EIA 31.3 Abstracts

**Laura Hartman**Climate engineering is subject to the “playing God” critique, which charges that humans should not undertake to control nature in ways that seem to overstep the proper scope of human agency. This argument is easily discredited, and in fact the opposite—that we should “play God”—may be equally valid in some circumstances. To revive the playing God critique, I argue that it functions not on a logical but on a symbolic and emotional level to highlight nostalgia for functional dualisms in the face of the bewildering problem of climate change. It also raises significant questions about the virtue of those who might engineer the climate. These two concerns point to questions about the proper role of human agency. I use the scholarship of Aldo Leopold and H. Richard Niebuhr to argue for a model of human agency based on contextual awareness and responsive, communal responsibility. I conclude with some implications of this view for decision-makers engaging the topic of climate engineering.

**Keywords:** playing God, geoengineering, virtue, Aldo Leopold, H. Richard Niebuhr, humility, modesty, responsibility, context, human agency