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

Alyaa Mustafa Saad
English Literature Lecturer, Faculty of Arts, New Valley University

Abstract:
To save your life and stay alive you have to use your power and hegemony over others. Explaining the connection between human activities and the web of life and how human activity has led to climate change which in turn has led to water scarcity thus leading to privatization of water, this paper aims to show social unrest arousing from hydro-capitalism, unveiling 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. This study joins water scarcity and its privatization in a speculative hydro-fiction text to the dominant features of biopower, hydro-capitalism and imperialism. Analyzing Mindy’s narrative text *Not a Drop to Drink*, this paper shows the problem of ruling Western paradigm and discourse, like capitalocene and how water scarcity may drive the overwhelming powers of a society to conquer and subjugate the other; the weak. In addition, the study examines the dam projects which are integral to the thrilling hydrological regimes of independence in several post-colonial countries, like the Aswan Dam in Egypt and the Grand Renaissance Dam in Ethiopia, shedding light on the biospheric turning point during the 21st century in which the forces of nature are extended to affect the output of human being activities.

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

نهاية الماء الرخيص: الرأسمالية المائية في رواية "لا نقطة للارتواء" للكاتبة ميندي ماكغينيس لكي تنقذ حياتك وتبقي على قيد الحياة، عليك أن تجيد هيمنتك على الآخرين. تهدف هذه الورقة البحثية عن طريق استعراض العلاقة بين الأنشطة التي يقوم بها الإنسان وبين البيئة المحيطة به وكيف أدى النشاط البشري إلى تغير المناخ و الذي تسبب بدوره في ندرة المياه و من ثم إلى خصخصتها، إلى إظهار الاضطرابات والصراعات الاجتماعية الناشئة عن الرأسمالية المائية، وكشف النقاب عن حقيقة تعرض دول العالم الثالث للعديد من الصراعات بسبب فقر الموارد الطبيعية بها و تعرض هذه الدول لهيمنة و سيطرة القوى على الضعيف، حيث نرى في العالم من حولنا كيف أن الغرب يستعبد و يستعمرون الشرق تماما مثلما تقوم الذات بإخضاع الآخر لها. تقوم هذه الدراسة من خلال نص روايتي تنبأت فيه الكاتبة بمشكلة ندرة المياه و خصخصتها بالإضافة إلى كونها مصدر طبيعي بالربط بين هذه المشكلات و بين بعض التصورات المعاصرة مثل القوة الحيوية والرأسمالية المائية والإمبريالية. هذا النص هو "لا نقطة للارتواء" للكاتبة الأمريكية ميندي ماكغينيس، و من ثم تقوم هذه الدراسة بتوضيح سيطرة النموذج الغربي على الحكم متمثلة في ظاهرة الكابيتالوسين (الرأسمالية المتعلقة بالنظام البيئي) وكيف أن ندرة المياه قد تدفع القوى الساحقة لغزو وإخضاع الآخر. ليس هذا و حسب، بل تقوم الدراسة بإلقاء الضوء على ما ذكرته الكاتبة في روايتها من إقامة السدود و التي تعد جزءًا لا يتجزأ من أنظمة الاستعمار الإستعمارية، مثل إنشاء السد العالي في مصر وسد النهضة بإثيوبيا، وما يفسر نقطة تحول القرن الحادي والعشرين إلى الاهتمام بالنظام البيئي. القرن الذي امتدت فيه قوى الطبيعة لتؤثر على ناتج النشاط البشري.

الكلمات الدالة: الخيال المائي، كابيتالوسين، القوة المائية، السدود، هلع الماء، الحرب
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, 60 % of our bodies is composed of it and simply water goes down the sky. It’s 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. As claimed, the UNICEF has estimated 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, Donald Hill declares that the big countries of the ancient world have been built in river valleys which are very rich in water. He added that the rise and fall of communities and economies has mainly been associated to efficient agriculture depending on the accessibility of water. On the other hand, fresh water lack is now a main restriction on cultivation and, after all, the development of societies. Nowadays, water management that plays a main role in the world economy does not offer enough main resources to fulfill and match human beings needs (2013, 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 has witnessed, from December 2011 till 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 2016). The US Forest Service asserts that this drought terminated about 102 million trees (Deamer 2016). As a result, critics started to inquire about stubborn water shortage and massive privatization of natural resources which enriches the capitalism procedure that overvalues financial gains than human needs. This scarcity of water has really increased social consciousness and community contributions in 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 consider them as a product that can be bought and sold, even during times of severe lack.

The water trauma necessitates the need to analyze critically the primary relation between water and living organisms in the current days. 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 into critical studies and literary fictions. Giving great attention to the 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.

Out of climate change and population growth, nothing is more challenged than water. Many lands in Antipodes and the Americas are going to suffer from desertification out of farmers’ dependence upon groundwaters for irrigation. Therefore, as Rothenberg and Ulvaeus assume: ‘where there are enough humans and not enough water, hydrosquabbles spew forth’ (2001, 40). All over our watery world, human beings are involved in struggles over potable water. People all over the time argue about who should retain water, supervise it, use it, benefit from it or control it.

As ecology and ecosystem are broadly examined, literary men and critics give more attention to water issues. They are worried about water value, afraid of water pollution and horrible flooding in the winter, anxious about water scarcity in hot seasons, and irritated about privatization. Many years passed after privatizing water, but still critics admit that it is the most miserable action capitalists ever did. Thus, all of the undercurrents, even literature, which explore much more severe tensions about water are instant and can be examined.
Connecting water with war is undoubtedly terrifying, as water is a vital resource needed by all that can’t be substituted by any other available resource. Water wars cannot be just because water is a commodity which can be bought and sold, like gold and silver, but because it is considered as a process of ethnic cleansing through the termination of members of one religious or ethnic group of one sector by those of another.

Water crisis motivated the geographer Jamie Linton to call in his book *What is Water? The History of a Modern Abstraction* for ‘modern water’ (2010, 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 Jason W. Moore argues (2015a, 44). Unrestrained hydropower and hydropolitics progress in the world show how social, economic and political ecologies were reframed throughout a keen consideration to 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 of the widespread of hydro-dependency in the neo-liberal era, as well as paying attention to extraction, production and consumption of water throughout the whole world, water acts now as power and as a weapon in the neo-liberal regime of the capitalist world-ecology. Nowadays, we notice a trend where authors are applying environmental topics and themes like water scarcity in their examination of governmental conflict and instability. Fiction has given attention to water crisis. 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 Mindy 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” (2013,104).

Believing in Jason W. Moore’s debate about the trauma of ‘cheap nature’ (2014), the ecological authority and government of the late neo-liberal era is characterized by a decrease in ‘cheap water.’ Resulting the 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 the capitalist lot of natural resources in the 21st century (Deckard 2019). Each government tries to find a solution to water scarcity through reengineering riparian megaprojects like building dams, river redirections and water diversion enterprises.

This paper tries to answer this question: why did Mindy mention third-world countries’ violence over water, especially Egypt and the Aswan Dam? It examines whether Mindy has speculated the building of a new dam in Africa when she mentioned the High Dam in Aswan in her novel. What was her aim when she mentioned the High dam as a political power? “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” (Mindy 2013, 105).

**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 (Moore 2017). Capitalism controls human being’s connection to all resources, regardless of the quantity of these resources or its 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 over 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 the climate change and crisis will start to restrain their safety, satisfaction and economy. In order to protect themselves against those homogenized and deprived from 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 fresh water sources. Meanwhile, as much as water shortage increases as much as water cost drives up everywhere.

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. Out of unfair, capitalism may change material and resources abundance into scarcity that in turn cause 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 proletariat’s natural resources. This means that 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 for the bourgeoisie. Fresh water is currently treated as a commodity. It 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” (2014, 260).

Capitalists believe that natural resources are considered as inputs which 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 as the Age of Capital. This era is characterized by 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, capitalocene elevated environmental change more than anything known before. Moore insists that capitalocene, ‘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, Hamilton argues that it is the world-ecology which acts, nowadays, as the motivating force behind each evolution. It is not class, not capital, not imperialism, not even culture. However, it’s the Anthrops: humankind as an indivisible whole. Rather than considering capitalism as world-economy, critics now view capitalism as world-ecology (2015).

As human activities have provoked many biophysical changes on our planet, the term Anthropocene was necessary to be coined in 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” (Malm and
Hornborg 2014). 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 2015). “The capitalocene signifies capitalism as a way of organizing nature as a multispecies, situated, capitalist world-ecology” (Moore 2015, 7).

The Anthropocene discourse has started with biospheric results and proceeds towards social history. Thus, unfamiliar crises would start with the interactions among 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 together 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 2016). 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 to hegemony as the representation of authority or law. He admits that there are not any restrictions to the sphere of imperial power. Everyone as well as everything is subject to the tyranny. “Power is essentially that which represses. Power represses nature” (Foucault 1980, 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” (1978, 85). But, as Foucault claims “where there is power there is resistance” (1978, 95). Where there is power, there is somebody who persistently resist. Foucault asserts that power is ubiquitous. It is present in all kinds of relation 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 in our life. “Power is everywhere and comes from everywhere” (Foucault 1978, 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.

Power is the probability that one actor within a social relationship will be in a position to carry out his own will despite resistance, regardless of the basis on which this probability rests. Domination is the probability that a command with a given specific content will be obeyed by a given group of persons. (1978, 53)

According to Weber, power can be described as an affair that applies hierarchically against the powerless. Power is provoked by a domination from above, and returns back by the possibility of the resisting power or counterpower. 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 (1979, 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. (1978, 137)

Foucault critiques the classical liberal theorists’ conceptualization of power in the 18th century which claims that the crucial procedure power managed is juridically (1978, 135), via banning, deducting and penalizing throughout official organizations (Ewald 1990, 1). Foucault argues that in the 17th century a new form of power has appeared (2008, 304-308), 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 1978, 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 to each other (Ewald 1990, 1). Consequently, nation force and power are not merely achieved and legalized throughout 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, 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 instead of consuming and demolishing resources till the 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 the hegemony and powerful control over the 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 2013, 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 the social relations (Anders 2013, 3-4). Accordingly, human beings are not merely subjected to power, but they also provoke and direct it by subjugating and homogenizing others (Rangan 2013, 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’ (Foucault 1978, 138). Biopower, hence, identifies the manner in which biopolitics is engaged in society. It also reflects what Foucault portrays as “a very profound transformation of [the] mechanisms of power” (1978, 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 endeavours to administer, optimize, and multiply it, subjecting it to precise controls and comprehensive regulations” (1978, 137).

Water is considered as a material under ‘control.’ In colonial settings, those who are powerful imperialize the other and privatize water or build dams in order 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” (1993, 225).
Speculative Hydro-Fiction

Ecocriticism as well as the environmental humanities have resulted the exposure of the ‘blue humanities’ coined by Steve Mentz, an English professor. 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 examine “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 2020). Anna Henkel, an environmental researcher, marks the contemporary stage of advancement as “thrilling and threatening” (2016, 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 fresh water 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 fictions dedicated to water called hydro-fictions.

It is generally recognized that apocalyptic and post-apocalyptic literatures have become so popular in the recent decades as a result to its 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, indicates 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 2014, 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. 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, that 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 a social discrimination relying on economic hierarchies.

Literary men and critics speculate that lack of water resulting from desertification, drought, as well as industrial toxins is going to generate insecure future of water. In other words, it causes water trauma. The speculative narrative text discussed in this paper can explore futures that suffer from the harms of privatization of water under imperialism, capitalism and biopower. Regarding water crisis, the collective ownership, maintenance, and distribution of water resources in speculative hydro-fictions 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 in order to be able to face the sudden and rapid results of climate change.

Mindy McGinnis *Not a Drop to Drink* (2013)

*Not a Drop to Drink* can be considered a speculative hydro-fiction that can reflect the current harms of water privatization under hydro-capitalism. Mindy’s literary text presents the post-apartheid era (post-1994), described by Bram Büscher and Michela Marcatelli as a phase of ‘liquid violence’ (2019). This period is characterized by the quick privatisation of the former public and natural resource; water, through assigning a price to water by multinational firms causing “structural and racialised water inequality in contemporary South Africa” (Marcatelli 2019, 760). This phase has aroused new patterns of water unfair discrimination influencing populations and increased by climate change resulting 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 Z’bu Zikode describes as a ‘living politics’ which claims that “we have no water but that in fact we all deserve water” (Rubenstein 2015, 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, every where, / And all the boards did shrink; / Water, water, every where, / Nor any drop to drink”, Mindy’s *Not a Drop to Drink* 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
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” (np.) the poem seems to speculate what happens today; socially, technologically, 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” (np.). As water scarcity started 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 has started the annotation of her narrative text by this sentence, “Regret was for people with nothing to defend, people who had no water.” 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” (Mindy 2013, I). Lynn, even, considers the pond as her own private property. It is a kind of the privatization of water using force and coercion. Mindy portrays water as a main mean 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, the protagonist, was nine when she killed, for the first time, to defend the pond using a bullet. Mother and Lynn had 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. Lynn and her mum are worried all the time from the smoke coming from the east. In order 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 there are some enemies who spy on them, “You think they’re watching us?” (2) Mindy portrays Lynn carrying her rifle all the time to show Lynn’s fear and her continuous readiness to quarrel and kill the other in order to keep the pond just for themselves. She and her mother 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 can be interpreted as “something which circulates, or as something which only function 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 1980, 98).

In other words, 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 Antonio Gramsci. Sovereign power requires submission to the regulations or dominant authority figure. 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 2009, 38). So, the powerless is also powerful during his/her 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 asked Lynn (2). Then, Lynn’s continuous reply was “No.” So, her mother insisted that she has to kill the other, without regret, in order to keep herself safe. They have to protect their source of water (3). Living in a countryside, they just hoped that the urban countries do not completely control water supplies and grasp them.

Lynn’s mum declared that in addition to water scarcity, cholera also spread. Thus, it had once been the most dreadful pandemic in the world. Clean water was scarce, so they had to drink brackish water. Dead bodies started to drop all over the region, as well as the water table started to rise with the spring rains. It was unbelievable to Lynn that water may make her sick as mother said. Lynn argues and refuses to believe that “so much blue could be a bad thing.” However, mum told her the prominent refrain from Coleridge’s poem about the ocean. To put an end to this argument. “‘Water water everywhere, but not a drop to drink’” (17). Mother had to purify 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. In addition, she could only remember this water mixed with dirt or tasted lightly 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 in order to inform the reader how Lynn and her mother consider their relationship to water as a possession; “gathering the last of their rainwater”. Following the rain storm Lynn told her mother “It’s a good rain”. However, her mum told her “There’s never enough”, “Don’t forget that” (6).

In order to protect and defend ‘their’ pond, they had to remain on the roof at night and sleep in shifts. However, Lynn feared that they may come in the dark, hence Lynn’s mum told 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 narrative text, Mindy tries to inform the reader how water was so scarce and rare. They didn’t have a faucet in bathroom. Lynn always imagines how wonderful it could be to turn a faucet and hear the water splashing into the porcelain bathtubs. Mother told Lynn about her comfortable life. That time when she had the opportunity and were 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 didn’t worry about taking a hot bath or being killed by somebody who search for potable water (24-25).

Unintentionally, Lynn ends her mother’s life, and she starts her war against the coyotes. After her mother’s death, Lynn became unable to protect herself day and night. Her most prominent concern was the pond. She can’t now observe it during cutting wood in the fencerow. Finally, she had a deal with Stebbs, her neighbor. They made 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.

“You trust me to do that?”
“You don’t need our water.”
“No,” he said. “I don’t.” (36)
Lynn as well as Stebbs fear “City people” (35). One night, during watching over the stream, Stebbs has noticed some people over it. Both of them were so terrified and frightened from that black smoke in the south. Though, Lynn was ready to kill them as much as she can using her rifle.

All over the time Lynn is completely convinced that without the pond she is lost. When Lynn had the new partner, Lucy, she worried that her resource is proposed to feed two persons now (44). Coming from the big city, Entargo, Lucy was surprised to find Lynn filling the buckets and doesn’t have running water that fall down from a faucet.

“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.” (49)

Out of natural resources scarcity, western governments allow a couple to have only one child, and so Lucy’s parents had 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 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 asked Lynn to support her with water to simulate a flood, Lynn rejected her request as they hardly have water to live. On the other side Lynn offered Lucy her mum’s boots and coat what reflects Lynn’s kindness and good humor. She just tries to save her life and save water by protecting the pond that represents the source of their survival. As Mindy shows, “Lynn didn’t like being away from the pond” (77). Lynn tried 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 water.

To hear a sound of rushing water was like finding a treasure. Lynn was surprised to discover Stebbs’ source of water. It was 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” (Mindy, 80) Lynn wonders. Anyone observing Stebbs small shelter won’t imagine or guess that he has anything deserves seizing, unconscious that a well which is worth more than a gold mine lay underneath. In contrast, Lynn’s big shelter, outbuildings, and apparent pond made her an endless target. As a child Lucy is so surprised to know that there’s 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, ’cept they’re 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” (Mindy, 81). In addition, glorifying water’s importance, when Lynn and Lucy asked Stebbs how could he find this well and if this was a magic, he answered, “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 was afraid that Lucy might tell others about Stebbs’ well. So, she warned her against the “wrong people” and “the bad men” as she calls them. Lynn told her that those people take anything worth. If anyone knew anything about this source of water, “they’d take—” (83).

In the 21st century, water is considered more precious than gold. Lucy told 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 feared and worried about her pond. Lucy added 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’s family had to leave the city before her mother’s belly got big. The father looked at the water maps, searching for a safe place to go. Lucy’s father came back home and drew the map out as best as possible. Uncle Eli and her dad memorized the map, then got rid of it via burning. They were so terrified to be subjugated and tyrannized by the power of the authority. They saw the pond and the house of Lynn and were supposed to grasp them and have them as their own to live in instead of the city. Noticeably, when they searched for a residence, they chose a good place near a pond as a source of water. They were ignorant of Lynn’s presence there. On the contrary, they were caught. Father was killed, then Lucy, Neva and Eli were driven away. Uncle Eli followed the water map in his mind but he was too weak to take the pond by force because there was somebody living at the house.

Bradley, Eli’s brother, was a member in a special team in a private organization. He told 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 that matters in the city go bad. After knowing these facts, Lynn tries to get any information about the water maps in order to control these water resources and take them as a 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 novel. All the time they lack tap water and fear death whether from water’s scarcity or being attacked from others in order 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, told 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 to tyrannize the other. Eli told Lynn that they used faucet in their big city, Entargo, but they have to pay for it. It’s expensive. People who have enough money could bear the clean water cost. On the other hand, those who have little money, their water isn’t as purified (99).

Throughout this fictional text, Mindy sheds light on the water scarcity effects on the governments, especially in the third-world countries. She
claims that the world was running out of freshwater and the government was trying to keep it a secret, so as to avoid a panic. All over the globe… people was running out of water and the news, they was putting a different spin on it, so we wouldn’t know what was going on. 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. (104)

Noticeably, this point of view emits from an orientalist. Westerners believe in what Karl Marx has recorded hundreds of years ago in *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*, “they cannot represent themselves; they must be represented” (1852). So, Mindy plays the role of a representative 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 1978, 3).

Throughout Mindy’s narration, Stebbs told Lynn that her father told them that

Pretty soon… the east would be going down. There was 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. (Mindy 2013, 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 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 had the opportunity to start to build the Renaissance Dam only when the Arab Spring has sparkled and Egypt was under confusion and unsettled. BBC claims that in the 1960s, Egypt did exactly what Ethiopia is doing today, through building the Aswan High Dam. Being a revolutionary post-colonial country, Egypt was proud to achieve a national project like this. As well as, Ethiopia considers it in the same way. 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 an 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 were so ambitious to gain this power, and so they started to build the dam. Ethiopia needs to raise its income, and so the Ethiopians thought to get electricity through hydroelectric power. Egypt fears its rival, Ethiopia, as 85% of the River Nile come 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 to have 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 told 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 said 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 had all been turned off, and they had to move to city to purchase water when they need. They permanently had to buy their water, unless one was too lucky to own a well. The water organizations claimed 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 after
that to make us glad we did. (Mindy 2013, 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 law have been abused, and it comes into play in order
to prevent or restrict this abuse. Therefore, Foucault describes power as
the “right of seizure: of things, time, bodies, and ultimately life itself”
(1978, 136).

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

Those men who tyrannize others taking their water resource, “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 the others in order to grasp what they want. Mindy,
also, didn’t miss to mention how those powerful used their power to
tyranize 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 told Stebbs, “We’ve got to defend what’s ours, or we die” (148).
Mindy depicts California as still normal and doesn’t suffer from water
shortage and those others in Entargo think to go there.

Once more in chapter 19, Mindy sheds light on damming the earth.
she concludes this chapter by 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” (155). Those others build the dam to gain power, grow stronger and then homogenize them. The scavengers will continuously loot the countryside till there’s nothing left for anyone in the area and they become beggars. Obviously, rivers, seas and oceans can be subjugated and used via the techniques of hydroelectric dams or tidal energy turbines. Hence, as Vandana Shiva 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 are captive waters. They can be privatised, commoditised, bought, sold, and controlled by the powerful’ (2006). Evidently, certain shifts in techniques are applied by the new ecological regime using new ways of mapping and calculating the world. (Moore 2015a, 193-220).

Dams can be considered as a key sign of the ‘political unconscious of globalisation’, what Max Haiven calls Damming the Earth. Respectively, in Les Damnés de la Terre, Frantz Fanon invites us to regard dams as concretisations that “harness, produce, materialise, and symbolize” (neo)colonial power relations. This concretisation can be clarified literally, according to the mass concrete structures of megadams as what Bob Johnson labels “congealed energy, or the deep energy of the exosomatic environment” (2019, 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 organise waters and relationships (2013, 215). Notably, 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” (Haiven 2013, 214).

Lynn, Stebbs and Eli managed to fight the others in the south. They decided to use their power of resistance because those others build a dam to keep water just for themselves. “Hell or high water” (Mindy 2013, 159). They decided to use molotov cocktail. Lynn decided 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 narrative text portrays Lynn, for the first time, hasn’t the will to attack the coyotes. Finding a massive, old and frail coyote, trying to reach the pond and let its long tongue hungrily lapping at the water of the pond, she leaves it telling Lucy that “he’s just trying to survive. Same as us all” (172).
Conclusion

Undoubtedly, there’s a close relationship among capitalism, power and imperialism. “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 2007, ix). Dealing with natural resources as a commodity has created a class struggle and discrimination. In other words, Access to water and sanitation services seem to be highly correlated to power. Considering Marx’s capitalism, governments yield to privatize water and dedicate it to the bourgeoisies rather than the rural poor. These struggles among governments and between the self and others, have been articulated through a politics that conjoins anti-colonial resistance with climate justice and anti-privatization, highlighting capitalism in hydro-fiction. Water access is typically framed in terms of human rights that emphasizes water as a universal biophysical need. However, while water is essential for life, water scarcity caused many struggles and power confrontations due to water crises. Yet water scarcity played a crucial role in Mindy’s narrative text, as a main cause of the break-up of social relations and a cause of hydro-capitalism, hydro-imperialism and the counter-relation of power and resistance. Scarcity of water caused a feeling of threat for all the globe; the powerful as well as the powerless. Mindy’s contemporary speculative fiction imagined the ways in which human society will relate to water in the future, following the plausible consequences of climate change on an overpopulated planet as well as the capitalism of bourgeoisie class and the imperialism of the self to the other.

It seems that Mindy is speculating water wars all over the world, specifically in third world countries. Mindy has really mentioned in her narrative text that third-world countries like Egypt struggle all the time to get control over natural resources of potable water. She claims that the Egyptians have really 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 Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam forewarns for an upcoming water war in the third-world countries. 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. In general, privatizing water reflects man’s continuous yield to what Marx calls capitalism, what Edward Said calls imperialism and what Foucault calls biopower. To conclude, Not a Drop to Drink acts as a keen narrative fiction of hydrological reengineering in a prescient and elucidating thriller of water war. Thus,
these types of speculative fictions might encourage readers to envision some alternatives that will continuously change due to the permanent changes in the ecosystem through climate change.
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