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There's Something in the Water Film Analysis

1. What are the environmental issues this documentary focuses on? (2-4 sentences) (3 points)

There's Something in the Water (2019) is a documentary that shows how environmental crime is not just one country's issue- its a global issue. It portrays environmental racism in Canada and how corporations are harming poorer neighborhoods and those who live in it. A major issue the documentary focuses on is the government prioritizing corporations over citizens and how racism is deeply embedded in social institutions.

2. After you watch the film, take a moment to reflect. What are you led to believe are the causes of these environmental issues? Were these causes explicitly articulated or were they implicit or implied? That is, how intentional was the filmmaker in calling attention to those responsible for the environmental issues in the film? (1-2 short paragraphs) (10 points)

After watching the documentary, I am led to believe racism, money, and power are the main causes of these environmental issues. These causes were explicitly described throughout the documentary. For example, Louise talks about how in the black communities in the late 1940s, they built a dump. This was during a time where racism was at its peak therefore, placing a dump and burning the waste in their community was due to a disregard for basic human living

conditions. This did not occur in the white communities and if it did, there would be a huge public outrage.

Money was also a major cause which was shown through Michelle's story. Michelle discusses how corporations wanted to build mills and factories on Indigenous people's land. When questioned about it, the corporations tricked and paid off the Indigenous people because they played into the factor that poverty was high in their community. They knew they could pay them off and make a huge profit years later. Money was also shown through the Grassroots Grandmother's because soon, the cost of water will be worth more than money. Power was also shown through all three stories. They discussed how corporations and governments constantly held the upper hand and refused to help citizens for, as Louise states, "our God given right" to clean water.

3. Are there possible causes or factors that the film omits based on what you've learned in class? If yes, what were they? If not, explain what causes they discussed that aligned with this class.

(1-2 short paragraphs) (10 points)

The causes discussed in the film align with what we learned in class through environmental racism and power. For example, we've learned in class that those that are causing these issues are not being affected by the consequences, the minority communities are the ones suffering. Louise and Michelle explain it very clearly- everyone in their communities are dying from cancer. However, in Michelle's community people are dying from suicide and addictions from the guilt that this is their fault that their community is suffering.

We learned in class the different types of power. This documentary clearly exhibits power over society where corporations have power over the black and Indigenous communities. For

example, this is shown through greed and suffering. All of these communities suffer from the corporations due to contaminated water and air. Corporations are fueled by their greed and therefore, have a lack of respect for minority communities land.

4. Reflect on this documentary using a critical criminology lens. (1 paragraph) (5 points)

I think this documentary was important because it showed how we know specific things. For example through standpoint. We should be regarding environmental racism through the standpoint of those that are being affected. This documentary describes environmental racism by interviewing those in the community that are experiencing the environmental racism. For example, Louise is a black woman, Michelle and the Grassroots Grandmothers are Indigenous women living in the community affected by corporations and governments refusing to help. It would not make sense to ask the corporations or government officials about environmental racism if we were trying to understand it because they would use their narrative of everything is fine. This is because the powerful controls the narrative already. To understand environmental racism, we have to gather the stories and narratives of the powerless and minorities.

5. Does the film highlight issues around environmental racism or poverty? In other words, does the film implicitly or explicitly point to the fact that those affected by environmental issues usually are poor people of color, Indigenous peoples, or white poor people, (all with little political power). If yes, how? If no, where/how could they have included them? (1-2 short paragraphs) (10 points)

This film highlights the issues around environmental racism and poverty by showing those affected by this issues are poor people of color and Indigenous people. Louise explains

how there is racism is deeply rooted in their government. She also explains how this is only happening in the poor, minority communities. For example, the poor people of color and Indigenous people get their water from wells which are now contaminated due to the toxic wastes that seeped into the soil and water. The white communities have a government regulated water treatment where they can drink their water. When Louise brought this up to the mayor to extend the pipe, they refused stating it would cost too much money. This explicitly shows the blatant racism within the community and the major difference in treatment of the people who live in these communities. This is also shown through Michelle, who stated their land was sacred and used as an escape from the war when white settlers took over their land. However, their ancestors were tricked into believing company would not damage their home and played into their economic status to control their land.

6. Make three separate connections between what was in this film and what we have covered in class thus far. Make these connections explicit, do not expect me to know what connection you're making. I recommend writing this answer in separate bullet points, with 2-4 sentences for each. (12 points, 4 points per connection)

- Connection 1: This film connects to the lecture we had on history matters. For example, we are told a history from a perspective of those that have power. They use their narratives to construct reality. However, if we look at history from those that are oppressed, we can start to understand the truth of reality. For example, most government officials when asked to remove the companies from their communities stated they would make sure companies would be regulated. However, from history we know corporations and governments largely influence each other. Therefore, the regulations would not be what the minority communities are calling for.

· Connection 2: This film also connects to intersectionality. For example, we learned in class through Urban Planning, poor inner city black communities suffer because they have to ingest pollution due to highways, landfills, dumping toxic wastes. In this documentary, they did not have highways however, they are suffering due to being near the dump with toxic wastes. This also affects Indigenous communities because they respect the Earth because they live off of it.

· Connection 3: This film connects with the iceberg method. For example, the tip of the iceberg is the water pollution. However, beneath the iceberg is all that is hidden, such as dumpsites, social inequality, political will, improper disposal, etc. The companies carried on their habits and in return, it affected minority communities because of all that is hidden under the iceberg. Not only does this affect the communities but it will slowly affect the rest of the world. However, since right now it is only affecting the minority communities, there is no sense of urgency.

7. Reflect on this assignment. Questions to consider: Did you enjoy watching this film? Why or why not? What did you learn that you did not know before? What was the most difficult part of this assignment and why? Do you have any suggestions on how I can improve this assignment in the future? Any other comments? (1 paragraph) (10 points)

I enjoyed watching this film. It's one thing to read and learn about this topic in class however, to watch a documentary to apply this to reality and see how it's currently affecting communities is eye-opening. It makes it all the more real. I did not know about most of these movements that were covered in the documentary. For example the Grassroots Grandmothers. I admire their bravery and perseverance to fight for their land and clean water- even protesting and speaking with the Prime Minister of Canada. Personally, I did not have any issues with this

assignment however, I did learn a lot and found it very interesting to apply what I learned in class to reality.