

A GUIDEBOOK TO LIFE ELSEWHERE



ERRA

ON

NIMALS

ATASTROPHIC

C.A.T. CONTENT

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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WATER

ENERGY

LOCALISM

11

Rosie Benn



weather rock

(media
waiting on
situation?)

In the primeval forest of Transcarpathia we are bathed in century-old trees, each with their own tale to tell, with carpets of moss like glowing green grandfather moustaches from head to toe. A rather different experience from the monoculture I usually encounter. The snakes, who have fallen, continue their living in a new form as they are left to decompose on the bed of the forest. Watchful tree snakes lying endlessly, yet always in motion. They are houses for new creatures and microbial worlds. These beings slither in and around the forest, regulating water flow and retention, protecting us from floods.

A stroll with the road in charge leads us to a lady who stands strong and proud at the gate of her self-renovated house. The walls inside are dressed in hand-painted patterns, the surfaces of furniture inhabited by small villages and gatherings of ornaments of animal characters. This lady bakes bread in a large oven the shape of a small house. She keeps a pig, in the dark; I felt sorry for that. He seemed lonely and distressed in his tiny room. Quite a contrast to some of the other animals I met in the village, who trot in and out of the paths and fields, taking the same righteous space as the humans

around. It made me chuckle with delight to watch ducklings, kittens, goats and humans intertwine on their daily routes so casually. But the pig in the dark was called Kapitoschka, named after a water droplet that stars in a Ukrainian cartoon. Kapitoschka is a rain creature, watcher from the sky, guardian of houses and weather, yet also mischievous and slips easily through your fingers.

In Nyzhnje Selyshche we had many encounters with water. One such encounter was with the water of a chapel well that was said to induce fertility. To which we were very curious to find out if our male colleagues who drank it would soon swell up like a balloon and bring a new mini person into the world. Bogdan, an ecologist guiding us through the village, was inspiringly passionate about sustainable water use. He shared his take on permaculture water sanitation systems, and we learned about structures he has already put in place and plans he is conjuring up, to regulate water surplus and manage pollution.

Water has energy and money has energy; both modify the landscape depending on their currents and interactions with the environment. In what directional flows and

conditions do these energies circulate? How does the flow of money modify the landscape? Or the landscape of everyday life? Water flow is often engineered, its currents and activities designed. Dams are created to accumulate large bodies of water and produce hydroelectric power, canals are made for marine travel or distribution of water through irrigation to agricultural lands or for other human uses,¹ sometimes a river is straightened to increase speed of water flow or dredged to obtain more water at one time in one place.² Although the intention of engineered intervention in water systems is to benefit, such constructions can in some cases lead to flooding and vegetation disturbance, and intervene with destruction to species migration or reproduction cycles.

As water flow can be adapted to create currents of energy or resources that are distributed from one place to another, from one group of people, community, or species to another, so can an economy. The flow and distribution of money is engineered according to a chosen system. This metaphor came into being through drawing, when taking notes and sketches while listening to Sascha, the village's Mayor, explaining the de-

centralisation model for Ukraine (that had been tried out in areas nearby and was currently being debated for Nyzhnje Selyshche). We were informed that the current economic system and management of money flow in Ukraine as in most places relies on decision-making from the state; when the money goes through this system it is retained and builds up in certain areas and pockets due to bureaucratic corruption. When the money finally reaches the village, what has trickled down from the 'dam' is not even enough to re-pave roads. Decentralisation would open up decision-making and economic investment management to local citizens. It seems that this would have a positive effect as those people have local knowledge and an involvement in the community that no economic adviser in Kiev has. They could utilise their situated knowledge to direct with detail where money could be allocated and where the energy is needed and could give a most fruitful outcome. However, the details of a decentralisation plan must also be monitored and critically analysed. Strategies from Nick Clegg, Deputy Prime Minister UK, in 2010 stated that '[...] a radical shift of power from the centre to citizens and communi-

ties would give more control and freedom back to people to manage their own lives as they see fit.'³ UKs' decentralisation model of 'community politics' and 'Liberalism' used the concept of the 'Big Society' to re-work monetary management.⁴ The 'Localism Bill' put into place under the Liberal Democrats and Conservative coalition government, 2010–2015, '[...] has been seen as a mechanism for reconfiguring public services within the context of austerity. This is partly about more effective policymaking but also about blame shifting.'⁵ This statement is a reference to the poor outcome of decentralisation in the UK due to the fact that it was introduced at a time when 'new demands' were generated by 'expenditure cuts'.⁶ In other words, less money was given to public services, and the decentralised organisations had to deal with that. This created a situation of strain on public services, and the ones who made the money pot smaller were hiding behind a mask of distributed responsibility. This is not to say decentralisation is essentially misconstruing or negative, rather to point out that although it can be an anti-authoritarian and emancipative model that could certainly give more power to citizens, the way it is carried out, with what procedures

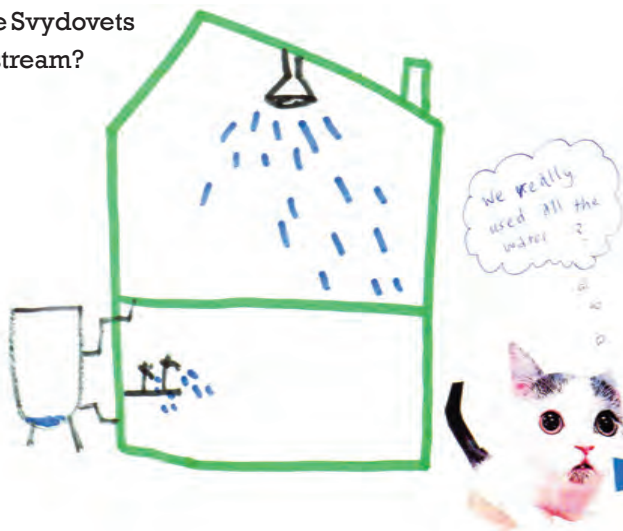
it is supported and under which intentions it is introduced should be considered.

Water runs through the village, invisibly underground through pipes, peeping its nose out through creeks, wandering around streets and houses, even leaking into our morning yoga via dew. Rivers can act as borders between places, make islands of countries, yet to flip the coin they also connect towns and communities, cities and countries. Water trespasses and pushes through these boundaries bringing with it a stream, carrying ripples of actions and interactions. Actions in the sense of mineral distribution, interactions in the sense of animal reproduction, but there are also traces of the social and political manifested in material forms of pollution that also make their way down streams. What then would the development of a large ski resort in the Svydovets Mountains⁷ send downstream?

NOTES

1. See Sanjeev Gadad, 'Introduction to Irrigation Canals and Design', online presentation, ResearchGate, May 2017, <<https://doi.org/10.13140/RG.2.2.22799.79524>>.
2. See 'River Management', in BBC Bitesize, online guide, <<https://www.bbc.com/bitesize/guides/zg4tfrd/revision/3>> [accessed 30 March 2019] (p. 3 of 5).
3. Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government and Greg Clark, 'Six Steps to Return Power to the People', in Gov.uk, news story, 13 December 2010, <<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/six-steps-to-return-power-to-the-people>> [accessed 28 March 2019].
4. See Department for Communities and Local Government, *Decentralisation and the Localism Bill: An Essential Guide* (London: HM Government, 2010), online publication.
5. Martin Smith and Carlos Sola, 'Austerity, Decentralisation, and Local Governance: Examining Interagency: Working in the Context of a New Financial Model in the UK', online conference paper draft, 2016, <<https://www.psa.ac.uk/sites/default/files/conference/papers/2016/Austerity%20and%20interagency%20draft%20for%20PSA%202016.pdf>> [accessed 30 March 2019] (p. 9 of 39); see Ruth Dixon and Christopher Hood, *A Government that Works Better and Cost Less? Evaluating Three Decades of Reform and Change in UK Central Government* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), ebook.
6. See Martin Smith and Carlos Sola, p. 5 of 39.
7. See the petition 'Free Svydovets', <<https://freesvydovets.org/en/>> [accessed 10 March 2019].

Illustration next page, Rosie Benn 2018.



BOGDAN

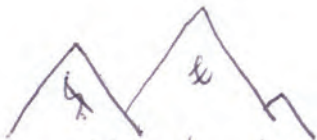
WATER

SEWAGE

we return water
to sources in
polluted way



the flying
toilet



switzerland

30% energy on water sanitation

ECOLOGICAL
SANITATION

PERMA CULTURE
PERMENANT SYSTEM

• BIOGENIC ELEMENTS •

sulphur

potassium

calcium

Ukraine

water & hungry & situated

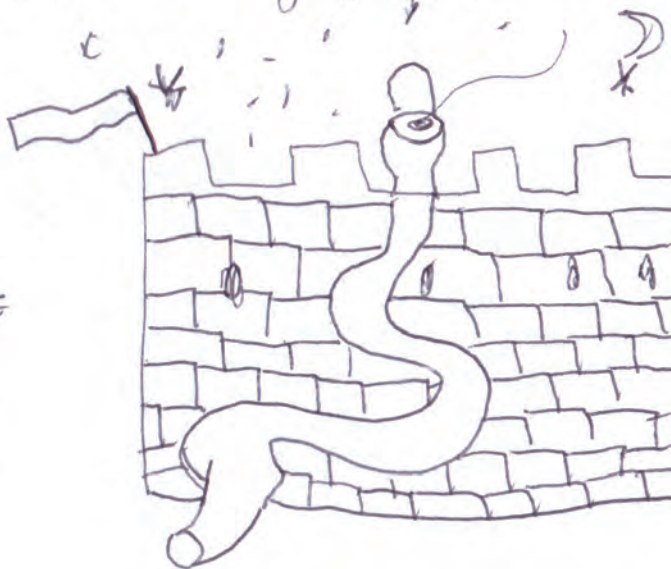
WATER
WARS

ISRAEL

PALASTINE



REALISE
TREES



GOING THROUGH
THE TOILET TO
GET TO THE
SYSTEM



everything
connected to
everything
User must pay
nature knows
best

BRISHTY ALAM, GUADALUPE ALDRETE, GOLNAZ BASHIRI, ROSIE BENN, MARGIT BUSCH, VALERIE DEIFEL,
JOHANNA FOLKMANN, MAXIMILIAN GALLO, ATHANASIOS GRAMOSIS, MATILDE IGUAL CAPDEVILA,
BERND KRÄFTNER, RAFAEL LIPPUNER, MARKO MARKOVIĆ, FRÉDÉRIQUE NEUTS, MARINA REBHANDL



dr:angewandte

Universität für angewandte Kunst Wien
University of Applied Arts Vienna