**Notre Dame Leadership Seminars**

**The Environment: Science, Policy, Ethics - Essay #1**

**Please answer one of the following questions. [300 words]**

1. Which present environmental issue is of most concern to you and why? Please be specific, citing relevant sources in the course of your narrative.
2. Imagine that as a future scientist or policy maker, you are called upon to draft a 10-year plan that addresses climate change. What is the single most important intervention you would propose for doing so? Please draw upon and cite relevant scientific and policy sources in the course of your answer.

“He’s dying.” My classmate said as I set foot on the Race Rocks Islands. Noticing my approach, this male, young-adult sealion began to howl out of vigilance, but couldn’t move anymore.

Two months later, he was still lying there, skinny and lethargic. The marine mammal veterinarian could have done nothing with his shrunken skull and bleeding left eye. I learned that the propeller had damaged his nerves. The only eye he had was filled with sorrow and hatred.

I observed him on the island every day, in the morning winds of up to 40 knots or the twilight of the sunset. Each time, I recall what I learned from my Marine Science class: the fat stored within an adult sea lion can sustain its life for months despite the lack of food.

I started to concern about coastal biodiversity. The fate of humankind is closely linked to that of the ocean and marine lives - half of the oxygen that we inhale comes from the ocean, and the ocean absorbs about one-third of the carbon dioxide produced by human activities.

But, we, the human, are destroying this very system. The burning of fossil fuels leads to the sea’s increased level of acidity, and then dissolved oxygen decreases, and polar glaciers melt. Numerous marine creatures have been forced out of their natural habitats and into extinction. Over one-third of the fish population has now become unsustainable due to overfishing. Up to 8 million tons of plastic is being dumped into our oceans annually, suffocating an enormous number of marine lives.

Having witnessed marine animals being threatened by unnatural destructive factors, I’ve made up my mind to continue my diving cleaning job and ocean monitoring. Starting with small changes, I believe I’ll gradually enlarge my impact on the conservation of marine biodiversity.

[word counts: 299]

**Essay #2**

**Please answer one of the following questions. [250 words]**

1. Where in the world (any world) would you like to get lost?
2. If you had the power to stop time, when would you use it and what would you do?
3. Write a love letter to your chosen piece of technology.

Great-grandma chased the chickens out of the coop, while Grandpa was chopping wood beside the farmhouse; Uncle just came back from the morning market after selling agricultural products. The mist was not yet clear, but our family had long been awake.

The incessant “cracks” from the mud stove woke me up. Savoring my vegetable porridge, I smelled the lamb braised in our huge wok. I went to sit beside my grandma on a small stool, handing the firewood to her. The cozy, bright fire lit up my cheeks. I’d spend all my childhood days in the village catching crayfish, making malt sugar, and fluffing cotton.

This time, I wake up with the howling of sea lions and seals. It takes a while before I realize myself being inside an ecological reserve. It’s still dark outside. I open the door. The peculiar smell of coastal creatures seizes my nose. Then, I walk out. Living here for a week, I’ve gotten used to a lot of things, from no shower, frozen food, to limited electricity. But nothing changes my deep appreciation for the daily sunrise and sunset. “The demands of mankind are unlimited,” I start to reflect on what my economics teacher once said in class.

Before returning to campus this afternoon, I’ll climb up to the top of the lighthouse to watch the whales not far away. I enjoy getting lost on the island, where I have little but lack nothing, like how everything was at the dawn of humanity.

[word counts: 249]

**Additional Comments**

If there is further information you believe would be helpful to the Admission Committee, please provide it below: [100 words remaining]

No.