. All around, furious typing on the keyboard and the thundering sound of riffling through binders to find previous notes. I sat at my station diligently working at a comfortable pace, because, unlike the others, I had both set and adhered to my schedule. I was down to the fine tuning, sandpapering the rough edges of my project when class ended. I had clicked save twice just to make sure and ejected my USB drive, unaware that I had saved a copy of my project to the desktop as well. One seemingly lucky classmate was happy to copy it to his flash drive and save himself 48 hours of working without sleep.

The next day my friend sat down at the computer next to mine and opened my project off his flash drive. He said in a quiet but easily heard voice, "I saw this on the desktop and I knew you wouldn't mind if I used it. Thanks, bud, you the man." My heart sank. My eyes opened. I knew I had a problem, but I did not imagine its potential magnitude.

ARCADIA: A Student Journal for Faith and Culture

I was, and still am, a shy person who is not the most socially apt; I was so afraid of saying or doing anything that would cause me to lose my few friendships. This had become such a problem that I was willing to let people whom I thought were my friends walk all over me with my permission. I always thought to myself this behavior had to stop, but it was not hurting me until now, so it was okay. I was the most irresponsible person I ever met, for the sole fact that I prevented my own thoughts from becoming words or actions. Fear caused me to create a façade of responsibility, while knowing that on the inside I was riven with irresponsibility.

Blair Braverman (2016) illustrates a similar façade in her essay, “Post-Nature Writing.” She stands on a ridge in Colorado with two totally different views, one with beautiful scenery, and one that had been touched by disease, stripping it of natural beauty. She purposely avoided the stripped side of the ridge because it painted a picture she saw but did not want others to see. She wanted others to see only the good side and glance over the undesirable side, for she knew that she herself and her generation are responsible for similar and future damage like the scene on that side of the ridge (Braverman, p. 10). She was irresponsible for recognizing a problem and ignoring it by creating a façade.

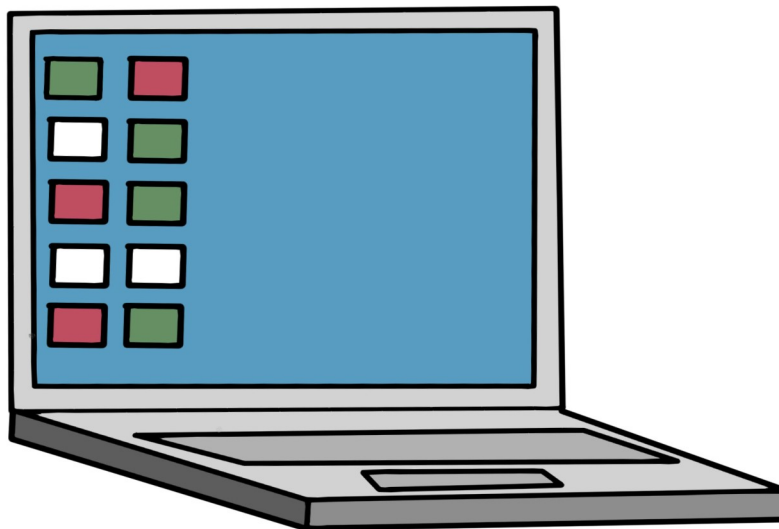
I was sick of living in a façade, and that was the day I revealed the truth and let my inner thoughts out. It was time for me to break down this façade I had made because I was stricken by fear, and be responsible and stand up for myself and my values. In the past I would have said “No problem, just glad I could help.” But now with my new-found courage and lack of fear, I immediately stood up and acted; I went straight to my professor to inform him of my classmate’s intent to plagiarize. This not only benefited me as an individual, but it also helped better my classroom community by showing others that cheating and plagiarism are not acceptable. More importantly it showed others that it is possible to stand up for yourself, despite all the obstacles in the way.

Acting on one’s values despite the difficulty it presents shows true responsibility. It is irresponsible to ignore your values due to difficulty and fear. Bonnie Hemphill (2016) demonstrates her own irresponsibility when she admits she herself and her generation claim to “save the world,” yet act otherwise (p. 165). Acting responsibly according to your values does not mean that you can choose when to

Volume IX - July 2019

adhere to values and when to ignore them. It is becoming increasingly difficult in today's world, but to not have a switch for when to act upon your values is irresponsible, even if the intentions are well minded. I believe it is irresponsible for Hemphill to label herself as a Fossil-Fuel Freedom Fighter, when she only acts accordingly a fraction of the time. Responsibility is only achieved when one can live by one's own positive values on a consistent nonstop schedule.

I showed great irresponsibility because I had values, but I did not always utilize them to improve myself or my community; however, responsibility can be acquired. I saw the error and acted according to my value of hard work and not giving handouts to plagiarizers. I believe the best show of responsibility is acting upon the recognition of irresponsibility. Irresponsibility plagues everyone, but overcoming your irresponsibility shows the ultimate form of responsibility.



Fixing What Is Left

Jessica Grove

My mother is a diagnosed alcoholic who has relapsed more times than I can count. For anyone who has had the displeasure of dealing with addiction, either themselves or through someone they love, it is an accepted truth that addicts do not take responsibility for their messes and spills. Addicts are well known for their manipulation techniques and quick thinking to avoid accepting their actions as their own. Thusly, growing up with a mother who basically defines addiction, I have an abundance of examples in which I struggled to make her take responsibility. However, a person who is not a functional member of society without the assistance of differing substances is not a person I believe can be honestly judged on their character. For this reason, instead of analyzing my mother's shortfalls when it came to taking responsibility, I analyze my own in relation to her illness.

For a large portion of my upbringing, I thought my life was normal. Unfortunately, when I went into junior high, I began to realize the other children's homes were not like mine. When I did eventually understand this, I was faced with humiliation and a misunderstanding of why my life had to be as it was. From that point on, I tried tirelessly to hide the truth from everyone I met. I made sure my brother was fed, clothed and his homework was done. I even had excuses ready for why my friends could never come over or why my mother was never able to drive. However, as I continued this charade, all I could think was how unfair it was. I worked so hard just to be normal when the reason for the abnormality in my life wasn't even my doing.

As I grew up, these thoughts remained with me. I kept thinking how unlucky I was and how bad the cards I had been dealt were; I just couldn't understand. It wasn't until I went into my junior year of high school I began to comprehend the situation. It wasn't my fault, but it was my mess and spill. In "I will still be here," James Orbesen (2016) beautifully grasps this concept as he "felt bamboozled because younger people have been left with a mess that has supposedly been handled. [But] reality shows it certainly hasn't been" (p. 61).

Volume IX - July 2019

Although different in topic, the focus of Orbesen's essay and my own are the same; people are often forced to take responsibility for other people's messes and spills. Just as those Orbesen writes about, I had no choice but to take responsibility for a situation that was not my doing. I had to claim my mother's deficit. Although unfair, it was my burden to carry, my responsibility. To handle this, I had to learn how to apologize on my mother's behalf. I had to learn how to politely turn people away when they asked to come over because I knew it wasn't a safe environment. I had to learn that addiction is something that is uncontrollable and just because my mother fell for it, does not mean she is a bad person. Taking responsibility for my mother's illness, her mess and spill, was the hardest thing I have ever had to do, yet also the most rewarding.

After comprehending this, my standpoint on responsibility adapted to reflect more of the perspective that Bonnie Frye Hemphill (2016) adopts in "We Are the Fossil-Fuel Freedom Fighters." In her argument, she claims that "it's too late to save the polar bears, but it's not quite too late to save ourselves" (p. 168). From this, one can derive an undertone in her exclamation which speaks to a more generalized concept of responsibility. Hemphill can be understood as saying that although damage has been done, the next step isn't to give up, but work towards fixing what is left. That is what responsibility is.

I couldn't undo the years of damage my mother had done to friends, family, or herself, but I could fix the issues she had caused in myself and my younger brother and work to mend the small amount of unity my family still held. Being responsible is about taking what is given to oneself, no matter if it is easy to handle, hard to deal with, or simply completely unwanted. It's about taking these challenges and trying to fix what is left. To be responsible often means sacrifice: in my case it was my childhood; in Hemphill's case it is the polar bears.

So yes, I began by taking responsibility for a mess and spill that wasn't my own. However, I ended with a new concept of what the word "responsibility" really means.



The Buck Stops Here

Elizabeth Kuriakose

The act of taking responsibility is the defining characteristic of being a true leader. The famous sign on President Truman's desk reading "The buck stops here!" exemplifies how being a leader, or, in this case, the president, means to take ownership of a problem or challenge instead of passing the blame to someone else. It means to face a difficult reality head on with the will to create change instead of shrinking and running from it; rising up to say, "The buck stops here!" This act of taking the future into one's own hands requires maturity, courage, and strength. I, too, have had the opportunity of learning what it means to take responsibility by working as a recreation aide in a nursing home over the past summer.

The first step in taking responsibility is acknowledging that a problem exists and recognizing one's own power to create change. In the case of climate change, most of us are aware of it, but simply choose to ignore its existence and continue about our lives. We know our over consumptive lifestyles have a negative effect on the planet, but instant gratification, convenience, and indifference to the issue are given priority. Many people are also prone to the lazy thinking that there is no point in even trying because they are too small to make a difference. However, in *Coming of Age at the End of Nature*, we see young people reject these easy ways out.

In "Why Haiti?", Elizabeth Cooke (2016) describes the personal growth she experienced working with a fellowship in Haiti to re-plant trees in the area and witnessing a series of hurricanes wreck the island. Although, at first, when the plan was going nowhere, she felt discouraged and useless and even questioned her reason for traveling to the foreign land, the experiences and encounters she had along her journey as well as the support the project began receiving from the public helped her discover why she chose to stay: "All I know is that the wind and the water, the fish and the frogs, the people in tents and the people in palaces—Haiti and I—are here together witnessing this moment and shaping the next" (p. 22).

Cooke both acknowledged the severe effects of climate change on Haiti and used whatever power she had to work for solutions, even when she felt defeated and incompetent. In a similar way, my summer job has also taught me to acknowledge challenges and work to fix them even when I feel unsure about my abilities. The residents'

happiness became my concern through my work as a recreation aide. Although I'm normally quite reserved and quiet, my job required me to step out of my shell and learn to talk with the residents and lead fun games and activities. I had to accept that I had the power to make a difference in the lives of the people living in the facility by doing my job well.

Taking responsibility also means working to find a solution to a problem, even when you may not be the guilty party. Often, people try to escape responsibility by playing the blame game, as if the issue will disappear as soon as the person at fault is caught.

Unfortunately, this does not occur (or all our problems would be solved!). Instead, with everyone busy trying to pass the guilt, the problem is left alone and goes from bad to worse. For example, although the younger generations have not been the major cause of climate change, we will inherit the consequences. In "But I'll Still Be Here," James Orbesen (2016) states, "I've increasingly felt bamboozled because younger people have been left with a mess that has supposedly been handled. But reality shows it certainly hasn't" (p. 36). Orbesen feels betrayed that his generation carries the burden of cleaning up a mess that is not theirs. Younger people must simply accept this truth and use the power we have to reverse the damage done.

In "We Are the Fossil Fuel Freedom Fighters," Bonnie Frye Hemphill (2016) writes "My generation is hopeful, practical, strategic, and muscular—and not naive. In fact we are staking our very sense of self on it; we want history to write us as the ones who got to work. We are the fossil fuel freedom fighters and we're on the move" (p. 78). This message exemplifies the positive attitude we should have in dealing with the environmental crisis, or any issue in general. Whether at fault or not, we must all take up duty to make the world we live in a better place for us and the future generations—and sometimes this means cleaning up spills that are not ours. During my summer working, I have witnessed how having a positive attitude can make a difference. Taking initiative and reaching out a kind hand to a coworker or resident even when it may not be part of your job can go a long way. It creates a happy, productive environment by inspiring others to step out of their own world and reach out as well.

Taking initiative, no matter how large or small the act, helps to build a positive environment. Escaping from reality and passing the

Volume IX - July 2019

blame only exacerbates the issues at hand. Taking responsibility not only indicates maturity, courage, and strength, but distinguishes a true leader. In light of the rapid global warming and environmental destruction occurring, our world is calling forth a new set of leaders from our generation to stand up and say, “The buck stops here.”



End the Blame Game

Zainab Ali

As children, we were taught that consequences follow every action. You got punished for certain behaviors, and you surely didn't deserve a chocolate for everything you did. As our span of behavior and relationships grow in complexity, we tend to forget that lesson. Sooner or later we relearn how this "action vs. consequence" equation works in real life, at least in theory. We figure out what it means to take responsibility for our own choices, albeit usually the hard way. People duck responsibility for reasons ranging from simple laziness or a fear of failure to a sense of feeling overwhelmed by the scale of a problem or a situation. *Coming of Age at the End of Nature: A Generation Faces Living on a Changed Planet* is a groundbreaking collection of essays with a foreword by Bill McKibben, author of *The End of Nature*. Impressive in scope, the essays vary from the pleasantly anecdotal to the penetratingly philosophical. All focus on the relationship between humanity and nature, the inheritance of an industrialized, destabilized global ecosystem, and how millennials, more than any other generation, will be tasked with healing and taking responsibility for their own actions towards the planet.

Personal responsibility primarily stems from owning up to mistakes, despite the difficulty in countering the mechanisms of our ego defense system. Every man who wishes to take on the mantle of manhood must make the effort. In doing so, striving to take responsibility calls for hindering self-justification, which often sets off a domino effect sending you more off track. In her essay, "Winter Solstice," Lisa Hupp (2016) explains the comfort she took in knowing "Places of refuge like the Olympic Mountains and Crater Lake—perpetually protected and inviolate" (p. 36). She lived in an environment where desolation and permanent damage were too remote to personally affect her. We are given privileges by our life and those who have ventured into our lives. These privileges may be material, love, concern, respect, or in this case, nature itself. With privileges come the responsibility of making an attempt to preserve them instead of taking them for granted. As humans, we also feel entitled to what we think we "have." We are contractually living on this earth leased to us by the community we are living in. Hupp's perspective changed when she learned that poisonous dioxin produced in the U.S industry "concentrates in the breast milk of Inuit moth-

ers at levels several times higher than American women” through prevailing winds (pg. 37).

“Taken for granted” is a mask and a deceptive cloak of non-actions. It is doing nothing and yet it does a lot of damage in the non-doing; in other words, failing to take responsibility. From my personal experiences, I tend to take my education for granted. There is a massive distinction between attending school and learning. Many students continue to develop a distaste for learning. Students are losing their willingness to understand and absorb knowledge, as most grew up believing that getting an education was a chore, a mundane task that must be performed every day, rather than as a privilege. In a society where we are fortunate enough to have resources unavailable to others, we must take full responsibility to avoid taking unmindful advantage of such resources for personal gain.

By recognizing the difference between fault and responsibility, we can eschew the blame game and take ownership of difficult problems. Often, we have to deal with situations for which we’re not at fault, but fault is backward-looking, and responsibility is forward-looking. Fixating on blame delays taking corrective action and inhibits learning. Focusing on responsibility offers a sense of peace. In her essay, “We Are the Fossil Fuel Freedom Fighters,” Bonnie Hemphill (2016) offers hope by explaining that many Americans and people worldwide “have taken part in a social movement for climate solutions” (p. 161). These actions include, but are not limited to, sustainable development, renewable energy policies, pricing climate pollution, and even organizing food co-ops and carpools. These examples of ownership can free us to drive results. The most productive people and those most likely to succeed are those who are proactive about finding and solving problems, and comfortable acting with increasing autonomy and decreased oversight. As Hemphill states, “We who have come of age after the end of nature know that we have inherited damaged goods. But we’re strong and we’re smart, and we can, and we will rebuild” (p. 170). These people insist on hope, even if they have to dig through parched soil to find it. It’s only when we, as individuals, take full responsibility for a problem that we focus our full attention on it and feel the pressure we need to drive results. In a world where problems are getting more complex, determined and innovative problem-solving will flow from those who live as if help is not coming. Living with responsibility can make us stronger and more action-oriented individuals.

ARCADIA: A Student Journal for Faith and Culture

Coming of Age at the End of Nature highlights some disturbing facts: the climate change generation works longer hours with less security; we are a generation constrained by debt and desperately seeking alternatives to avoid taking personal responsibility. As an incoming college student, I must take full responsibility for my behavioral choices, respecting rules and policies and developing healthy study, eating, and sleeping habits. Maintaining academic honesty, persisting to succeed in my academic studies, and exercising personal integrity will soon become one of the most important responsibilities as a student. A sign of wisdom and maturity is when I come to terms with the realization that my decisions cause my rewards and consequences. I am responsible for my life, and my ultimate success depends on the choices I make.

Lost in Technology

MiRae Ryu

I hate being a millennial baby. In my lifetime, I have experienced people born in other generations having negative perspectives about millennials like me. Yes, it is true that millennials have had the luxury to grow up with technology; however, this could be more of a curse than a blessing. In fact, almost all my childhood toys required the use of batteries tucked away inside the body, and soon, my toys evolved into tablets that had an infinite number of games that could be downloaded. Our generation seemed alone together with our faces tucked behind our screens without realizing the isolation. For example, the internet lured me into a different world that was in the palms of my hands, and I soon became captivated. It became a habit. Since I have only remembered my life with answers from the Internet that can help me through what seemed like questionable moments, I became dependent. Little did I know that I would realize this after I found myself and my friend Cailey lost in the middle of the woods with no form of technology to show me the way out. This is when I realized the responsibility of assessing and addressing my ignorance on the dependency on technology.

In fact, I was always someone who hid in the comforts and reassurance of technology. Having a friend who was also dependent on the new innovations, Cailey had no problem agreeing to a stroll in the woods. However, I assured her that I knew my way around these woods by telling her the few stories I had exploring the woods with my two older brothers, and if we were to get lost, then I always had my phone that could navigate us back to my house. Once we traveled too far and I could no longer see any recognizable landmarks, I started to panic. It was finally time to admit that we were lost. Unlike the adults in Blair Braverman's (2016) "Post Nature Writing," I had no other person to blame but myself. And like the narrator, I only wanted to show my friend the beauty of these woods that only lay a few feet from my back door. Now we had traveled too far, and it seemed as if we have walked into a horror movie where the branches seemed like long arms trying to grab us and the leaves on the ground seemed as if they were trying to cover a scary monster that was waiting to grab our ankles. When reaching for my "way out," all I could feel was the lint in my pocket, and my stomach dropped. This is when I went through the first stage of responsibil-

ARCADIA: A Student Journal for Faith and Culture

ity, and I had to accept that it was my fault for putting us in danger through the comforts of technology.

Now I was in a position I could have never pictured myself in. Cailey and I were in an unknown location of the woods with no guide to lead us away. We decided that it was better to walk and try to find my house than sit in the forest and wait for a hero to come save us. It seemed as if we were walking in circles but all I could focus on was how disappointed I was that my phone had led us astray. This brought me to the conclusion that my devices are not always going to be there for me, especially in times that I really need them, and the technology blinded me to the dangers of this excursion.

As Bonnie Hemphill (2016) wrote, “Everything and nothing about the planet has changed in my lifetime” (p. 161), which reflects on the idea that no one has been educating society on the ignorance caused by technology. People, especially millennials, have depended on their phones and laptops, but I have yet to see the other generations grow from our mistakes. In fact, I have seen many technological advances throughout my life, yet there still doesn’t seem to be a balance, and “nothing about the planet has changed in my lifetime” in terms of the education and acknowledgment of the imbalance in technology. Similarly to Bonnie, I can see how humanity has done very little, although not in the same context. The older generations have made their efforts to give millennials balance; however, with society constantly conforming to the ills of technology, it makes acknowledging habitual problems harder in relations to technology. I had to learn a lesson that could not have been taught, and that is to recognize my clouded judgement.

After hours of walking, we emerged from the woods in a neighborhood a couple of miles away from my neighborhood. We had to borrow somebody’s phone to call our parents to come get us. Luckily, our parents came, and I got an earful about how irresponsible I was for going out, but I knew at that moment what the true meaning of responsibility was. Responsibility will not stop you from making mistakes, it is about finding oneself in the middle of a situation and being able to analyze the catalyst and hopefully learning where everything went wrong. After this experience, I did not end up swearing off electronics forever, but I did learn how to use everything in moderation. Like strolling through the trees in the forest, if you surround yourself with technology, you can get lost within it.

Volume IX - July 2019

Part 4:
The Life You Save May Be Your Own

History Repeats Itself

Briana Carril

As a society, we have faced constant challenges in trying to keep horrible events and actions from occurring. When we propose and make laws, our intention is to protect what we love and what we want to have in the future. However, this doesn't always work as intended. Just like a child can't have every toy that they want, society cannot have every law passed. *Coming of Age at the End of Nature: A New Generation Faces Life on a Changed Planet* has shown me even more how our past struggles will repeat themselves unless we strive to make changes to prevent these problems from reoccurring. In the essays "Why Haiti?" and "I'll Still Be Here," the authors challenge others to clean up their own messes and spills. Both essays have particular relevance in my daily life, as well as to my experience when I challenged the New York State Congressmen and Congresswomen to act against gun violence.

In "Why Haiti?" Elizabeth Cooke (2016) writes, "I answer this question endlessly" (p.12). Similarly, I ask myself: Why Sandy Hook, Las Vegas, Orlando, Parkland, Santé Fe? Why all these schools and places? Why were all these men, women, and children senselessly hurt? These questions remain unanswered as the tragic events are laid out in front of me on the news and social media. One question that can be answered is: "When will we as a society clean up our messes and spills?"

"As I lie in the darkness, willing it all to stop, the unexpected sound of singing cuts through the rain. The other girls, I slowly realize, are soothing the fears of the younger ones with familiar hymns" (Cooke, 2016, p. 18). Even in times of sorrow the nation slowly came together to create hope for a better future, through such events as March for Our Lives. In the article "Everything You Need to Know About NYC's March for Our Lives," Eliza Dumais writes about Alex Claverling, the 26-year-old student organizer of New York's event, "normally, social media feels like a way for people to avoid taking real action. However, within 24 hours of starting the online campaign, he had 1,500 attendees." This organization run by kids my age fueled my conviction for change and action. I hit social media where word can spread like wildfire to all my friends, my family, and to all the people who feel the same exact way I do: empowered.

ARCADIA: A Student Journal for Faith and Culture

In Government class, just a few days after March for Our Lives had announced a nationwide walk-out, my teacher asked for our opinion on what we thought these kids were doing. One classmate said they felt like they were making a difference and that they weren't letting a horrible event stop them from getting justice for their friends. Our Government teacher, liking the answers he was hearing from several other kids, told us to write letters to Congress. I had never before put so much emotion into a letter. I felt that since it was going to be read by at least a congressional staff assistant, I was putting my grain of sand into the pile that would possibly make a difference. It was as if I was pleading for my life, my future, the future of my kids, and the future of everyone else tired of gun violence. We fight for change in the hope that the congressmen would finally speak up and take action to change the laws and/or create new laws that would keep guns out of the hands of teenagers, and overall create a safer environment for the general population.

When my parents were little, they didn't have to worry about being safe in school or seeking justice for gun violence. They were able to just focus on their studies and on their future. Today we have active shooter drills that instill in us that unspeakable violence is not only possible but increasingly probable. Responsibility is knowing that an individual can resolve difficult tasks by either correcting the wrong or simply just knowing what to do in a difficult situation. The two essays cited above touch on responsibility by describing how to take ownership of an inherited problem and correct it.

With these cases of senseless losses of life, responsibility can be as simple as using a bad situation to justify and encourage meaningful change. Whether it's taking responsibility for someone else's actions or trying to better the world one day at a time, we all face the same conclusion, we will still be here.

Our parents want a better future for us—one that is substantially better than the one full of problems that our grandparents had to overcome. We spend every day of our lives arguing for what we believe in or something we want, but all that work gets us nowhere without action. Words without action are pointless. In the past, society dealt with racism and segregation. The moral compass of society brought about action which in turn brought about change. Society took responsibility for all the things that were going wrong and changed the laws. "I think [what] my childhood exposure to envi-

Volume IX - July 2019

ronmental awareness did was convince me that the adults were on the job. ... The grown-ups had it all covered” (Orbeson, 2016, 57). Today, we need the grown-ups in Congress to step up to the job at hand.

Since the nationwide walk-out demonstration and our class writing the letter to Congress, I am continuing to challenge the elected officials in Congress to change the laws. Being 18 years old, I exercise my power to vote and use technology to make my voice heard among the thousands of others. I vote for action. I vote for change. I vote for Congress to take responsibility to make changes that are meaningful. Times change, as do people. So why aren't we changing right now, so that we can ensure a brighter future?



The World is Not Too Old and Large to Change

Christine Connelly

115. This number may not seem very overpowering or large. In fact, the fall semester spans 113 days, and Apple AirPods are \$160, a value much higher than \$115. But, when you realize that the 115 represents the number of students, teachers and staff members who have lost their lives in school shootings since I entered kindergarten in 2005, it changes your perspective of the number. 115 lives lost, dreams crushed, and families destroyed. 115 people who would never enjoy a Sunday dinner gathered around the dining room table with family or a refreshing dip in the cool ocean on a scorching July afternoon. Schools of all levels are supposed to be a place of learning and safety, not cradling in corners fearing for your life. Gun violence has been an ever-growing issue in America, with even faster growing technology. With this growing technology, a person has the capability of printing—yes, *printing*—their own handheld weapon.

After the shooting at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School on Valentine's Day, 2018, there was an uproar in demands for stricter gun laws and background checks. As my generation comes of age and can vote, it is our turn "to take responsibility for messes and spills" (Orbeson, 2016, p. 58). It is our time to demand and create the change we want. We must decide what we feel is right, as Danna Joy Staaf says, we are "agonizing over the rightness or wrongness of every decision" (Staaf, 2016, p. 210). My high school was very split between conservative and liberal students. So, finding a balance of right and wrong was very difficult, as it is for our government. To take action into our own hands, myself and the other class officers planned a walkout. This walkout was planned for the same date as many of the survivors of the shooting planned for schools nationwide. We as a group of five felt that this walkout was the right choice to make, protesting the loose laws surrounding semiautomatic weapons.

My peers and I feel that it is our responsibility to clean up the messes and spills from generations before us, messes that we believe will restrict our growth as a society. Until we are old enough to hold offices that can implement cleaning up the messes we see, we can lead protests, send out petitions and hope those in office currently will see the change our generation demands. By leading the protest in my high school, I urged to clean up the spills that have

Volume IX - July 2019

been created and worsened since Columbine in 1999. School shootings are all too common in America, a place where the gun laws are less strict than in other countries. I hope to, throughout my continued schooling, fight for the necessary change. Many in Congress vote against these changes possibly because the money donated by the NRA is wielding some influence. However, contrary to their beliefs that “the world seemed too big and too old to change” (Hemphill, 2016, p. 162), the world is not too large and old to change. Society progresses with each generation, and it seems that my generation, the youngest, recognizes this and is calling out for this justice. While my part was small compared to the recent celebrity status of teen activists and gun control advocates Emma Gonzalez and David Hogg, I still have goals similar to theirs, demanding change. I hope to continue the fight for change until it is earned. This earned change will be my generation cleaning up and taking responsibility for messes and spills made by those before us, in a peaceful, nonviolent manner.

Cultivating Empathy

Belen Gamarra

The book *Coming of Age at the End of Nature: A Generation Faces Living on a Changed Planet* is thoroughly relatable to any millennial, even though our group is very diverse. After all, the only similarity that merges us is the time frame in which we were born. However, as depicted by many authors in the book, we, just by being born on a changed and changing planet, have dilemmas and responsibilities that are related.

In the essay entitled “Why Haiti?” Elizabeth Cooke describes her experience of going to Haiti as a volunteer, and, as the title depicts, she isn’t sure why she picked there out of all places. The country is a victim of disaster, and there is famine and unrest. This quote gives a bit of explanation: “I was so certain back then that I had something to gain—something to give—by moving to Haiti. All I had to do was leap and trust that I would land safely on the other side” (Cooke, 2016, p. 15). She trusted this feeling more than anything else. She felt this responsibility to help. It was strong enough to make the decision to land her there.

As humans, we are all capable of relating to this. Empathy is rooted in us, and naturally, we want to find a solution to problems in the world. The beautiful thing about living in this generation is that in ways and at rates never before possible, we can make an impact. For example, after Hurricane Maria, millions of people came to the rescue. Charities sent food, shelter, water, and other essentials. Celebrities shined a light on it, which helped many people become aware and determined to alleviate the suffering in Puerto Rico. People went out of their way, and people funded or encouraged relief from their own home. This simply would’ve been impossible in an old world. In a very real way, we are all responsible for the world around us given the resources that we have.

Everything, from politics to technological advances to shootings to fashion trends to health discoveries, can get exposure. If I wanted to, I could find an E-pal on the other hemisphere of the earth. I can become immersed in their culture; I can see their country by means of my screen, and with the click of a few buttons, I can book a flight to visit it tomorrow.

Volume IX - July 2019

As much as I open my computer to absorb what's happening somewhere else in the world, there are responsibilities now and here that must be tended to locally. I challenge myself to take responsibility for things every day. However, there is one thing that I believe really shaped the person that I am today—which was taking responsibility for my own negative thoughts.

Going through a divorce is so common nowadays. What I don't feel is too common is going through a divorce by yourself. As in, when they divorced, I didn't lose one parent; I lost both. My mother developed a drinking problem. My father moved to a small apartment in East Orange and always worked. Around this time, my half-brother was also leaving for the Navy. I just began to look at the negative in everything. I wanted so desperately to find ease within others, and my result was always disappointment. I remained empty for a long while. What I didn't think of was to search the thing that I had all along. I learned to lift the groundwork within myself and began to love myself through all the misery. And I found that there is no true home like the one within myself. I started to look for the things that I can be happy about instead of filtering it out and acting like it was minuscule. No matter the circumstance I realized that I have to take responsibility for my circumstances and stop blaming the outside.

I've come to understand through a measly 18 years of life experience that responsibility comes with action. I am responsible for the actions that I take today and every day. I'm responsible for my duties—school and work. I'm responsible for my possessions. I'm responsible for me, my body, and my mind. Responsibility also comes with no action. I am responsible for the actions that I don't take today and every day. If I don't complete my duties, there is no other person to blame. If I don't take care of my body, my mind, and me then I will surely face the consequences. This is not newfound. Nonetheless, our generation does have a newfound sense of responsibility. This is the responsibility that I have for someone that I don't know halfway across the world. On a comprehensive note, we are responsible now for recognizing the potential footprint we can have on the world or in somebody's life, as the footprints we leave have never been more tangible.

A Bridge Between Worlds

Muireann Carmody

It was my freshman year of high school. I scurried through the flooded hallways and dodged the roadblocks, also known as the popular upperclassmen, to get to my French class. After the never-ending weeks of “*Bonjour*” and “*Comment tu t’appelles?*”, I noticed people making fun of the quirky but quiet blonde-haired girl in my class. I’d only heard her speak a handful of times, so why were people making fun of her? That is a good question, so why did I contribute to this? I may have not verbally done anything wrong, but my actions spoke louder. I thought because other people picked on her due to social anxiety that I should avoid the situation altogether and continue to let this occur. Being a bystander is just as bad as doing the deed. I lacked courage and let my insecurities get in the way of speaking up.

Fast forward to my senior year of high school. The blonde-haired girl, Hannah, ended up being in my ceramics class, and we chose to sit next to each other. We were both lone wolves in that class: we did not have any friends or people with whom we were acquainted. Hannah and I grew to have each other; throughout the school year we bonded over countless similarities such as having an unhealthy obsession with our dogs, having a brother with Asperger’s, and loving the beautiful craft that is ceramics. She sat at my lunch table every day and we developed a friendship. With our hands covered in clay and probably laughing about some funny cat video, I began to realize that she was the opposite of what I expected. She is so much more than just a blonde-haired girl. Thinking back to the time when I judged her disgusted me. We as human beings have a responsibility to take care of one another. I most definitely “judged a book by its cover.” What most people do not think about, me included, is that sometimes the “ordinary” book becomes award winning. Looking past the seemingly so “ordinary” book cover and taking the time to read the pages can be surprisingly delightful and enlightening.

In my opinion taking responsibility means using communication skills for justice and to empathize with others. Also, responsibility means that one has a positive view of oneself and radiates one’s beliefs. CJ Goulding (2016) described that he used to think that his skin color among his peers was a problem but now sees it as a posi-

Volume IX - July 2019

tive thing. He sees it as a “megaphone” to convey the message that people of color in cities [without a lot of access to the outdoors] can explore the outdoors too and for others [that grew up with the outdoors] “to connect to new cultures” (p. 159). As Goulding did, someone who takes responsibility must have respect for themselves and a healthy self-esteem to radiate their message effectively.

A positive image of oneself aids to show the genuine nature of a leader and helps their passion seep through others. At the beginning of high school, I was this introverted girl who didn’t want to speak up because I feared outside judgement. I am still shy but my attitude towards others’ opinions has changed. I now feel like it is my obligation to speak up against verbal harassment. All my life classmates tormented my brother for being different, and I became sick of it. A statement said by Goulding (2016) to which I relate is: “there are two worlds, I am a bridge” (p. 159). I want to pursue a career in which I am the bridge between those who have special needs and those who overlook these individuals. As a special education teacher, it will be my responsibility to fight for these struggling students and show the world the beauty within each of them.

A vital characteristic of someone who takes responsibility is being open-minded. To me there is a low level of maturity equated to narrow-minded people. To be a strong and successful leader one cannot judge another based on physical appearance. While observing an abandoned house with debris and a crumbling exterior William Thomas (2016) calls it perfect. This is the equivalent of one looking past the physical attributes such as clothes, race, gender, etc., and getting to know the person for their soul. He enters inside the house and discovers an abundance of salvageable and reusable items. Thomas says, “I saw what others overlooked. These houses could be fixed, and I could shelter friends, build kitchens, rebuild bathrooms, put in woodstoves, and create meeting spaces” (p. 120). Everyone has a point in their life where they are crumbling or falling apart. As humans that all live in the same world, should we not all be responsible to help those that are abandoned—or at the very least respect them?

Leaving Neverland

Arifa Nagim

It's been said that the line between childhood and adulthood is crossed when we move from saying "it got lost" to "I lost it." Indeed, being accountable—and understanding and accepting the role our choices play in the things that happen—are crucial signs of emotional and moral maturity. Many people live in their own Neverland, refusing to grow up to avoid the daunting consequences of being held accountable. Of course, responsibility requires us to do things that are unpleasant or even frightening: to carry our own weight, prepare and set goals, and exercise the discipline to reach our aspirations. However, the benefits of accepting responsibility far outweigh the short-lived advantages of refusing to do so—life does not become better by avoiding responsibility. This infinite childhood is actually a form of self-imposed servitude—to circumstances and to other people. Responsibility is about our ability to respond to circumstances and to choose the attitudes, actions, and reactions that shape our lives. We can only reach our full potential, and truly adore life, when we finally start to be accountable and self-reliant. Responsibility is crucial in order to fully appreciate life and the pleasures, prerogatives, and power of freedom and independence.

Eventually we all must grow up and leave Neverland, and it is then we are faced with the result of our denial of responsibility, as our world is left in disarray. One issue that is often overlooked is homelessness. Homelessness is the result of gentrification—a city's lack of response to protect affordable housing for homeless people. This is a product of a lack of government regulation which lets the landlords charge as much as they want, subsidizes the construction of high-end apartments, and bidding up rents, which leaves the poor with fewer options and forcibly removes families. Gentrification has left many locals homeless and forced to leave a community where they grew up.

The catalyst for me to get involved occurred during my junior year of high school. My history teacher, whom I had had for the last two years, was organizing a coat drive. Living in an affluent town, I had never really thought about those less fortunate than us. As Ben Cromwell (2016) said in the essay "Diseases of Affluence," "To be that close to the edge of the world inspires a kind of connection to it.

Volume IX - July 2019

There is so little here. Literally, we were on an island of life in the middle of the sea, and were on it still, though it is less obvious how close to the edge of the world we are. Maybe that's the real disease of affluence: deception, the gilt frame that hides how close we all are to inundation" (p. 142). A friend and I wanted to do something to help those less fortunate, so we collected winter clothing and some packaged foods during the holiday season. We gift wrapped the items and distributed them to fellow New Yorkers who were spending the holidays on the street. The last gift we gave out happened to be a nice, expensive coat that someone had donated to us. Although the night was frigid, the gentleman that opened up the present told us that somebody already gave him a coat and that there were people two blocks down that needed the coat more than he did. He asked us about our background, and we explained how fortunate we are to live in a community and environment that allows us to help others. Then he told us how things took an unfortunate turn with his family, leading to other issues, which in turn led to his unemployment and loss of home. This one, short interaction was a wakeup call for me in two ways: anyone can come across hard times—regardless of the person's background. This experience was mirrored by Amaris Ketcham (2016) who describes staying with some homeless people in a tent city: "A Native American woman befriended me, and, I believe, protected me. I think I reminded her of her teenage daughters whom she did not have rights to visit. She gave me a pallet to sleep on and some Oreos and Cheetos that were dropped off by some church group" (p. 47). It also taught me that we have a duty—a responsibility—to take care of one another. In this case, even though the person we were dealing with was homeless, he had the kindness and compassion to think of others who were in an even less fortunate position than he was.

We all have a responsibility to help and take care of each other. To limit the responsibility for the current homeless situation to those in the government is short-sighted. All of us have a responsibility to care for the homeless, as "provide for the general welfare" is the basis for the entire Constitution. We can address this problem. We can re-educate ourselves and change the way future generations think. This is what my teacher accomplished through his drive. He had inculcated our community with a sense of love, kindness, and empathy that the world is currently greatly lacking. It showed us that when we truly put ourselves in another's shoes, a good and long-term solution will percolate. We must take down the wall separating one group from the other. Over the long term, if we take the

ARCADIA: A Student Journal for Faith and Culture

responsibility for the mess we have spilled over the city, we can make it a better place to live.

Volume IX - July 2019

References for Freshman Studies Essays

- Braverman, B. (2016). Post-nature writing. In J. Dunlap & S. A. Cohen (Eds.) *Coming of age at the end of nature: A generation faces living on a changed planet* (pp. 3-11). San Antonio, TX: Trinity University Press.
- Bromwell, B. (2016). Diseases of affluence. In J. Dunlap & S. A. Cohen (Eds.) *Coming of age at the end of nature: A generation faces living on a changed planet* (pp. 133-144). San Antonio, TX: Trinity University Press.
- Climate change, Ecuador's constant struggle to curb its effects. (2018, May 22). *Andes*. Retrieved from www.andes.info.ec/es/noticias/lifestyle/1/climate-change-ecuadors-constant-struggle-curb-effects
- CO2 emissions. (2016). *Global carbon atlas*. Retrieved from www.globalcarbonatlas.org/en/CO2-emissions
- Cooke, E. (2016). Why Haiti? In J. Dunlap & S. A. Cohen (Eds.) *Coming of age at the end of nature: A generation faces living on a changed planet* (pp. 12-23). San Antonio, TX: Trinity University Press.
- Coplen, A. (2016). Tamale traditions: Cultivating an understanding of humans and non-human nature through food. In J. Dunlap & S. A. Cohen (Eds.) *Coming of age at the end of nature: A generation faces living on a changed planet* (pp. 82-90). San Antonio, TX: Trinity University Press.
- Dicky, S. (2016). The lives of plovers. In J. Dunlap & S. A. Cohen (Eds.) *Coming of age at the end of nature: A generation faces living on a changed planet* (pp. 145-155). San Antonio, TX: Trinity University Press.
- Dumais, E. (2018, March 16). "Everything you need to know about NYC's March for Our Lives. *Thrillist*. Retrieved from <http://www.thrillist.com/>
- Dunlap, J., & Cohen, S. A. (2016). *Coming of age at the end of nature: A generation faces living on a changed planet*. San Antonio, TX: Trinity University Press.

ARCADIA: A Student Journal for Faith and Culture

- Ecuador. (2018). *Mongabay*. Retrieved from <https://www.mongabay.com/deforestation/archive/Ecuador.htm>
- English Oxford Living Dictionaries*. (2018). Retrieved from <https://en.oxforddictionaries>
- Friedman, Y. (2015, November 18). *Aging Architecture: The Staten Island Farm Colony's Regeneration*. Retrieved from <https://urbanomnibus.net/2015/11/aging-architecture-the-staten-island-farm-colonys-regeneration/>
- Goldfarb, B. (2016). Rebuild or retreat: Is it time to give up on places like the Rockaways? In J. Dunlap & S. A. Cohen (Eds.) *Coming of age at the end of nature: A generation faces living on a changed planet* (pp. 24-31). San Antonio, TX: Trinity University Press.
- Goulding, C. J. (2016). Why I wear Jordans in the great outdoors. In J. Dunlap & S. A. Cohen (Eds.) *Coming of age at the end of nature: A generation faces living on a changed planet* (pp. 156-160). San Antonio, TX: Trinity University Press.
- Gracey, M. (Director). (2017). *The greatest showman* [Motion picture]. United States: 20th Century Fox.
- Hemphill, Bonnie F. (2016). We are the fossil-fuel freedom fighters. In J. Dunlap & S. A. Cohen (Eds.) *Coming of age at the end of nature: A generation faces living on a changed planet* (pp. 161-170). San Antonio, TX: Trinity University Press.
- Hupp, Lisa (2016). Winter solstice. In J. Dunlap & S. A. Cohen (Eds.) *Coming of age at the end of nature: A generation faces living on a changed planet* (pp. 32-42). San Antonio, TX: Trinity University Press.
- Johannes, F., Ge, M., & Pickens, A. (2017). This interactive chart explains world's top 10 emitters, and how they've changed." *World Resources Institute*. Retrieved from <https://www.wri.org/blog/2017/04/interactive-chart-explains-worlds-top-10-emitters-and-how-theyve-changed>

Volume IX - July 2019

- Ketcham, A. (2016). Urban foraging. In J. Dunlap & S. A. Cohen (Eds.) *Coming of age at the end of nature: A generation faces living on a changed planet* (pp. 43-49). San Antonio, TX: Trinity University Press.
- Maier, C. (2016). Wilderness of blackberries. In J. Dunlap & S. A. Cohen (Eds.) *Coming of age at the end of nature: A generation faces living on a changed planet* (pp. 91-97). San Antonio, TX: Trinity University Press.
- McBride, A. (2016). To love an owl. In J. Dunlap & S. A. Cohen (Eds.) *Coming of age at the end of nature: A generation faces living on a changed planet* (pp. 50-53). San Antonio, TX: Trinity University Press.
- McGuire, B. (2016, October 12). How climate change triggers earthquakes, tsunamis and volcanoes. *The Guardian*. Retrieved from <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/oct/16/climate-change-triggers-earthquakes-tsunamis-volcanoes>
- McKibben, B. (2006). *The end of nature*. New York, NY: Random House.
- Orbeson, J. (2016). But I'll still be here. In J. Dunlap & S. A. Cohen (Eds.) *Coming of age at the end of nature: A generation faces living on a changed planet* (pp. 54-64). San Antonio, TX: Trinity University Press.
- Parnell, A. (2016). Sunset at mile 16. In J. Dunlap & S. A. Cohen (Eds.) *Coming of age at the end of nature: A generation faces living on a changed planet* (pp. 112-119). San Antonio, TX: Trinity University Press.
- Reid, K. (2018, July 9). 2016 Ecuador earthquake: Facts, FAQs, and how to help. *World Vision*. Retrieved from <https://www.worldvision.org/disaster-relief-news-stories/2016-ecuador-earthquake-facts>
- Schosid, E. (2016). Could mopping save the world? How day-to-day chores can bring big changes. In J. Dunlap & S. A. Cohen (Eds.) *Coming of age at the end of nature: A generation faces living on a changed planet* (pp. 191-207). San Antonio, TX: Trinity University Press.

ARCADIA: A Student Journal for Faith and Culture

- Staaf, D. J. (2016). True to our nature. In J. Dunlap & S. A. Cohen (Eds.) *Coming of age at the end of nature: A generation faces living on a changed planet* (pp. 208-216). San Antonio, TX: Trinity University Press.
- Thomas, W. (2016). Birdhouse treasures. In J. Dunlap & S. A. Cohen (Eds.) *Coming of age at the end of nature: A generation faces living on a changed planet* (pp. 120-124). San Antonio, TX: Trinity University Press.

*St. Francis of Assisi,
pray for us!*



Prison of St. Francis of Assisi