Environment & Society Portal

Multimedia Library Collection: Periodicals

"Spent Earth"

Chao, Sophie

Chao, Sophie. "Spent Earth." *Critical Times: Interventions in Global Critical Theory* 6, no. 2 (2023): 179–88.

This essay considers the multiscalar manifestations of loss and the destruction of loss through the material-semiotic figure of "spent earth," a toxic waste by-product generated by the industrial bleaching of crude oils into edible oils. Drawing on two distinct encounters with spent earth in the Indonesian palm oil sector, the essay reflects on the substance's unevenly distributed effects across peoples, places, and generations; its association with visions of purity and realities of complicity; and the importance of attending to loss through both its situated, localized manifestations and its partial connections across sites, scales, and subjects. (Abstract)

© 2023 Sophie Chao. *Critical Times* is published under a Creative Commons license (CC BY-NC-ND 3.0).

Download:
PDF: https://www.environmentandsociety.org/sites/default/files/key_docs/179chao.pdf

Related links:

- *Critical Times* website
  https://read.dukeupress.edu/critical-times

Periodicals Collection, Multimedia Library, Environment & Society Portal
"Spent Earth"
Source URL: http://www.environmentandsociety.org/node/9939
Print date: 07 November 2026 04:28:47