

**The End of Cheap Water:
Hydro-Capitalism in Mindy McGinnis's *Not a Drop to Drink*
(2013)**

Alyaa Mustafa Saad

English Literature Lecturer, Faculty of Arts, New Valley University

Abstract:

This study aims to analyze how Western literature depicts human activity that has led to climate change which in turn has led to water scarcity thus causing the privatization of water. The paper shows social unrest arising from hydro-capitalism. It unveils how third-world countries face a lot of struggles out of their poor resources and how the powerful humiliates the powerless, the West imperializes the East and the self subjugates the other. The article joins water scarcity and its privatization to the dominant features of biopower, hydro-capitalism and hydro-imperialism as portrayed in the speculative hydro-fictional text *Not a Drop to Drink* by the American novelist Mindy McGinnis. To analyze the narrative text, the research sheds light on some concepts like, Capitalocene, Bio-Power and Speculative Hydro-Fiction. Moreover, the study examines the dam projects which are integral to the thrilling hydrological regimes of independence in post-colonial countries, like the Aswan High Dam in Egypt. The novelist seems to warn of an upcoming water war in the 21st century in which the forces of nature are extended to affect the output of human being activities, urging the Ethiopians to build the Grand Renaissance Dam in Ethiopia.

Keywords: hydrofiction, capitalocene, hydropower, Dams, water trauma, war

نهاية الماء الرخيص: الرأسمالية المائية في رواية "لا نقطة للارتواء" للكاتبة

ميندي ماكغينيس

تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى إظهار كيفية تناول الأدب الغربي تأثير النشاط الإنساني على تغير المناخ الذي أدى بدوره إلى ندرة المياه و من ثم إلى خصصته، كما تظهر الورقة البحثية الصراعات بين الأشخاص والدول الناجمة عن الرأسمالية المائية. و يوضح البحث كيف تواجه دول العالم الثالث الكثير من الصعوبات والتحديات بسبب مواردها الفقيرة وكيف يهيمن الأقوياء على الضعفاء، كما يحاول الغرب استعمار الشرق و إخضاعه له. و يربط البحث ما بين مشكلات ندرة المياه وخصصتها و بين النظريات المهيمنة على العصر الحالي من السلطة الحيوية، والرأسمالية المائية، والإمبريالية المائية، كما تم تصويرها في النص الخيالي التنبؤي "لا قطرة للارتواء" للكاتبة الأمريكية ميندي ماكغينيس. ولتحليل النص، يلقي البحث الضوء على بعض المفاهيم مثل، كابيتالوسين (الرأسمالية المتعلقة بالنظام البيئي)، والقوة الحيوية، والخيال المائي التنبؤي. علاوة على ذلك، توضح الدراسة كيف تناولت الكاتبة مشاريع إقامة السدود التي تعد جزءاً لا يتجزأ من الأنظمة الهيدرولوجية في حكومات بلدان ما بعد الاستعمار، مثل السد العالي في مصر. و تبدو الروائية و كأنها تحذر من وقوع حرب مياه في القرن الحادي والعشرين حيث تمتد قوى الطبيعة لتؤثر على نشاط الإنسان مما دفع دولة مثل إثيوبيا لبناء سد النهضة الكبير.

الكلمات الدالة: الخيال المائي، كابيتالوسين، القوة المائية، السدود، هلع الماء، الحرب

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Introduction

“We have made from water every living thing. Will they not then believe?”

(The Holy Qur'an, Al-Anbiya, 30)

Water is the main source of life. All human beings cannot survive without it. 71 % of the Earth's surface is covered by Water, and 60 % of our bodies is composed of it. It is supposed to be plentiful and completely necessary, though, a lot of human beings suffer from water scarcity. As a result of climate change, overpopulation, management inadequacies, and unskilled use of natural resources, the quantity of potable water available to living organisms is going to shrink. UNICEF estimates that by 2025, 1.8 billion citizens will suffer from absolute water shortage, and around half of the world will live in states of water trauma.

Water shortage means that the available water cannot fulfill all the needs for the profitable demands of an ecosystem. Many years ago, constant irrigation constructed massive Mesopotamian societies. In *A History of Engineering in Classical and Medieval Times* (2013), Donald Hill declares that the big countries of the ancient world have been built in river valleys that are very rich in water. He adds that the rise and fall of communities and economies have mainly been associated with efficient agriculture depending on the accessibility of water. However, freshwater lack is now a main restriction on cultivation and, after all, the development of societies. Nowadays, water management which plays a main role in the world economy does not offer enough main resources to fulfill and match human beings' needs (15). During the twentieth century, global shortages of potable water enlarged about seven times. Simultaneously, the globe's human residents nearly tripled, thus increasing the use of water over twice that of population evolution. According to *Charity: Water* (2018), “There are 663 million people on the planet who don't have clean water. 1 in 10 people in our world doesn't have access to the most basic of human needs. Something we can't imagine going 12 hours without.”

What's going to happen if living organisms cannot easily gain potable water? It is claimed that California witnessed, from December 2011 to April 2017, an extraordinary drought, an extreme one that attacked millions of human beings and caused massive ecological disasters. This time has been the driest in the USA since 1895 (Hanak). The US Forest Service asserts that this drought terminated about 102 million trees (Deamer). Moreover, Many lands in Antipodes and the Americas are going to suffer from desertification out of farmers' dependence upon groundwater for irrigation. Therefore, as Rothenberg and Ulvaeus assume: "where there are enough humans and not enough water, hydro squabbles spew forth" (40). All over our watery world, human beings are involved in struggles over potable water. People all over the time struggle about who should retain water, supervise it, use it, benefit from it or control it. The water crisis motivated the geographer Jamie Linton to call in his book *What is Water? The History of a Modern Abstraction* (2010) for "modern water" (14), because water can be simplified into abstract molecules of 'H₂O' which circulate inside the hydrological cycle; as a supposed solution. However, critics clarify how this notion has encouraged the consumption and decay of water throughout the whole world seeking just for personal profit, increasing these affairs in formal approaches which have given rise to capitalism's 'world-ecological regime' as the environmental historian, Jason W. Moore, argues (*Capitalism* 44). Unrestrained hydropower and hydro-politics progress in the world show how social, economic and political ecologies were reframed through a keen consideration of water cultures since all countries in the whole world develop according to the accessibility and prosperity of natural resources and how we are responsible to control them. As a result, critics started to inquire about stubborn water shortages and massive privatization of natural resources which enriches the capitalist procedure that overvalues financial gains over human needs. This scarcity of water has increased social consciousness and community contributions to water conservation as well as promoted hydro-literature and hydro-criticism. Broadly, it unfolded the firm discriminations of the hydro-capitalism system which privatizes natural resources and considers them as a product that can be bought and sold, even during times of severe lack.

Water trauma necessitates the need to analyze critically the primary relationship between water and living organisms in the current day. In this sense, critics claim, nowadays, that nature crises represent the critical points of world-historical procedures like capitalism, imperialism and power. Water has started to be involved in critical studies and literary

fiction. Giving great attention to international water trauma reflects thriving agitation about the competence of water resources to support human beings and living organisms in general and the efficacy of human organizations to support hydrological coherence.

The bourgeoisie believes that to save your life and stay alive you have to use your power and hegemony over others. Water acts now as a type of power and as a weapon in the neo-liberal regime of the capitalist world-ecology. Connecting water with war is undoubtedly terrifying, as water is a vital resource needed by all that cannot be substituted by any other available resources. Authors are applying environmental topics and themes like water scarcity in their examination of governmental conflict and instability. This emergence of water wars issue in narrative fiction reflects the massive traumas in the Nile Basin as the BBC lately broadcasts in the series entitled “The ‘water war’ brewing over the new River Nile dam”. ‘Water crisis’ narrative texts declare that water privatization and shortage may trigger inter-state battles and wars in the whole world. Noticeably, vast areas in Africa are subjected to water lack. As the American novelist, Mindy McGinnis (1979-), explains “All the violence in third-world countries was over water...but they kept telling us stories about tribal wars and religion to keep us distracted, and these poor countries didn’t have a way of telling people any different” (104).

Believing in Moore’s debate about the trauma of ‘cheap nature,’ the ecological authority and government of the late neo-liberal era is characterized by a decrease in ‘cheap water.’ This results in a corresponding consumption of water partitions distinguished by increasing procedures of coercion, speeding up water shortage and increasing costs of potable water appropriation. Additionally, it is integral to the massive productivity plight facing a capitalist lot of natural resources in the 21st century (Deckard 110). Each government tries to find a solution to water scarcity through reengineering riparian megaprojects like building dams, river redirections and water diversion enterprises.

Following the descriptive analytical research methodology, this paper aims to analyze how human behavior and climate change have led to water scarcity that causes the privatization of water. The article analyzes a speculative hydro-fictional text which unveils the relationship between biopower, hydro-capitalism and imperialism. It examines the desire and consideration of post-colonial countries to build dams. Finally, the article wonders whether Mindy has speculated on the building of a new dam in Africa.

Capitalocene: Hydro-Capitalism

The rise of capitalism after 1450 shows a change in the level, speed, and scope of landscape modification across the geographical field of early capitalism throughout different ages. Capitalism controls human beings' connection to all resources, regardless of the quantity of these resources or their value to human survival. Capitalists and those who are powerful and seize control over others are conscious and try to respond to the contemporary climate crisis effects on our needs. They try to keep their control over resources, even water, forewarning for an agitating future. The shortage of water may cause maximum humanitarian and ecological catastrophe, chaos and even military attacks. Thus, capitalists are continuously anxious and afraid that those they've prevented from having water will revolt against them. As well as, they fear that climate change and crisis will start to restrain their safety, satisfaction and economy. To protect themselves against those tyrannized and deprived of natural resources, capitalists started to hire organizations to guard them and their water sources. Fearing the apocalypse, they also yield to buy up some lands rich in freshwater sources. Meanwhile, as much as water shortage increases as much as water cost drives up everywhere (Moore *The Capitalocene*).

Nowadays, water is appropriated and exploited by capitalists for private gain, they attempt to increasingly commodify the water supply due to drought and climate change. Unfortunately, capitalists use natural resources like water as a tool of social sovereignty. This is the rationale of class discrimination in which the powerful and rich suppress the powerless and poor. Capitalism may, unjustly, change material and resource abundance into scarcity which in turn causes social conflict. Every resource, even water, is subject to that brutal quarrel. Under capitalism, natural resources such as water are treated as a commodity through organizations and are weaponized through violence. Thus, natural resources are used as weapons by the ruling class.

The bourgeoisies who own most of society's wealth and means of production keep their dominance and sovereignty via the manipulation of the proletariats' natural resources. Therefore, the working class has to pay in order to be able to buy and obtain biological necessities, like water. Furthermore, capitalists dedicate potable water resources for their private gain, while laborers are compelled to produce commodities granted to the bourgeoisie. Treated as a commodity, freshwater can be afforded according to the availability of this resource and living organisms' desires. According to Marx's political philosophy which shows Foucauldian conception of 'biopolitics,' both Marx and Foucault show

that the government has a keen concern to keep powerfully the health of its residents, as governments need healthy productive laborers to maximize gains and profits. Derrick King suggests that capitalism has an “innate ability to use moments of crisis for its own purposes” (260).

Capitalists believe that natural resources are considered as inputs that can be seized and captured. Hence, we live now in a new age of human relations with the rest of nature which is called by critics the Age of Capital. This era is characterized by an imperial power that wraps around ecosystems including human beings from Canada to Egypt. Undoubtedly, it is the creation of nature that has suggested and necessitated the rise of society. Subsequently, the capitalocene elevated environmental change more than anything known before. Moore insists that capitalocene, the ‘Age of Capital,’ is the history of capitalism relating to capital, power, and nature as each part of the community is necessary and fits well with the other parts. Accordingly, it is world-ecology that acts, nowadays, as the motivating force behind each evolution. It is not class, not capital, not imperialism, not even culture. However, it’s the Anthropos: humankind as an indivisible whole. Rather than considering capitalism as a world-economy, critics now view capitalism as world-ecology.

As human activities have provoked many biophysical changes on our planet, the term Anthropocene was necessary to be coined in the 1980s by the American biologist Eugene F. Stoermer and popularized in the early 2000s by the Dutch atmospheric scientist, Paul Crutzen. Though, “another far more powerful engine must have driven the fires.” It is capitalism. Thus, the most appropriate term for this age is the capitalocene, as “blaming all of humanity for climate change lets capitalism off the hook” (Malm 162). “The capitalocene signifies capitalism as a way of organizing nature as a multispecies, situated, capitalist world-ecology” (Moore “Putting Nature” 7).

The Anthropocene discourse has started with biospheric results and proceeds towards social history. Thus, unfamiliar crises would start with the interactions between humans and nature, and consequently go towards geological and biophysical conversion. These outcomes, in turn, form new states for consecutive ages of capitalism. Power and productivity collaborate within nature and these connections enfold and unfold specific effects. According to this approach, the modern world-system changes into “a capitalist world ecology: a civilization that joins the accumulation of capital, the pursuit of power, and the production of nature as an organic whole. This means that capital and power do not act upon nature, but develop through the web of life” (Moore “The Rise”). Therefore, eco-critics care for the investigation of the climatological facts

about drinking fresh water taking into consideration anthropogenic global warming, as well as analyzing and evaluating how capitalists exploit a biological vital need like water.

Biopower: Hydro-power

Mentioning capitalism and capitalocene necessitates shedding light on power. Power is generally interpreted as the ability of one person to force his/her hegemony over the will of the other, or the capacity to tyrannize and suppress the other to act against their will. And mentioning power necessitates shedding light on Foucault's power and biopower. Michael Foucault describes power in consideration of hegemony as the representation of authority or law. He admits that there are no restrictions to the sphere of imperial power. Everyone as well as everything is subject to tyranny. "Power is essentially that which represses. Power represses nature" (Foucault *Power* 90). Quoting Foucault, "In any case one schematizes power in a juridical form and one defines its effects as obedience." Hence, power can never be limited to "a sovereign and a subject" (85). But, as Foucault claims "Where there is power there is resistance" (95). Foucault asserts that power is ubiquitous. It is present in all kinds of relations among the members of any community as well as among different societies. He adds that oppression is omnipresent that is found and occurred every day in the whole operations of our life. "Power is everywhere and comes from everywhere" (*The History* 93).

On the other hand, Max Weber views power with regard to authority that stems and falls from above throughout the deeds of the tyrants. According to Weber, power can be described as an affair that applies hierarchically against the powerless. Power is provoked by domination from above, and returns by the possibility of the resisting power or counterpower (53). Contrary to Weber, Foucault believes that power does not dominate to be acted on. It is self-activating. Tyranny is not necessary. He declares that power seems to circulate inside a net; while an agent may violate the other, he/she may equally obtain an equal amount of violation throughout resistance (*Discipline* 137).

Throughout *The Will to Knowledge*, Foucault shows how:

Wars are no longer waged in the name of a sovereign who must be defended; they are waged on behalf of the existence of everyone; entire populations are mobilized for the purpose of wholesale slaughter in the name of life necessity: massacres have become vital. (137)

Foucault critiques the classical liberal theorists' conceptualization of power in the 18th c. which claims that the crucial procedure power

managed is juridically (*The History* 135), via banning, deducting and penalizing throughout official organizations (Ewald 1). Foucault argues that in the 17th century, a new form of power appeared (*The Birth* 304-8), a “power over life” known as biopower. Biopower means that the “ancient right to take life or let live was replaced by a power to foster life or disallow it to the point of death” (Foucault *The History* 138). It doesn’t mean that juridical power has been diminished or replaced by biopower. Instead, it is associated with biopower. Both types are inherently attached (Ewald 1). Consequently, national force and power are not merely achieved and legalized through juridical procedures but also via schemes that focus on how people live and how life can be improved. Biopower is the power over life. Hence, the biopolitical power of the population represents the procedure of government that manages residents via biopower. In other words, it represents the practice and effect of political power over all sides of human life.

Human beings, nowadays, deal with natural resources as eternal commodities, they consume and demolish resources till a shortage or crisis occurs, then discrimination and power dualism appear. Power can also be geographical in nature, in addition to economic, military or political power. Some sovereign states use their hydro-hegemony to control water politics. They use their sovereign power to force others to leave natural resources and just behave as subjects.

The biopower portrayed in the fictional text discussed in this paper shows the bourgeoisie maintains its power through hegemony and powerful control over biological necessities, such as water. Those who have access to potable water and can grasp it tyrannize the poor and powerless. There is always a struggle between the self and the other. Pointedly, Achille Mbembe, the Cameroonian historian and political theorist, declares the sovereign decisionism about death: “the power and the capacity to dictate who may live and who must die” (Campbell 161). Biopower is not only imposed through official institutions but throughout any and every social relationship and discourse. In other words, biopower is enacted all over social relations (Anders 3-4). Accordingly, human beings are not merely subjected to power, but they also provoke and direct it by subjugating and homogenizing others (Rangan 401). Briefly, biopolitics can be analyzed as a political belief that studies the management of life and populations: “to ensure, sustain, and multiply life, to put this life in order” (138). Biopower, hence, identifies how biopolitics is engaged in society. It also reflects what Foucault portrays as “a very profound transformation of the mechanisms of power” (*The History* 136) concerning the Western classic era. In his book, *The Will to*

Knowledge, Foucault explains and focuses on “A power that exerts a positive influence on life, that endeavors to administer, optimize, and multiply it, subjecting it to precise controls and comprehensive regulations” (137).

Water is considered a material under ‘control.’ In colonial settings, those who are powerful imperialize the others and privatize water or build dams to grasp water. Imperialism, as Edward Said claims, “is an act of geographical violence through which virtually every space in the world is explored, charted, and finally brought under control” (*Culture* 225).

Speculative Hydro-Fiction

Ecocriticism as well as the environmental humanities have caused the exposure of the ‘blue humanities’ coined by Steve Mentz, an English professor who is specialized in environmental criticism and blue humanities. The ‘hydrological turn’ that has appeared as a result of the elevation and growth of the blue humanities has given rise to new trends of hydro-criticism that are devoted to examining “how narrative form registers the spatial strategies and geopolitics of water enclosure,” which in turn help “to sustain dominant hydrological regimes” as well as to expect “alternative epistemes and imaginaries of water” (Campbell). Anna Henkel, an environmental researcher, marks the contemporary stage of advancement as “thrilling and threatening” (1). Thrilling because progress is inspiring and bestows humanity more power, still threatening because of the natural side effects, such as climate change that reduce and damage the positive advancement by exhausting freshwater resources and raising saline levels in seas and oceans. Responding to the massive changes we are facing both environmentally and technologically, authors who give attention to nature and the environment have shifted to various approaches of environmental rhetoric and have developed new procedures like hydro-fiction encouraging readers to detect suitable techniques for comprehending these crises and examining environmental water agitations. Therefore, the 21st century has witnessed some literary fiction dedicated to water called hydro-fiction.

It is generally recognized that apocalyptic and post-apocalyptic literary genres have become so popular in recent decades as a result of their proficiency to speculate and, consequently, warn people against close and threatening social and environmental termination. Considering some historical policy documents, like the Central Valley Project and the California State Water Project in addition to speculative novels, indicate how narrative texts showing water shortage are effective and can draw the

reader's attention toward the significance of water resources. This speculative genre that stems from contemporary real-world worries and anxieties answers the question "What if?" Speculative fiction, like the text discussed in this paper, has become "dominant across today's wide spectrum of risk issues" and thus "acts as an imaginative heuristic for exploring today's omnipresent, fundamental, multiple risk space" (Buell 277).

End-of-world literary texts analyzing climate change disasters, water trauma, and hydro-wars are popular in literature written for adults as well as young readers. The water war is one of these wars that were speculated and predicted. Therefore, speculative fiction helps the reader to understand hydro-cultures and the privatization of water, which indicates how man has started to hegemonize, get control over natural resources and degrade the environment reflecting hydro-hegemony, hydro-power and hydro-capitalism that produce social discrimination relying on economic hierarchies.

Literary men and critics speculate that lack of water resulting from desertification, drought, and industrial toxins will generate an insecure future of water. In other words, it causes water trauma. The speculative narrative text discussed in this paper can speculate futures that suffer from the harms of the privatization of water under imperialism, capitalism and biopower. Regarding the water crisis, the collective ownership, maintenance, and distribution of water resources in speculative hydro-fiction like Mindy's showing the contemporary outlines of capitalist manipulation of potable water resources, helps readers to conceive some available alternatives in their own lives to be able to face the sudden and rapid results of climate change.

A Speculative Hydro-Political Reading of Mindy McGinnis's *Not a Drop to Drink* (2013)

Mindy's text can be considered a speculative hydro-political fiction that reflects the current harms of water privatization under hydro-capitalism. It presents the post-apartheid era (post-1994), described by Bram Büscher and Michela Marcatelli as a phase of 'liquid violence.' This period is characterized by the quick privatization of the former public and natural resource; water, through assigning a price to water by multinational firms causing "structural and racialized water inequality in contemporary South Africa" (760). This phase has aroused new patterns of water unfair discrimination influencing populations and increased by climate change causing global warming temperatures and severe drought. In addition, it has witnessed a tide of crucial political organizations that

demand connection to crucial services concerning fresh water and drain water, and expressed fluently what, the president of the South African Shack dwellers' movement Abahlali baseMjondolo in Durban, Z'bu Zikode describes as a 'living politics' which claims that "we have no water but that in fact we all deserve water" (Rubenstein 580).

Using, in her epigraph, the approach of Samuel Taylor Coleridge's refrain from "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner" written in 1797: "Water, water, everywhere, / And all the boards did shrink; / Water, water, everywhere, / Nor any drop to drink", Mindy's text depicts the scarcity of water which ironically covers the majority of the earth's surface. Contrary to the mariner in Coleridge's poem who met his fate because he was lost at sea surrounded by salt water, people have generated this crisis themselves by privatizing water and imperializing the other. Commenting on Coleridge's refrain, Peter Neill, an author and an editor on environmental and ocean issues, writes in a blog post, "Consider the irony," the poem seems to speculate what happens today; socially, technologically and developmentally. Suddenly, we do not have enough water to have showers, flush toilets, or support our needs. Moreover, Neil begs us to rationalize and consider how "our water consciousness" should be "raised exponentially from complacency to crisis, our habits must be dramatically revised, and austerity applied." As water scarcity starts to be recognized as a global water crisis, literary men try, intentionally, to portray how water trauma may appear in reality and thus forewarn us.

Mindy starts the annotation of her narrative text with this sentence, "*Regret was for people with nothing to defend, people who had no water.*" The protagonist Lynn and her mother know very well all the threats to their pond: "drought, a snowless winter, coyotes, and, most importantly, people looking for a drink." So, they make sure that "anyone who comes near the pond leaves thirsty, or doesn't leave at all" (I). Lynn considers the pond as her own private property. It is a kind of privatization of water using force and coercion. Mindy portrays water as a main means of survival that may force people to engage in war and build fortitudes to protect it. "Having a life means dedicating it to survival, and the constant work of gathering ...water. Having a pond requires the *fortitude to protect it*" (I).

Lynn was nine when she killed, for the first time, to defend the pond using a bullet. She and her mother have to kill any others who come too close to their pond, using a gun as well. Water is portrayed throughout the narration as a commodity that people can buy and keep for themselves. They are frightened all the time by the smoke coming from the East. To protect themselves from those in the East who "have their own water" as

Lynn says, she supposes to “give them three snows” (1). They are always afraid of strangers who may come and take control of ‘their’ pond. They behave as if they’re in a real war and some enemies spy on them, “You think they’re watching us?” (Mindy 2) The author portrays Lynn carrying her rifle all the time to show her fear and her continuous readiness to quarrel and kill the other to keep the pond just for themselves. They use force and power to get their aim. What they do is an act of resistance or counterpower (the power of the other). Thus, power can be viewed as properties, as an object possessed by those in power. Power is interpreted, here, as “something which circulates, or as something which only functions in the form of a chain... Power is employed and exercised through a netlike organization... Individuals are the vehicles of power, not its points of application” (Foucault *Power* 98).

The new shape of global power, hegemony, which is known as the ideological, economic, political or cultural power can be acted by a tyrannical group over the other powerless as conceived by, the Italian philosopher and one of the most influential Marxist thinkers of the 20th c., Antonio Gramsci. Sovereign power requires submission to the regulations or dominant authority figures. However, power is “coextensive with resistance; ...ubiquitous, being found in every kind of relationship, as a condition of the possibility of any kind of relationship” (Kelly 38). So, the powerless, Lynn and Mom, are also powerful during their resistance as this resistance is considered a form of counterpower.

Throughout the text, Mindy depicts their suffering out of scarcity and privatization of water:

Years before, Mother had shown her pictures of the thirsty dead. Their skin hung from their bones like the wallpaper that sloughed from the walls in the unused upstairs hallway. Swollen tongues were forced past lips cracked and bleeding. Eyes sunk so deeply into sockets that the outline of the skulls was evident. (2)

“Do you want to die like this?” Mother asks Lynn (2). Then, Lynn’s continuous reply is “No.” So, her mother insists that she has to kill the other, without regret, to keep herself safe. They have to protect their source of water (3). Living in the countryside, they just hope that the urban countries do not completely control water supplies and grasp them.

Lynn’s mum declares that in addition to water scarcity, cholera also spreads, being the most dreadful pandemic in the world. Clean water becomes scarce, so they have to drink brackish water. Dead bodies start to drop all over the region. The water table starts to rise

with the spring rains. Lynn argues and refuses to believe that “so much blue could be a bad thing.” However, Mom tells her, “*Water water everywhere, but not a drop to drink*” (17). Mother has to purify the water of the pond following an issue of National Geographic, as the water of the pond could terminate them as simply as rescue them. “Lynn was grateful for every drop of water” (4). She can hardly remember tanks of tap water which is clear like crystal. She could only remember this water mixed with dirt or lightly tasted of fish.

When it rains, they feel as if “life was falling from the sky” (6). They gather all the containers they have “from plastic measuring cups to five-gallon buckets to old glass bottles” (6). They scatter them all over the whole yard. They run everywhere “during the rain, emptying full containers into the barn tanks and dashing back outside to catch every possible drop with the empties” (6). Recognizing the value of water, Lynn puts the last drop of the rainwater down the barn tank to the extent that she shakes each last drop from every bowl, cup, and bottle (7). Mindy gives the pronoun ‘their’ to rainwater to inform the reader how Lynn and her mother consider that they possess water; “gathering the last of *their* rainwater”. Following the rain storm Lynn tells her mother “It’s a good rain”. However, Mom tells her “There’s never enough”, “Don’t forget that” (6).

To protect and defend ‘their’ pond, they have to remain on the roof at night and sleep in shifts. However, Lynn fears that they may come in the dark, hence Lynn’s mum tells her, “Shoot at what you hear... Couple shots might be enough to scare them off...If it’s not, don’t be frightened when I turn my gun on you...Just know that there’s bad men in the world” (10).

Throughout the narration, Mindy tries to inform the reader how water is so rare. They do not have a faucet in the bathroom. Lynn always imagines how wonderful it could be to turn a faucet and hear the water splashing into the porcelain bathtubs. Mother tells Lynn about her comfortable life in the past. That time when she had the opportunity and was lucky to take a hot bath, contrary to these days that necessitate hauling and warming water. Mum had used a bathroom with a faucet when she was Lynn’s age. Years ago, they did not worry about taking a hot bath or being killed by somebody who search for potable water (24-5).

Unintentionally, Lynn ends her mother’s life, and she starts her war against the coyotes. After her mother’s death, Lynn becomes unable to protect herself day and night. Her most prominent concern is the pond. She cannot now observe it during cutting wood in the fencerow.

Finally, she has a deal with Stebbs, her neighbor. They make a deal to “benefit each other; he could watch the pond while she cut wood, and she would give him half in return. Water she would not part with” (33). She trusts him as he doesn’t need “her” water. Stebbs wonders, “You trust me to do that?” Lynn answers, “You don’t need *our* water.” “No,” he says. “I don’t” (36). Lynn as well as Stebbs fear “City people” (35). One night, during watching over the stream, Stebbs notices some people over it. Both of them are so terrified by that black smoke in the South. Though, Lynn is ready to kill them as much as she can using her rifle.

All the time, Lynn is completely convinced that without the pond she is lost. When Lynn has the new partner, Lucy, she worries that her resource is supposed to feed two persons now (44). Coming from the big city, Entargo, Lucy is surprised to find Lynn filling the buckets and doesn’t have running water that falls from a faucet. She asks Lynn, “Why don’t you turn on the faucet?” “I don’t have running water. That’s why I was dragging buckets up from the basement,” Lynn answers (49).

Out of natural resources scarcity, western governments allow a couple to have only one child, and so Lucy’s parents have only her. “You screw up and the entire family is out of the city?... They won’t waste water on lawbreakers. Sometimes they’ll keep older kids, males mostly, to help protect the city. Lucy not being a boy helped her out in that respect” (56). Neva, Lucy’s mum, told Stebbs that there are a lot of stories telling about people’s faces changing into black without water as well as dying slowly out of water shortage.

Scarcity of water may cause a struggle between any opposing sides and the more powerful is going to overcome the subjugated and less powerful. Therefore, each side has to protect and guard its own ‘property’ of water. This explains why Lynn could not leave the pond “unguarded...Nothing was more important than themselves and their belongings” (67).

She stopped gathering water. Every bucketful she removed from the pond brought the handle closer to the surface. Lynn managed to convince herself that if it remained submerged, they would be fine. They were safe for the moment; the clean tank in the basement was full, as were the huge tanks in the pole barn, safe from freezing by their sheer volume. It was the future Lynn stored up against; the possibility of a snowless winter followed by a dry spring. No snowmelt meant no runoff. Since their pond wasn’t

ground-fed, it relied on rain and runoff for refilling. There had been no rain for weeks. (70)

When Lucy asks Lynn to support her with water to simulate a flood, Lynn rejects her request as they hardly have water to live. On the other side, Lynn offers Lucy her mum's boots and coat which reflects Lynn's kindness and good humor. She just tries to save her life and save water by protecting the pond which represents the source of their survival. As Mindy shows, "Lynn didn't like being away from the pond" (77). Lynn tries to stay as much as she can by the pond, and never to leave the pond for any visitors who can control the pond and thus get rid of her. The most powerful will tyrannize the other and get control over the water.

To hear the sound of rushing water is like finding a treasure. Lynn is surprised to discover Stebbs's source of water. It is a well containing fresh, cold and clear water. "How the hell did you get lucky enough to find a well? ...I always wondered where you got your water... I never saw you gathering any" (80), Lynn wonders. Anyone observing Stebbs's small shelter will not imagine or guess that he has anything that deserves seizing, unconscious that a well that is worth more than a gold mine lays underneath. In contrast, Lynn's big shelter, outbuildings, and apparent pond make her an endless target. Lucy is so surprised to know that there is water under the ground calling it "water witching" (81).

Highlighting water's importance to human beings, Mindy symbolizes water's importance to veins' importance.

There's veins down under the ground like these that are in our bodies...full of water, not blood. The ground is like the skin here on our bones, keeps the water down inside. I can find that water without seeing it, and then I dig where it's at to make a well." (81)

In addition, glorifying water's importance, when Lynn and Lucy ask Stebbs how could he find this well and if this was magic, he answers, "No, nothing like that. It's just something I'm able to do. Sometimes it's genetic—my grandfather could do it. Some people can just *feel water*" (82). Lynn is afraid that Lucy might tell others about Stebbs's well. So, she warns her against the "wrong people" and "the bad men" as she calls them. Lynn tells her that those people take all valuable things. If anyone knows anything about this source of water, "they'd take—" (83).

In the 21st century, water is considered more precious than gold. Lucy tells Lynn that Governments, applying their sovereign power,

use satellites to take pictures and deliver them to the computers and that organizations use these pictures to detect water. Thus, Lynn fears and worries about her pond. Lucy adds that only soldiers have the right to see these pictures. Because “the people who run the city, don’t want everybody who lives there coming out here to get water for themselves... then they won’t *pay* for it” (84).

Lucy narrates that her family has to leave the city before her mother’s belly gets big. Her father looks at the water maps, searching for a safe place to go. He comes back home and draws the map out as best as possible. Uncle Eli and her dad memorize the map, then get rid of it via burning. They are so terrified to be subjugated and tyrannized by the power of the authority. They see the pond and Lynn’s house and are supposed to grasp them and have them as their own to live in instead of the city. Noticeably, when they search for a residence, they choose a good place near a pond as a source of water. They are ignorant of Lynn’s presence there. On the contrary, they are caught. Father is killed, then Lucy, Neva and Eli are driven away. Uncle Eli follows the water map in his mind but he is too weak to take the pond by force because somebody is living at the house. Bradley, Eli’s brother, is a member of a special team in a private organization. He tells Eli that people who know that the satellites are still working are those people who have enough money to buy water, and an alternative plan in case matters in the city go bad. After knowing these facts, Lynn tries to get any information about the water maps to control these water resources and take them as property for herself. She asks Eli about the maps, “How about in exchange you tell me about these water maps?” (92)

The word fear is repeated frequently throughout the narration of the plot. All the time they lack tap water and fear death whether from water scarcity or being attacked by others to take by force their only source to survive. Lynn complains telling Eli that “it’d be kind of nice not spending every minute living working against dying” (95). Trying to defend himself against the accusation of attacking Lynn’s pond after knowing that her pond was detected by the satellite, Eli, as one of the proletariats like Lynn, tells her that when he noticed her house and pond, he “didn’t even consider taking it from” her. “I’d lost everything I had. I didn’t have the heart to take from someone else” (96). Both of them use power just to resist not tyrannize the other. Eli tells Lynn that they use faucets in their big city, Entargo, but they have to pay for them. It is expensive. People who have enough money could bear the clean water cost. On the other hand, for those who have little money, their water is not as purified (99).

Mindy, too, sheds light on the water scarcity effects on governments, especially in third-world countries. She claims that the world is

running out of fresh water and the government was trying to keep it a secret...to avoid panic. All over the globe... people were running out of water and the news was putting a different spin on it...All the violence in *third-world countries* was over water... but they kept telling us stories about tribal wars and religion to keep us distracted, and them poor countries didn't have a way of telling people any different. (Mindy 104)

Noticeably, this point of view emits from an Orientalist. Westerners believe in what Karl Marx recorded hundreds of years ago in *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte* (1852), "they cannot represent themselves; they must be represented." So, Mindy plays the role of a representative (the West) of the represented (the third-world countries). The West, as the powerful side (us), gives itself the right to colonize and have authority over the other powerless countries (them); "by making statements about it, authorizing views of it, describing it, by teaching it, setting it, ruling over it" (Said *Orientalism* 3).

Throughout the narration, Stebbs tells Lynn that her father told them that
Pretty soon... the *East* would be going down. There were too many people over there and not enough water. Then we'd be next. He said the whole environmental movement had shit-all to do with caring about the planet and everything to do with people giving their money to green programs so that desalinization plants could be built for the rich people to survive the coming shortage... Nobody took him serious until the *Aswan Dam* was blown up... That dam had always been a political problem for *Egypt*, but the rest of the world was always told it was about power, not water. (104-5)

In "The 'water war' brewing over the new River Nile Dam", the BBC's Africa Correspondent Alastair Leithead claims that, "a new dam on the Nile could trigger a war over water unless Ethiopia can agree on a deal with Egypt and Sudan". It is frequently claimed that the world's coming world war will be a water war. The River Nile is one of these places that may be exposed to stress and trauma. Physical scientists, geographers, authors and critics predict that a large geopolitical shift is going to occur along the world's longest river between Ethiopia and Egypt. It has been said for many years that a new dam on the Blue Nile is

supposed to be built, however, believing that everything all over the world is affected by power, Ethiopia has the opportunity to start to build the Renaissance Dam only when the Arab Spring has sparked and Egypt was under confusion and unsettled. BBC claims that in the 1960s, Egypt did exactly what Ethiopia is doing today, by building the Aswan High Dam. Being a revolutionary post-colonial country, Egypt was proud to achieve a national project like this. Likewise, Ethiopia considers it in the same way. It is claimed that two-thirds of the Grand Renaissance Dam has been built and the dam is now crossing the river. Therefore, it is said that Egypt is supposed to take extreme military action just to keep its control over the River Nile. On the other hand, Ethiopia, now, uses its hegemony to supervise the River Nile's flow.

The pharaohs used to worship the Nile as their god, they used to say that "Egypt was the gift of the Nile". For thousands of years, Egypt has exercised political hegemony over the Nile. But the Ethiopians are so ambitious to gain this power, so they start to build the dam. Ethiopia needs to raise its income, so the Ethiopians think to get electricity through hydroelectric power. The BBC News broadcasts that Egypt fears its rival, Ethiopia, as 85% of the River Nile comes out from the Ethiopian highlands. So, Ethiopia might be able to control the flow of the river. The Ethiopians are looking forward to starting the power generation and having plenty of cheap, renewable power resources. On the other hand, now, Egypt is worried, as the UN predicts that it will start suffering water scarcity by 2025.

Stebbs tells Lynn also about Lake Erie and the plant that had been raised for the first time on the Canadian side to purify the lake water. He says that there were armed guards all through those plant's walls, a private army holding M16s. The official army was over-occupied overseas. So, it was the militia that had to protect the lake water.

At that time, taps have all been turned off, and they have to move to the city to purchase water when they need it. They permanently have to buy their water, unless one is too lucky to own a well. The water organizations claim that they couldn't pay for the servicing cost of the water lines. So, if you need water, you should get it yourself. Because of this Shortage,

you had to go into the nearest town with a utility office to get your water. Then, ...it was too much of a bother to keep those open. So, if you wanted your water you had to come to the city to get it, and eventually, they just said if you wanted water, you had to live in the city. People started leaving, piling into their cars and going to the city limits to pile on top

of each other there. Those of us out here with wells or access to water stayed, and there were bad enough stories coming out of the cities. (Mindy 105)

Power systems such as corporations, government or capitalism motivate people to submit to the status quo and consent to the bourgeoisie dominance over proletariats or subordinates. Sovereign power operates only when rights or laws have been abused, and it comes into play to prevent or restrict this abuse. As Foucault states that power is the “right of seizure: of things, time, bodies, and ultimately life itself” (*The History* 136).

Mindy has also shown the probability of the spread of pandemics because of the scarcity of water like; cholera. Sick people are obliged to leave the towns. It resembles the Black Death. In addition, they become threats to each other. Men try to grasp and control that water plant by force. It is a kind of war, fought by the militia. People may fight to get control over an efficient water meadow running underground. Sometimes, to get water, they used to gather snow in buckets and warm it on the stove or eat it in frozen mouthfuls.

Those men who tyrannize others and take their water resources, “go house to house and clear out anything that seemed useful—medicine, blankets, and tools. They had it all stockpiled back at their camp...They’re taking it so that others that...need it have to come to them for it” (141). They subjugate others to grasp what they want. Mindy, also, does not miss to mention how those powerful used their power to tyrannize others even by subjugating women

Those less lucky traded their own bodies or the bodies of their women... One woman came begging for water, empty buckets in her hands and children clinging to her legs. Green Hat played with the children to distract them while Black Beard took the woman down to the stream far longer than necessary to gather water. (148)

Lynn tells Stebbs, “We’ve got to defend what’s *ours*, or we die” (148). Mindy depicts California as still normal and does not suffer from water shortage and those others in Entargo think to go there.

Once more in Ch. 19, Mindy sheds light on damming the earth. She concludes this chapter with Lynn hurrying to tell Stebbs that “they’re building a dam” (154). She tells him that “they’ve got a decent-size reservoir dug already, and plenty of stone to stop the river anytime they want” (Mindy 155). Those others build the dam to gain power, grow stronger and then homogenize them. The scavengers will continuously loot the countryside till there is nothing left for anyone in the area and

they become beggars. Rivers, seas and oceans can be subjugated and used via the techniques of hydroelectric dams or tidal energy turbines. Certain shifts in techniques are applied by the new ecological regime using new ways of mapping and calculating the world. Vandana Shiva (1952-), the Indian environmental activist, claims,

Free-flowing rivers are free, in the sense that they do not need capital investment, they are not enclosed, and their waters are accessible to all. Water locked in dams and canals is captive water. They can be privatized, commoditized, bought, sold, and controlled by the powerful.

Dams can be considered a key sign of the ‘political unconscious of globalization’, what Max Haiven, the researcher in radical imagination, calls Damming the Earth. Respectively, in *Les Damnés de la Terre*, Frantz Omar Fanon, an Afro-Caribbean political philosopher and Marxist, invites us to regard dams as concretizations that “harness, produce, materialize, and symbolize” (neo)colonial power relations. This concretization can be clarified literally, according to the mass concrete structures of mega-dams as what the professor of history and social sciences, Bob Johnson, labels “congealed energy, or the deep energy of the exosomatic environment” (139). However, Haiven convinces us to regard dams not only as “real material manifestations of political, economic, and social power” but also as “fundamentally cultural edifices” that organize waters and relationships (215). He asserts that:

Dams force us to attend to the interconnectivity of power, the ways sources of energy are converted into one another: from hydrokinetic to direct-current to alternating-current to thermodynamic; or between cultural, economic, historical, and material forms of power. (214)

Finally, Lynn, Stebbs and Eli manage to fight the others in the South. They decide to use their power of resistance because those others build a dam to keep the water just for themselves. “Hell or high water” (159). They decide to use a Molotov cocktail. Lynn decides to climb a tree, miles from her own pond to shoot any stranger so that Eli, Lucy, and countless residents downstream can get a drop to drink (161). The resolution of the plot portrays Lynn, for the first time, having no will to attack the coyotes. Finding a massive, old, frail coyote, trying to reach the pond and let its long tongue hungrily lap at the water of the pond, she leaves it telling Lucy that “he’s just trying to survive. Same as us all” (Mindy 172).

Conclusion

Water access is typically framed in terms of human rights that emphasize water as a universal biophysical need. However, while water is essential for life, water scarcity and dealing with it as a commodity cause many struggles and power confrontations. Thus, access to water seems to be highly correlated to power. Considering Marx's capitalism, governments yield to privatize water and dedicate it to the bourgeoisie rather than the proletariat. These struggles among governments and between the self and the other have been articulated through a politics that conjoins anti-colonial resistance with climate justice and anti-privatization, highlighting capitalism, imperialism and bio-power in hydro-fiction. The scarcity of water has caused a feeling of threat for all the globe; the powerful as well as the powerless, showing a close relationship among capitalism, power and imperialism. Pointedly, "The struggle over the world's water resources will be the defining struggle of the twenty-first century, and the battle has already been joined" (Midkiff ix).

Water scarcity due to climate change and overpopulation plays a crucial role in Mindy's *Not a Drop to Drink* (2013). This narrative text depicts how humans deal with water scarcity and consider it as a main cause of the breakup of social relations between the self and the other as well as a cause of hydro-power, hydro-capitalism and hydro-imperialism. It seems that Mindy is speculating on water wars all over the world, specifically in third-world countries. Mindy mentions in her narrative that third-world countries like Egypt struggle all the time to get control over the natural resources of potable water. She claims that the Egyptians have built the Aswan High Dam to ensure their power and hegemony over the neighboring countries. This future starts to become present in the Middle East between Egypt and Ethiopia. The government in Ethiopia has started to build the Ethiopian Renaissance Dam which in turn is supposed to control the flow of water to Egypt. This reflects the feature of capitalism in the Ethiopians' will to privatize water. The Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam forewarns of an upcoming water war in third-world countries. In general, privatizing water reflects man's continuous yield to what Marx calls capitalism, what Said calls imperialism and what Foucault calls biopower. To conclude, the speculative text *Not a Drop to Drink* acts as a keen narrative fiction of hydrological reengineering in a prescient and elucidating thriller of water war. Thus, this type of speculative fiction might encourage readers to envision some alternatives that will, however, continuously change due to the permanent changes in the ecosystem through climate change.

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