

## The Necropastoral and the City

There is, perhaps, no more somber example of the city's mediated relationship with the environment than the 1973 dystopian film *Soylent Green*. Set in 2022, the film depicts a world that has already surpassed total environmental collapse, where hyper-industrialization and over-population have annihilated plant and animal life, clean water and pristine wilderness, and where a permanent "greenhouse effect" has eradicated normal seasonal differences. Certainly, much can be certainly made of *Soylent Green* as a twentieth century film that once reflected—and continues to reflect—the pervasive fears of the American public toward the loss of nonhuman wildernesses. Yet in light of the proposal of H.R. 861, a bill recently introduced to terminate the Environmental Protection Agency, *Soylent Green* takes on a cluster of new readings that underscores the vexed popular contestations often fought over manufactured American wildernesses. This paper channels *Soylent Green* through the lens of what Joyelle McSweeney has called the necropastoral, that is, "the manifestation of the infectiousness, anxiety, and contagion occultly present in the hygienic borders of the classic pastoral." Throughout, I ask what kind of necropastoral is the city in order to apprehend the rhetorical and aesthetic stakes in popular cultural representations of built environments and the shared zones of exchange between waste and the human organism.

AV Needs: projector for PowerPoint and clip playback.