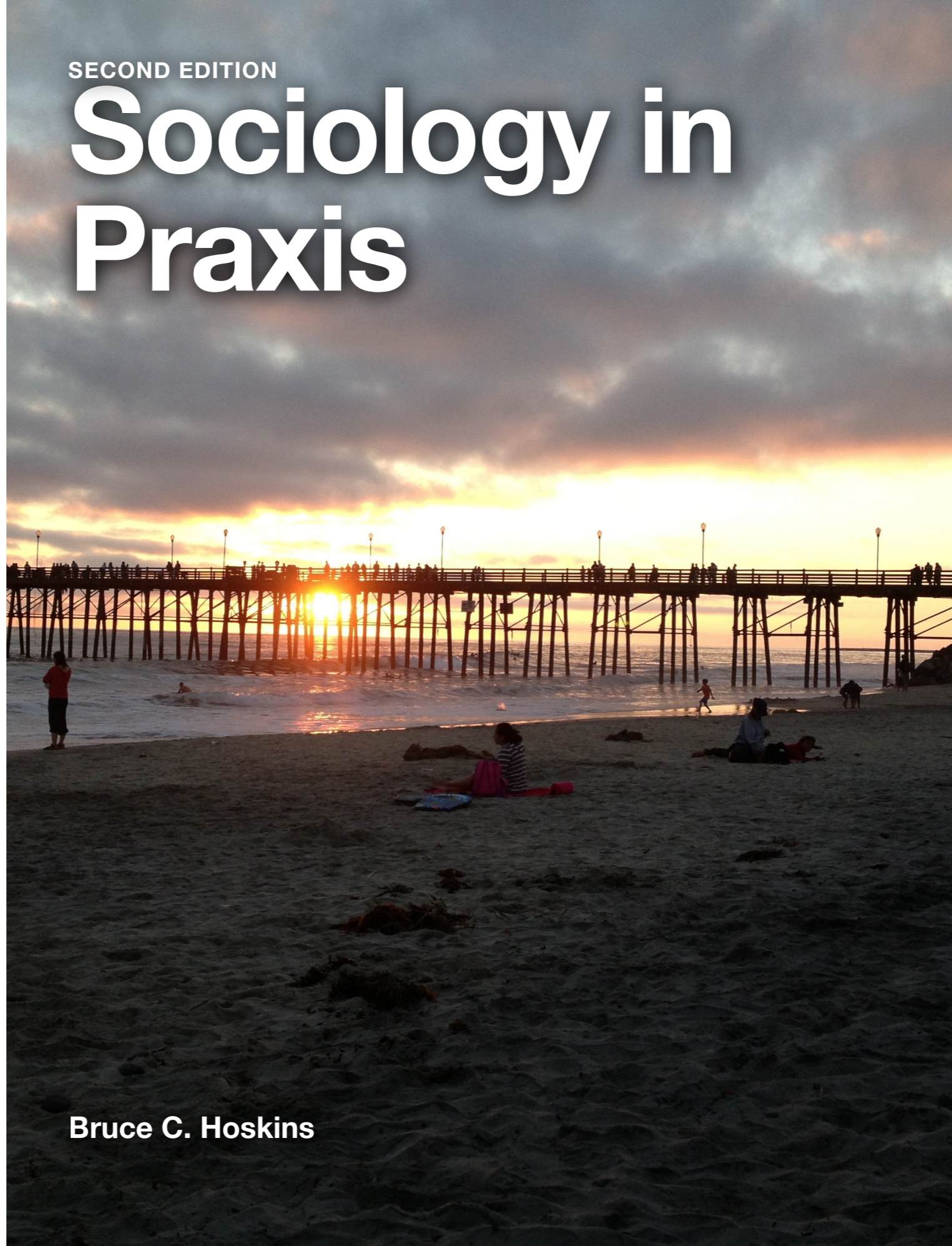


SECOND EDITION

# Sociology in Praxis



Bruce C. Hoskins

Chapter 13

---

# Age, Environment, and Health



# Aging and Society

**Gerontology** is the study of the sociological and psychological aspects of aging and the problems of the aged and has become of paramount importance as the *Baby Boomer generation*, which is understood today as anyone in their mid-50's to late-70's, enters into retirement. As a society, we are experiencing social challenges that have never occurred before in history because education about health and advances in medicine and have increased people's life expectancy and has caused many nations to have more people over the age of 60, 70, 80 and higher. (View Movie 1.1)

## *Perspectives on Age and Aging*

### Movie 1.1 Pops



- 1) <https://youtu.be/9M0YsXj8DaA> - Video
- 2) *What is the main point of this video?*
- 3) *What example(s) do the authors use to illustrate their point(s)? Do you agree or disagree? Explain.*
- 4) *How has growing older affected you? Explain.*

A person living a longer life gives new insights to **age stratification theory**, which seeks to understand how society makes distinctions based on age. Should people still be considered an adult at the age of 18? Why not 21? Why not 16 or younger? Should retirement age remain at 65 or should it be 67 or even 70? *Symbolic interactionists* are interested in how conceptualizations of age will change as it is commonly accepted now that 30 is the new 20. What this suggests is that people will be allowed to explore life options, advance their education levels and work in multiple careers before they settle down, get married and have children.

*Functionalists* would argue that

having predetermined ages for specific events and stages in life contribute to stability and order in society. If there is a set age, then people can build up traditions and ceremonies around these key moments in life that will help develop a common identity amongst members of society. Graduations and marriages are community events that allow the public to (re)affirm its values and beliefs and gives confirmation that these principles are being passed down to the next generation.

Concerns about who determines what is young or old are the focus of *conflict theorists*. **Ageism** refers to prejudice and discrimination based on a person's age. People younger than 30 can experience ageism in the workforce regarding promotions. If a qualified individual appears *too young* many employers may bypass this person for a promotion because older subordinate staff may not respect them. Another way that young people are

discriminated against is through receiving lesser pay for equal work after controlling for experience. (View Movie 1.2)

However, the vast majority of ageism happens in the workforce to people that are 40 or older. Layoffs and early retirement disproportionately affect older employees because they tend to make higher salaries, but it should be noted that they also have the most experience to help a company through economic downturns. Not being hired or limited promotion opportunities happen because of concerns with how long older employees will stay with the company or assumed health issues when it is impossible to predict such factors.

### *Socialization Over Your Life Time*

As we grow older, the socialization process remains active in our lives. The **life course perspective** considers the roles people play over a lifetime, the ages associated with

those roles, and how people are socialized into those roles. (View Movie 1.3) Major shifts in the social roles that we play are usually

## **Movie 1.2 Poetry in Praxis**

*F\*\*K YOU Old People* by Tayler Geiger, Ben Tolkin, Andie Berry, and Sam Lai



- 1) <https://youtu.be/y2LalkecFfs> - Video
- 2) *What is the poem about?*
- 2) *What larger social factors is the poet concerned about?*
- 3) *What do you think the poet believes is the problem?*
- 4) *Is the poet suggesting a solution? If so, do you agree or disagree? If not, what do you think might help?*

marked with a **rite of passage**, which is a formal event that marks the transition from one status to another. For people in the US, 18 is the age of adulthood and has many rites associated with it. The right to vote, being able to sign for yourself and registering for the draft all happen at this age. However, perhaps the most significant event that marks adulthood is graduation from high school and allows people to engage fully in their responsibilities as a citizen. In many Latin American countries, women reach the age of adulthood at 15 and are celebrated with a quinceanera, while Jewish girls become women at age 12 and boys become men at 13 and have a Bat Mitzvah and Bar Mitzvah respectively.

Marriage is a rite of passage that happens for the majority of people in the US by the age of 29, while 40 years ago the vast majority of the population was married by the age of 25. Although biologist would state that we are born with the desire to procreate, the concept of marriage is entirely a social construction. Our culture will teach us what is an acceptable age

to get married, who you should marry, and how soon you should have children. Although many children are born out of wedlock, it is still the case that marriage marks the time when two people are ready to become parents.

### Movie 1.3 Poetry in Praxis

*Life in Reverse* by Gray Thomas

# button poetry

1) [https://youtu.be/j\\_CSzwf5ww0](https://youtu.be/j_CSzwf5ww0) - Video

2) *What is the poem about?*

2) *What larger social factors is the poet concerned about?*

3) *What do you think the poet believes is the problem?*

4) *Is the poet suggesting a solution? If so, do you agree or disagree? If not, what do you think might help?*

Another rite of passage that is very significant in the US is retirement which happens to most in people their 60's. However; this number will most likely rise as people are expected to live longer and stay healthier throughout their lifetimes. **Disengagement theory** suggests that society and the aging individual mutually sever many of their relationships. Therefore retirement marks the *golden years* of a person's life where they formally disengage from the workspace and seek to enjoy the remaining years of their lives. As one gets older,

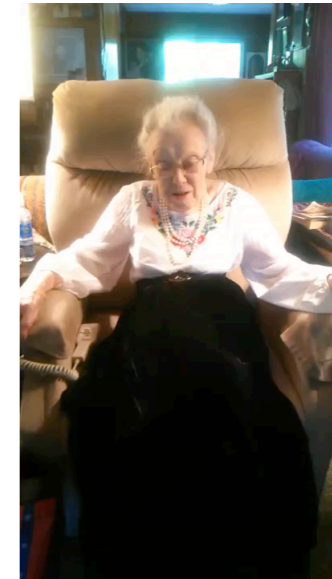
we must be socialized into how to retire in a manner where you are still independent and can do many of the things that you could not do with children and a full work schedule. You need to

know what an IRA (Individual Retirement Account) is, how to apply for social security, and how to manage a fixed budget to name just a few things.

However, one of the most challenging things for retired people to deal with is how to spend all of their extra time. Although most young people today would play video games, watch TV or surf the web for all hours of the day, **activity theory** suggests that those elderly people who remain active and socially involved will be best adjusted. In other words, playing video games all day would be one of the WORST things you could do to maintain good mental, physical and social well-being. Examples of staying active would be to join a social club, play a sport, travel, workout at the local gym or even maintain a part-time job. Anything that increases your interaction with actual people. (View Movie 1.4)

## Movie 1.4 Poetry in Praxis

*The Jewel Inside* by Wanda Goines



1) <https://youtu.be/2YxCR2a-sxl> - Video

2) *What is the poem about?*

3) *What larger social factors is the poet concerned about?*

4) *What do you think the poet believes is the problem?*

5) *Is the poet suggesting a solution? If so, do you agree or disagree? If not, what do you think might help?*

# What is Healthy?

**Health** is a state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being. Measuring a nation's health is done primarily through two factors: **Infant mortality rate**, which is the number of deaths in the first year of life for each 1,000 live births and **life expectancy**, which is the statistically projected age that a person in that nation is likely to live. In the US our infant mortality rate is approximately 6 per 1000 live births, while our life expectancy is close to 79 years old. According to the New England Journal of Medicine Christopher Murray, D. Phil and Julio Frenk state that although we spend the most per capita on health, these numbers ranked us at 37th for infant mortality and 36th for life expectancy.

## Movie 1.5 Poetry in Praxis

*Explaining My Depression to My Mom* by Sabrina Benaim

# button poetry

- 1) <https://youtu.be/aqu4ezLQEUA> - video
- 2) *What is the poem about?*
- 3) *What larger social factors is the poet concerned about?*
- 4) *What do you think the poet believes is the problem?*
- 5) *Is the poet suggesting a solution? If so, do you agree or disagree? If not, what do you think might help?*

When people think of being healthy, they focus on not being sick. **Social epidemiology** is the study of disease distribution, impairment, and general health status across a population. These scientists focus on **morbidity rates**, which is the incidence of disease in a given population. They take note of the fact that across the world poverty is the biggest killer because impoverished people are exposed to so many risk factors such as hazardous living and working conditions, a nutrient deficient diet, low education levels and lack of health care. They also find that a person's race, ethnicity, gender, and age can affect a population's morbidity rates and seek to find ways to address

these circumstances while appreciating the socio-cultural challenges that may contribute to poor health.

### *The Medicalization of Society*

The importance of health care as a social institution has increased dramatically over the years. Society has come a long way from using leeches to suck away the *bad blood* that was supposed to make people sick. Now medicine and health practices have been heavily researched and quantified into pills by pharmaceutical companies.

Modern medicine has been proven to be effective in treating the symptoms of illness; however, many of the remedies that we use have side effects that also need to be addressed. Therefore, there has been a growing shift toward **holistic medicine**, which refers to therapies in which the health care practitioner considers the person's physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual characteristics. Chiropractors treat back pain by attending to the health of the spine rather than surgery; nurse-midwives turn breeched babies rather than perform C-sections; and acupuncturist's focus on the flow of energy throughout the body rather than harsh chemical interventions.

Effectively being able to treat symptoms of illness has created a society that does not critically think about how these symptoms may be pointing us to bigger health issues that if left untreated will only make the symptoms worsen over time. Consider

Attention Deficit Hyperactive Disorder (ADHD), which is a real and quantifiable disorder where people have difficulty focusing, sitting still and lack overall impulse control. Although this disorder is diagnosable and treatable, this may be one of the most socially over identified illnesses of our time. Rather than going to a legitimate psychiatrist, many people will diagnose themselves and use this as an explanation for poor performance in school. Teachers may identify ADHD as the problem rather than their lack of desire to teach in a manner that is engaging to students of this generation. And educational administrators may also speak of ADHD rather than mention the fact that many public schools have removed music and art programs that engage in kinetic modalities of learning and have shorted the duration of recess. In other words, ADHD is real but could be more of a function of modern society being more structured and goal-oriented than it has ever been before.

### *The Perspectives on Health*

Although the definition of health is quite simple, quantifying what is considered healthy is an entirely different subject. *Symbolic interactionists* would be interested not only in how a given culture defines health but also how it is maintained. If you were to do a content analysis of magazines that purport to focus on health what would you see? Men's health revolves around being able to see their muscles! The epitome of men's fitness is the six-pack abs. What this suggests is that males need to build up muscle



mass and lose body fat. Most men are even encouraged to gain weight rather than lose it. And the media supports this image by rarely if ever, illustrating men who have small frames and slight builds as masculine. This portrayal is so prevalent that two top comedians, Kevin Hart (small frame) and Chris Rock (slight build), joke about this fact in their stand-up routines.

Women's health in the US is almost entirely defined by being thin. If you were to analyze the covers of female-focused magazines, you would find that over half of them have some version of a diet regarding how to lose 5lbs in a week, 10lbs in three weeks or 20lbs in two months coupled with a scantily clothed pencil thin woman who has figured out the secret to happiness. Symbolic interactionists would also point out that this thinness has very little to do with actual fitness. These weight loss programs usually focus on eating habits and mild workout regimens (i.e. walking) rather than building muscle

mass, which is clinically proven to help burn body fat. Women who are thin are assumed to be in good shape, and when women who have a problem losing weight find out about how little a thin woman does to maintain their dress size, they hate them. (View Movie 1.6)

However, although *functionalists* would never condone people making themselves sick or hurting themselves to achieve social standards of health, creating an image that is difficult to obtain fuels capitalistic ventures to help people strive towards society's desired body. How many businesses are out there that focus on health and nutrition? How many places are there to workout? How many weight loss clinics or nutrition specialists are out there? Also, once you achieve that ideal body, you have to continue to workout just to maintain it.

Although lowering your body fat percentage is a good health goal, *conflict theorists* would be quick to argue that women are

### Movie 1.6 Poetry in Praxis

*Dear Ursula* by Melissa May

# button poetry

1) [https://youtu.be/xLSnNSqs\\_CQ](https://youtu.be/xLSnNSqs_CQ) - Video

2) *What is the poem about?*

3) *What larger social factors is the poet concerned about?*

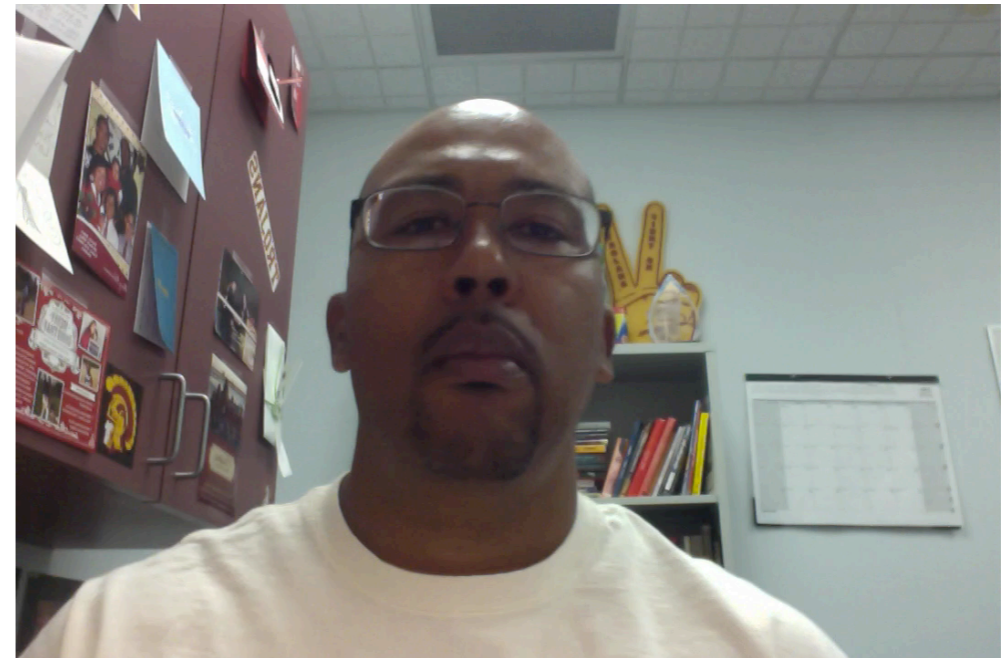
4) *What do you think the poet believes is the problem?*

5) *Is the poet suggesting a solution? If so, do you agree or disagree? If not, what do you think might help?*

negatively affected by our current construction of women's health. The **culture-bound syndrome** refers to a disease or illness that cannot be understood apart from some specific social context and in the US women of all ages are plagued with anorexia nervosa and bulimia because of society's focus on thinness rather than health.

Another issue for *conflict theorist* in the United States relates to the significant discrepancies in the health of black and white people. Black males have a life expectancy of approximately 72 years while their white counterparts are at 77 years. Black females are at about 78 while white women are at 81 years. Infant neo, and post-natal deaths are twice as likely to occur amongst African Americans than for white people. One reason for this difference is that black people are more likely to suffer from the stress of racial discrimination, which heavily contributes to hypertension, stroke and heart disease. However, research has also uncovered that black people are less likely to receive standard health care and life-saving treatment procedures than White people even when they have similar health coverage. (View Movie 1.7)

## Movie 1.7 Culture-Bound Syndrome and Phobias



- 1) <https://youtu.be/RVUxWsKvL8c> - Video
- 2) *What is the main point of this video?*
- 3) *What example(s) do the authors use to illustrate their point(s)? Do you agree or disagree? Explain.*
- 4) *Can you think of any other examples of how certain social issues can show how you and your friends are concerned about very different things? Explain.*

## Section 3

# The Environment and Us

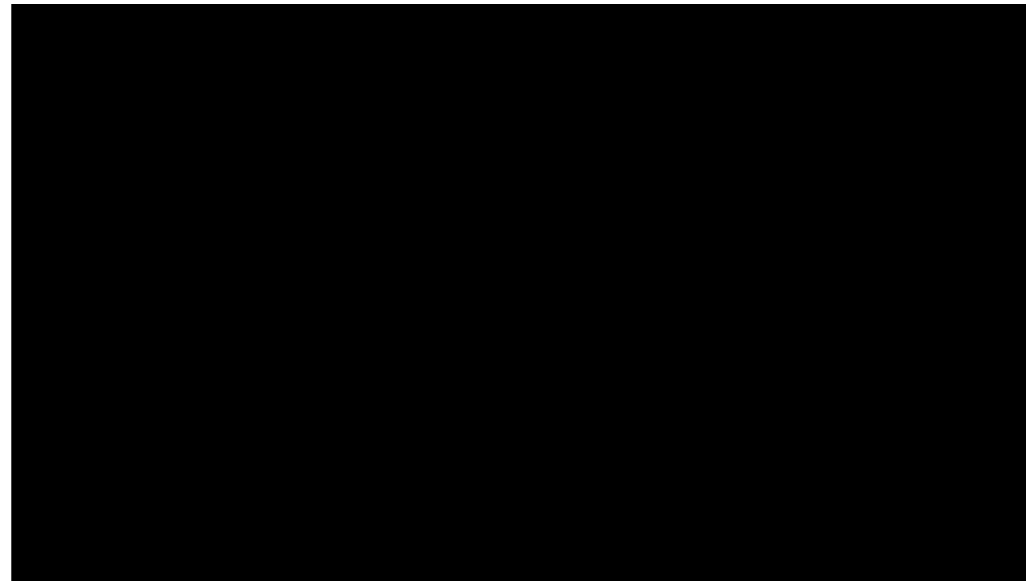
Our environment is something that we interact with continuously, but do not think about it much in the course of our everyday lives. How much we think about our environment is changing as we have uncovered that the manner in which we treat our world affects us in many ways.

**Human ecology** studies the interrelationship between people and their environment. We continue to learn about pollution and its various effects, but caring for our environment is a multifaceted endeavor that is not limited in how we manage our waste, but also how we use natural resources. Therefore, human ecology studies the checks-

and-balances that happen in every decision we make at a local, national and global community and how we can better serve our planet.

### Movie 1.8 Poetry in Praxis

*Sorry* by Prince Ea



- 1) <https://youtu.be/eRLJscAlk1M> - Video
- 2) *What is the poem about?*
- 3) *What larger social factors is the poet concerned about?*
- 4) *What do you think the poet believes is the problem?*
- 5) *Is the poet suggesting a solution? If so, do you agree or disagree? If not, what do you think might help?*

**Water Pollution** – The toll of unsafe water on people’s health cannot be calculated because of the vastness of the problems. Water is essential to life, however, throughout the world, over 1.1 billion people lack safe and adequate drinking water. Additionally, over 2.6 billion people have no real way to sanitize wastewater, which further threatens the quality of their water supply and the water of others.

**Air Pollution** - The World Health Organization has found that air pollution directly contributes to over 700,000 premature deaths per year and that more than 1 billion people across the world are exposed to

unhealthy and potentially damaging levels of air pollution. Air pollution in our inner cities is primarily caused by automobile emissions, power plants, and other heavy industries.

Another result of air pollution is **global warming**, which is the significant rise in the earth's surface temperatures that occurs when industrial gases, i.e. carbon dioxide, are released into the atmosphere. Although scientific research vastly supports phenomenon as a real and dangerous reality, the US continues to struggle with what should be done to counteract this hazard. The Kyoto Protocol was created in 1997, and its intent was to provide a unified global response. The United States has failed to ratify it, while Canada withdrew its support in 2011.

**Recycling** – Concerns over scarce resources has caused society to focus on recycling efforts. However, there is a lot of work that needs to be done. In the US 70 million tons of paper and cardboard were recovered;

however, we also produce over 2 billion books, 340 million magazines, and 24 billion newspapers each year. Although we recover over half of all aluminum from beverage containers (about 700, 000 pounds), we still discard 2.8 million tons a year. We

recovered approximately 28% of the 11.5 million tons of glass produced in 2011, but plastics may be our greatest challenge as we produced 32 million tons, but only recovered 8% of this total.

### ***What is Trash?***

Although technological shifts allow us to recycle more materials, *symbolic interactionists* are concerned over the education process concerning what is considered trash versus what is recyclable. (View Movie 1.9) Just a few decades ago, people had very little social consciousness regarding recycling besides the motivation to collect a nickel for a glass soda bottle. However, a

better understanding of the effects of pollution and how large landfills can affect our environment has encouraged society to

## **Movie 1.9 Poetry in Praxis**

*Trailer Trash* by Cristopher Gibson



button  
poetry

1) [https://youtu.be/pXVqg\\_0VWLg](https://youtu.be/pXVqg_0VWLg) - Video

2) *What is the poem about?*

3) *What larger social factors is the poet concerned about?*

4) *What do you think the poet believes is the problem?*

5) *Is the poet suggesting a solution? If so, do you agree or disagree? If not, what do you think might help?*

invest considerable resources to make recycling a common practice. Every major city now has a recycling plant, many cities give people large bins to put their recyclables and collect it themselves, and most parks and recreational areas have recycling containers. Perhaps more important to the socialization process are the ad campaigns that emphasize the need to manage our waste and how they are coupled with children-oriented TV shows, e.g. *Captain Planet*, that train us to understand that taking care of our planet is everyone's responsibility.

*Functionalists* would not be concerned with the behaviors that affect our environment; however, the environment becomes a concern when it affects that status quo. When pollution has an impact on a critical mass of people in a particular society, it then becomes a social issue that society needs to address. Large-scale social practices such as doing your taxes and reading the newspaper, books, and magazines have become increasingly paperless transactions, but the cost of the technology to engage in these activities is still prohibitive to many. Also, this perspective would be first to understand that societies will continue to create waste products and therefore would put more energy and effort into finding new places to put our garbage, i.e. the moon, than in finding other alternatives.

**Environmental justice** is a legal strategy based on claims that racial minorities are subjected disproportionately to environmental hazards and would be a major focus of the conflict perspective.

Research has demonstrated that the communities of poor people of color are more likely to have environmental contaminants than any other group. These communities are more likely to have hazardous waste plants, incinerators and multitudes of freeways and train tracks that contribute to air and noise pollution. A direct example of this is how the US government persuaded the Goshute Indians to accept more than 44,000 barrels of highly radioactive material, but these plans have not yet been implemented because of massive opposition.

Developed countries represent approximately 15% of the world population and yet use over 60% of all available resources. *Conflict theorists* study this imbalance and argue that developed countries often exploit undeveloped countries by monopolizing their natural resources and by limiting their ability to produce. A prime example of this would be the case of Brazil. In its efforts to become an industrialized nation, Brazil has cut down some of the rain forest surrounding the Amazon River to increase farmland and mining opportunities. However, environmentalists in industrial countries have lobbied to reduce and even eliminate this practice because of its effect on the global environment, especially as concerns over global warming continue to increase. The challenge with this is that these countries are restricting the development of another nation because their growth will exacerbate a problem that the industrial countries created themselves. (View Movie 1.10)

## Movie 1.10 Poetry in Praxis

*Global Warming* by Genevieve Leet & Aimee Le



1) <https://youtu.be/Mlfnw26gH4I> - Video

2) *What is the poem about?*

3) *What larger social factors is the poet concerned about?*

4) *What do you think the poet believes is the problem?*

5) *Is the poet suggesting a solution? If so, do you agree or disagree? If not, what do you think might help?*

# Chapter Review

## Chapter Vocabulary \*\*\*parentheses indicate page number\*\*\*

Gerontology (2)

Age Stratification Theory (2)

Ageism (3)

Life Course Perspective (3)

Rite of Passage (3)

Disengagement Theory (4)

Activity Theory (5)

Health (6)

Infant Mortality Rate (6)

Life Expectancy (6)

Social Epidemiology (6)

Morbidity Rates (6)

Holistic Medicine (7)

Culture-Bound Syndrome (9)

Human Ecology (11)

Global Warming (12)

Environmental justice (13)

### **Key Terms** \*\*\*need to illustrate concept with an example\*\*\*

Ageism

Life Course Perspective

Rite of Passage

Culture-Bound Syndrome

Environmental Justice

### **Bullet-point answer questions:**

- 1) What two age ranges do people experience ageism?
- 2) What is the infant mortality rate and life expectancy of people in the US?

### **Short answer questions:**

- 3) Name three rites of passage and what they signify in a particular society

4) What is the difference between disengagement theory and activity theory and give examples of both?

***Critical thinking questions:***

5) What is culture-bound syndrome and give an example of how this happens within a particular culture?

6) What has environmental justice research uncovered about pollution? What are some things that you suggest that we do about it?



# Transcripts

## Movie 1.1 Pops

Alright, so this is about becoming the old person on the basketball court. I can't even tell you how badly as when I was young, I'm 42 now, and when I was younger I used to see the old person on the basketball court, they would have the socks a little bit higher, their shorts would be a little bit shorter, as a matter of fact they would be a lot shorter, and here they are playing basketball with other young dudes, running around, and you know not doing much of anything, but really trying to participate in the game. And here I am at twenty...that wasn't me at 20 years old, but then I became the old person on the basketball court and I feel a lot differently about that guy now. Because, and I found this out because when I walked to the basketball court people started calling me sir, and I'm like "Why, who's...why would you call anybody sir at the basketball court? I don't even understand that", when I was playing against this dude, I was posting him. Yes, I was posting him up. I was posting him up, and he was like "Pops, you better get out of the key", and I'm like "Pop, boy I will smack you!", but this was just a whole different set of things when I was thinking about why are they

talking to me like this? And I was thinking about all the social, psychological things that were coming with this, that here I am, now older, and now I'm thinking about how I used to talk about those older guys on the basketball court and becoming that guy, right? Now to whatever degree, I've become that guy, and when we talk about sociology, it's like what makes us treat older people the way that we do? What makes us discount the abilities that an older person might have? What is it about our society, that in our society we tend to devalue older people, while in other societies they tend to value older people as being wise and knowledgeable? In our society though, we put people away in retirement homes and things like that, and when we're talking about this, understand that when you are at the basketball court or wherever it is you're at, that those set of assumptions that you have, the way that you're behaving towards someone is due to those cycle adult, excuse me, do to those sociological, to the way that we've been socialized.

## Movie 1.2 Poetry in Praxis

*F\*\*K YOU Old People* by Tayler Geiger, Ben Tolkin, Andie Berry, and Sam Lai

To the Parent, Reporter, Magazine Editor, Politician,  
That calls our generation lazy entitled delusional whiners  
Especially whatever shmuck coined the phrase "generation me"  
Fuck you!  
After we solve this financial crisis you call "an economy"  
Instead of telling our kids:  
"Back in my ay we had to walk to school uphill both ways"  
We'll be saying things like:  
"Back in my day an hour of work couldn't pay for a parking ticket"  
or  
"Back in my day a year of college education cost as much as a  
sports car" or my favorite  
"Back in my day our parents raised us to be their 'special  
snowflakes'  
and then were disappointed in us when we believed them".  
You tell us stuff like "follow your passion"  
"That your hard to break"  
"Pick yourself up by your bootstraps".  
We are America after all manifest your destiny as one of Uncle  
Sam's chosen elect.  
Blah, blah, blah.  
By the way you can't actually pick yourself up by your own

bootstraps that's not how physics works.  
Oh sure you didn't study for physics what about for  
A functioning middle class, an economy that isn't shit,  
A society that didn't have a hard on for college education so  
throbbing it's practically pornographic,  
And colleges didn't own us like a fucking cartel.  
But here we are and you guys seem to think that us pointing any  
of this out  
Is equivalent to us sticking our thumbs up our asses and blaming  
the moon  
There's a fucking difference!  
You're not even robbing Peter and blaming Paul  
You're robbing Peter and blaming Peter.  
We didn't make the stock market into a shamble.  
We didn't take the tax code beyond reason.  
We also didn't give ourselves crippling debt just for shits and  
giggles.  
So who did?  
So who did indenture us with these bank, and their loans, to  
pieces of fucking paper?  
To these asinine standards we just can't seem to reach,  
It's not like we haven't been trying really really hard.  
We don't want the world handed to us, we also don't want to bust  
our asses and stay broke anyway.  
So sorry if we don't pay attention when you guys tell us "not  
everyone gets a trophy"  
I don't want a trophy I want a fucking job.

And you guys are are parents, our mentors, our friends,  
We want you to be proud of us but just like with computers and  
cell phones  
You really have no idea what you're talking about.  
What would you know about student loan debt, like really.  
Or working full time at internships, for free.  
Or earning half of a living wage.  
These are new problems as young and awful as we are,  
And no amount of telling us "we understand we've been there"  
Will change the fact that no you fucking haven't.  
Look we know "fuck old people" is a little simplistic and we're just  
saying it because we're angry  
But actually fuck old people.  
Fuck letting corporations control out lives.  
Fuck letting the 1% quadruple in wealth since we were born.  
Fuck paying us the least of any generation while we do the most  
work any generation has ever done.  
Most of all  
Fuck you old people  
Who call us the delusional ones  
This is your mess act like it.  
Stop calling us names and take your own advice,  
Act your fucking age.

### **Movie 1.3 Poetry in Praxis**

*Life in Reverse* by Gray Thomas

sometimes i wish we could live our lives in reverse and watch as  
all the events play out backwards, everything becoming simple,  
easy, and perfect. now if we lived our lives in reverse it would  
begin with the mortician pulling us out of our coffins, and it would  
end with a doctor trying to shove us feet-first into our mother's  
vaginas. We'd go to school to learn how to forget everything we  
know. we'll give our expensive university diplomas to a stranger  
standing on a stage wearing a long black robe, then we'd shake  
his hand and smile into a camera that erases the moment forever.  
and if we lived our lives in reverse then weeping brides would kiss  
their soon-to-be fiancés, only to put the veil over their face and  
walk slowly away from them, up the aisle, towards the door, as  
she exits the chapel their love would begin to wane until they no  
longer knew each other's names. and fathers- fathers would pour  
gallons of themselves into small square bottles, then take the  
bottles down to the local liquor store and place them on the  
crude shelves. the liquor store owners would give the fathers their  
pay checks in small but gracious increments. and if we lived our  
lives in reverse then enemies would become friends  
instantaneously just because they said a bunch of shit to each  
other backwards. and my friend mackenzie- my friend mackenzie  
would become my friend again instantaneously. she'd become  
my friend again as i watch as she pushes herself into dozens

upon dozens of syringes and then donates these syringes to the dirty old moonbeam merchants. this act of charity would leave her looking younger, ravishing, unshakeable, alive. meanwhile the moonbeam merchants, they'd take their fistful of syringes and empty them of their contents onto little pieces of tin foil, allow it to cool until it became a fine, white powder then they would take the powder and form it into poppy gum, put the poppy gum into poppy blossoms, then they would gather oarfuls of poppy blossoms and spread them across huge fields. it would be wonderful. entire countries would be covered with mackenzie flowers. and if we lived our lives in reverse then oceans would throw airplanes at the sky, thousands of people would jump from their stomachs to the tops of tall buildings, and life row inmates would sit strapped into chairs as their death is shocked out of them. and this poem, this would be the beginning of the poem and not the end of it, and it wouldn't be recited by me, it would be recited by you, the audience. it would be recited by your ears while i stood up on this stage and listened with my dumb mouth wide open as every single word is pressed into it. and it wouldn't begin until you gave an applause, and it wouldn't end until there was complete and profound, silence.

### **Movie 1.4 Poetry in Praxis**

*The Jewel Inside* by Wanda Goines

I looked in the mirror and what did I see, but a little old lady peering back at me With bags and sags and wrinkles and wispy

white hair, and I asked my reflection, 'How did you get there?' You once were straight and vigorous and now you're stooped and weak, when I tried so hard to keep you from becoming an antique My reflection's eyes twinkled as she solemnly replied, 'You're looking at the gift wrap and not the jewel inside. A living gem and precious, of unimagined worth Unique and true, the real you, the only you on Earth The years that spoil your gift wrap with other things more cruel, should purify and strengthen, and polish up that jewel So focus your attention on the inside, not the out On being kinder, wiser, more content and more devout Then, when your gift wrap's stripped away your jewel will be set free, to radiate God's glory throughout eternity.

### **Movie 1.5 Poetry in Praxis**

*Explaining My Depression to My Mom* by Sabrina Benaim

Explaining my depression to my mother: A conversation Mom, my depression is a shapeshifter One day it's as small as a firefly in the palm of a bear The next it's the bear On those days I play dead until the bear leaves me alone I call the bad days "the Dark Days" Mom says try lighting candles But when I see a candle I see the flicker of a flame Sparks of a memory younger than noon I am standing beside her open casket It is the moment that I learn everyone I will ever come to know will someday die Besides Mom, I'm not afraid of the dark, perhaps that's part of the problem Mom says I thought the problem was that you can't get

out of bed I can't, anxiety holds me a hostage inside of my house inside of my head Mom says where did anxiety come from Anxiety is the cousin visiting from out of town that depression felt obligated to invite to the party Mom, I am the party, only I'm a party I don't want to be at Mom says why don't you try going to actual parties, see your friends Sure I make plans, I make plans I don't want to go to I make plans because I know I should want to go I know sometimes I would have wanted to go It's just not that fun having fun when you don't want to have fun Mom You see Mom each night Insomnia sweeps me up in his arms dips me in the kitchen in the small glow of the stove-light Insomnia has this romantic way of making the moon feel like perfect company Mom says try counting sheep But my mind can only count reasons to stay awake So I go for walks, but my stuttering kneecaps clank like silver spoons held in strong arms with loose wrists They ring in my ears like clumsy church bells reminding me that I am sleepwalking on an ocean of happiness that I cannot Baptize myself in Mom says happy is a decision But my happy is as hollow as a pin pricked egg My happy is a high fever that will break Mom says I am so good at making something out of nothing and then flat out asks me if I am afraid of dying No Mom I am afraid of living Mom I am lonely I think I learned that when Dad left how to turn the anger into lonely the lonely into busy So when I say I've been super busy lately I mean I've been falling asleep on the couch watching SportsCenter To avoid confronting the empty side of my bed But my depression always drags me back to my bed Until my bones are forgotten fossils of a skeleton

sunken city My mouth a bone yard of teeth broken from biting down on themselves The hollow auditorium of my chest swoons with the echoes of a heartbeat But I am just a careless tourist here I will never truly know where I have been Mom still doesn't understand Mom, can't you see That neither can I.

### **Movie 1.6 Poetry in Praxis**

*Dear Ursula* by Melissa May

In 2012, Disney released a line of villain dolls depicting Ursula, the classically full-figured Sea Witch from *The Little Mermaid* as a designer, couture, size zero. From one rolling midsection and tame less will to another, my sweet Ursula — I cannot imagine the sick flip of your stomach, to see your image dissected, chins shaved waist cinched, your silhouette robbed of every ounce of delicious curve. To find after two decades of existence that your evil was more worthy of preservation than the iconic body that held you, you — big lady, were the only Disney character who ever looked like me. And while you may not have had the waistline of a princess I'll be goddamned if you didn't have the swagger of a Queen. The way you sashayed around your lair in full makeup black flamenco number cut so low in the back that your every twist and shimmy displayed the gorgeous tuck of your rolls. You made back-fat look fucking sexy. You made living in this body a little less like a curse. I wonder how they told you, did they sit you down over tea, delicately frosted cakes lining your chipped porcelain? Explain it

as a marketing technique, a vehicle to make you more palatable to a culture that demands perfection? I hope you crushed the fucking teapot in the clench of your fist. I hope you grew a thousand feet tall and drowned them in the whirlpool of your rage. I wish I could have watched you suck the voices from their tiny, breakable throats. But I know you wept, I know you licked the icing from each and every cake, I know you broke, like a slow burn. Wasn't it enough that they made you a witch? That you were already beyond the bounds of their franchise royalty? They expected little girls to recoil from the wicked inside your laugh, when instead, they worshiped your honesty. Ursula, I don't want you cut down into bite-sized pieces. You weren't easy to swallow for a reason. I want you larger than life, flaming red lips, black flamenco dress — I want the thick of your tentacles, your conjurer's hands, the jiggle of your ample bust. I want you dressed to the nines on a runway, I want every little girl to see a heroine in a size 24. Ursula, Queen of the Ocean, you were never just a witch to me. You were perfect — every pound, every inch, every swell, perfect. And I pity the poor, unfortunate soul who would dare paint you as anything less.

### **Movie 1.7 Culture-Bound Syndrome and Phobias**

So I would argue that of the phobias that we can diagnose people with, are definitely part of this culture-bound syndrome, and so, if you think about the more, the more dominant phobias out there, and remember what phobia is. Phobia is a fear, a debilitating fear

of something, right? And so Arachnophobia is probably the most common phobia and that's the fear of spiders, that makes perfect sense, right? We have Ophidiophobia, which is the fear of snakes. Astraphobia is the fear of thunder and lightning, right? Carcinophobia is the fear of cancer. Again, makes perfect sense to me. Basiphobia is the fear of falling. Taphephobia is a fear of being buried alive. Now these all are very rational things that need to be afraid of, but here's where things start getting a little culturally interesting, right? Coulrophobia, is the fear of clowns. Now look, I don't know about you, but clowns are freaky. Clowns are scary, I don't know how, who created that to be funny, I don't know how that work, but clowns are freaky. Especially if you watch Stephen King "It", you'll never see clowns the same way, I'm just telling you, but anyway. We also have Aerophobia, which is the fear of flying, and so not unless society has flying like planes or something like that, then would you even be afraid of flying, right? A Globophobia is the fear of driving, and so again if you don't have cars, how can you be afraid of driving? Aglobophobia is the fear of balloons, anyway, that's funny. Telephonophobia is the fear of talking on the phone, and so what happens is that people who have Telephonophobia, they prefer texting, that should be interesting, in and of itself. One that we say a lot, I hear a lot is Technophobia, which is the fear of technology. We have Coasterphobia, which is the fear of roller coasters, right? Kinemortophobiatto is the fear of zombies. Now I don't know who you are, but look, I watch "Walking Dead". I get that, that one actually makes perfect sense to me, but if you're

not watching "Walking Dead", then I don't know how afraid you would be of zombies. And my favorite one, this is a hard one, so bear with me, so Hippopotomonstrosesquippedaliophobia, and that's the fear of long words. And so, this is what I'm talking about in regards to, if your culture doesn't have automobiles, if it doesn't have long words, if it doesn't have airplanes, then there's a lot of these phobias that wouldn't even register for you as a phobia because you wouldn't even know what it was.

### **Movie 1.8 Poetry in Praxis**

*Sorry* by Prince Ea

Dear Future Generations, I think I speak for the rest of us when I say, sorry, sorry we left you our mess of a planet. Sorry that we were too caught up in our own doings to do something. Sorry we listened to people who made excuses, to do nothing. I hope you forgive us, we just didn't realize how special the earth was, like a marriage going wrong, we didn't know what we had until it was gone. For example, I'm guessing you probably know what is the Amazon Desert, right? Well believe it or not, it was once called once called the Amazon Rain Forest, and there were billions of trees there, and all of them gorgeous and just um.. Oh, you don't know much about trees, do you? Well let me tell you that trees are amazing, and I mean, we literally breath the air they are creating, and they clean up our pollution, our carbon, store and purify water, give us medicine that cures ours diseases, food that feeds us. Which is why I am so sorry, to tell you that, we burned

them down. Cut them down with brutal machines, horrific, at a rate of 40 football fields every minute, that's 50% of all the trees in the world all gone in the last 100 years. Why? For this. And that wouldn't make me so sad, if there weren't so many pictures of leaves on it. You know when I was a child, I read how the Native Americans had such consideration, for the planet that they felt responsible, for how they left the land for the next 7 generations. Which brings me great sorrow, because most of us today, don't even care about tomorrow. So I'm sorry, I'm sorry that we put profit over people, greed over need, the rule of gold above the golden rule. I'm sorry we used nature as a credit card with no spending limit. Over drafting animals to extinction, stealing your chance to ever see their uniqueness, or become friends with them. Sorry we poison the ocean so much that you can't even swim in them. But most of all, i'm sorry about our mindset, cause we had the nerve to call this destruction, "Progress". Hey Fox News, if you don't think climate change is a threat. I dare you to interview the thousands of homeless people in Bangladesh, see while you was in your penthouse nestled, their homes were literally washed away beneath their feet due to the rising sea levels, and Sara Palin, you said that you love the smell of fossil fuels, well I urge you to talk to the kids of Beijing who are forced to wear pollution masks just to go to school. You see you can ignore this, but the thing about truth is, it can be denied, not avoided. so I'm sorry future generation, I'm sorry that our footprints became a sinkhole and not a garden. I'm sorry that we paid so much attention to ISIS, and very little how fast the ice is

melting in the arctic. I'm sorry we doomed you and I'm sorry we didn't find another planet in time to move to. I am s... You know what, cut the beat, I'm not sorry. This future I do not accept it, because an error does not become a mistake, until you refuse to correct it. We can redirect this, how? Let me suggest that if a farmer sees a tree that is unhealthy, they don't look at the branches to diagnosis it, they look at the root, so like that farmer, we must look at the root, and not to the branches of the government, not to the politicians run by corporations. We are the root, we are the foundation, this generation, it is up to us to take care of this planet. It is our only home, we must globally warm our hearts and change the climate of our souls and realize that we are not apart from nature, we are a part of nature. And to betray nature is to betray us, to save nature, is to save us. Because whatever you're fighting for: Racism, Poverty, Feminism, Gay Rights, or any type of Equality. It won't matter in the least, because if we don't all work together to save the environment, we will be equally extinct.

### **Movie 1.9 Poetry in Praxis**

*Trailer Trash* by Cristopher Gibson

Around here it's always Christmas and no it is not because we sing carols, the closest that we get to that is when we're screaming in unison about where the lawn furniture should go. Yes, there are two men here who like Santa Claus, they are not jolly, they are truckers. They don't want your kids anywhere near

their laps. I wish I could tell you because we are constantly giving gifts, but lord knows since the factory closed, those are more rare than red-nosed reindeer. No, it's because here, in the EastView trailer park, we leave our lights up year-round, and I know what you're thinking to yourselves. Those damn lazy rednecks, this has nothing to do with being lazy. Social protocol states that when you leave a light on, someone is welcome, and people are always welcome here. I know all of my neighbors names and faces. I can see where their houses are so I know that I am not alone. There are always a row Chili Peppers lighting my way home. I know that we've all been taught that trailer parks are America's out houses, with the wasted go to keep getting wasted, and yes I do believe whiskey can cure the flu, the common cold, and a broken heart. This does not make me more, this does not make me an alcoholic, just like you getting a little kid to giggle at a fart joke, does not make you a comedian. Besides, every hipster in here should be thanking us. We were the first ones to wear tank tops, cutoff jean shorts, and drink cheap disgusting beer. Yet, while the world calls them trendy, they just call me trailer trash. I remind them no, that gets picked up on Thursdays. I remember the May 4th tornado , it wiped out every house, the only thing left there was our bathtub. We knew that everyone made it through, that's how we know we didn't lose anything, the only difference between you and I, is my house had wheels that simply taught me, home is not a place. My mother told me to dream of something better than this lot. I move to a city with more people crammed in it than I thought possible. The saddest day of my life



was moving into an apartment building , 84 tenants, I knew none of their names. I could not recognize them passing me on the street. I spent my nights walking in a city with more lights than I could imagine, yet I could not find my way home. 200,000 people, I had never felt so alone. So I went home and I nailed Christmas lights to my door. In the first hour I met three people, they were all trying to tear them down, but I learned their names and I can now see them on the street and wave. As cliché as it is, you can take the kid out of the trailer park, you cannot take the trailer park out of the kid. When I pass the trailer, I do not see those chili peppers as cheap, tacky, or redneck, but as a landing strip waiting to welcome me to touch down. Around here is always Christmas.

### **Movie 1.10 Poetry in Praxis**

*Global Warming* by Genevieve Leet & Aimee Le

What's black and white and red all over a sunburned penguin we're talking six kids grappling to fit in the freezer box pressing sweat film foreheads against foggy coke cans we're talking autumn nights the temperature of blood and schools canceled due to spontaneous combustion there are no cold cuts or ice cream and no one not even Vo Sia is cool anymore thing about global warming is it doesn't pay too well why bother if i didn't fly if I didn't exhale if i dropped out of existence the temperature would keep rising it's too big to see even if I lie flat backed I can't fisheye my vision enough to take everything in I can't echo the pinched brow expression of a fevering planet but maybe I can

show you how thick the exhaust blazed across her shoulders in the Conch of her ear I hear an angry sea in there mud turned chalk colored warming sounds friendly it sounds like tea or a firm handshake try global burning global skin snaps that sizzles eyes desecrate it's big like SUVs like a six bedroom house with two people in it like air-conditioning running in an empty movie theater like tree roots like levies like egos and appetites and concepts packaging accusation dumpsters all of them gasping to swallow you what is hot hot is a scrape whistle buzz feeling every molecule of yourself vibrate and wishing you could it's disgusting combustion a continual compulsion to pick and pick yourself to pieces because you can't stop expanding imagine having hot flashes at puberty having to explain snow days hailstorms frosted glass in a sun-scorched terrified era where the most expensive kind of ice isn't around your neck it's in your drink and when you would explain to kindergarten kids that space is freezing expect gasps that your little warmed over brain can tortilla itself around I'm too young to remember what we're losing I'm small a hundred and twenty-five pounds of metabolic heat that's not enough to melt an ice cap when I climb in Lake Superior my chest ceases my shins ache my teeth crack I couldn't chip a mountain with these thin arms if i were to camp on a glaciers flanks press my palms to snow it might take my body in trap me frozen there if I were lucky I'd be the ice woman get found by my descendants on ski trips my exhale is no more threat to that sky than my spit is to drowning Manhattan ever stand beside a glacier and inhale how negligible you are it's looking at you glittering like a mountain of

teeth and it says you don't matter except sometimes nothing x 6 billion is something this is what happens when a planet gets devoured it's sand patches growing on the throat bed it's shaking hands like tsunami waves this is a planet getting irritable getting soured getting pissed off this is the city getting chewed up and swallowed up and thrown up we can't win in this match between us and our homes no matter who takes the fall eventually were sunk drowning in good hands suffocating on our own breath you can't be the last man standing without something to stand on.