



ALL THAT IS SOLID BURNS INTO SMOKE: US MILITARY BURN PITS AND THE LOGICS OF COMBUSTION

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In the opening years of the post-9/11 wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, the US military burned all waste it produced in open air pits. The largest of such pits burned up to 200 tons of waste per day, all doused in jet fuel and blazing around the clock for years on end. Inky plumes of acrid black smoke laced with toxicants rose into the air to be inhaled by all those living in proximity, giving rise to a range of environmental and embodied damage. Drawing on fieldwork with US veterans exposed to some of the largest of these pits, this talk thinks through combustion and toxicity offering a set of reflections about how the burn pits invite new critical understandings of the nature of contemporary US war violence.

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