

Hydroperformativity and the mirage of hydro-power

Hydroperformativity and the mirage of hydro-power: How water speaks

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Abstract

This article asks how water speaks and relates to Central European people, especially those who have experienced displacement, totalitarianism, droughts, or floods. Based on ethnographic research conducted within the framework of blue anthropology, it focuses on Pilchowiec, a postindustrial village in Poland, introduces concepts such as hydroperformativity, water worlds, and water as a transsubstance, and challenges the mirage of hydro-power formed in human–water relations since the nineteenth century. It illustrates how such illusions lead to paradoxes, unconventional industrial landscapes, and eerie practices of dwelling degradation. Water in this context actively cocreates hydrosocial realities that consistently evade control and transcend time, allowing us to reflect on human dreams of prosperity and today's water permacrisis.

Keywords

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Hydroperformativity, water worlds, blue anthropology, hydrosocial relations, environmental humanities, transsubstance, floods, droughts, water crises, hydro-power

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