

RICE BALL SEMINAR



Wounded Lands and Exposed People: The Drift of Agent Orange in Discourses of Science, Diplomacy and Emerging Biocitizenship in Vietnam

Analysing the enduring legacy of Agent Orange in Vietnam through the intertwined perspectives of “biocitizenship” and “drift.” Grounded in ethnographic and archival research, it reflects critically on the seductive pull of war ecology and the need to recognise how contaminated bodies give rise to contaminated categories of analysis. The plight of dioxin-exposed Vietnamese veterans and their kin as vessels of inherited trauma and contested citizenship shows how chemical exposure becomes a source psychological torment, social stigma and uncertain claims to recognition and care.

Scientific discourses and knowledge about the effect of Agent Orange on human and environment health is shaped by political constraints and epistemic instability, leaving Vietnamese veterans in a conflicted space between exposure, denial, and fragmented justice.

Tracing the slow drift of Agent Orange toxins allows us to understand how exposure is embodied, interpreted, and passed down, both genetically and affectively, while practices of biocitizenship reveal both the possibilities of state compensation and transnational solidarity, and the limits imposed by stigma, silence, and political denial.

This dual analytic frame highlights how Vietnamese veterans’ lived experiences challenge universalist accounts of biocitizenship and foreground the moral, psychological and political stakes of toxic warfare.



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WED



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IN PERSON



ENGLISH



4th period

14:20-16:00