

WATER AND DAMS

A Political and a Lyrical Approach: Arundhati Roy and Anne Michaels

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ABSTRACT • This essay starts by quoting Aesop’s fable of “The Wolf and the Lamb” as an allegory of conflicts related to the control and distribution of water in our contemporary world. Megadams are among the controlling factors not only as far as distribution of water is concerned, but also as far as the mere life of people is concerned. To control water means to control people’s life. And megadams have become the subject matter of recent literature. The aim of this essay is to analyse different stylistic ways of approaching the themes of dams, water and human rights, through the works of a well-known writer-activist, Arundhati Roy, and a Canadian poet and novelist, Anne Michaels.

KEYWORDS • Literature in English, Ecocriticism, Water, Dams, Arundhati Roy, Common Good, Anne Michaels, Human Rights

The property, the availability and the use of clean water is increasingly becoming a matter of contention in the First as well as in the former Third World. From time immemorial the property of water is claimed by tyrannical and arrogant financial powers at the expenses of the weaker people in the World. Aesop’s fable *The Wolf and the Lamb* established this type of highly asymmetrical relationship between a voracious power and a defenceless consumer. What moves both the wolf and the lamb to the stream of water is their thirst (“siti compulsi”), but soon it becomes clear that while the lamb’s thirst is for water, the wolf’s thirst becomes hunger (“incitatus iurgii”) and a more metaphorical one for power over life and death (“lacerat iniusta nece”). In the end, the lamb ends up being slaughtered first on the false assumption that he is polluting the wolf’s drinking water, in spite of the fact that the lamb is positioned downstream, and then on the false assumption that either he, or his father, has ruined the wolf’s reputation. The moral of the fable is “for those men who oppress innocents with false excuses”, men who (“fictis causis innocentes opprimunt”) (Perry 1965: 190).¹

This fable might be taken as an allegory standing for various types of hegemonic practices. A case in point is “downstream Uzbekistan [...] now obliged to confront actions both threatened and carried out by the relatively weaker upstream Tajikistan” (Cascão, Zeitoun 2010: 30). Another case in point is “environmental racism” as “discriminatory treatment of socially marginalised or economically disadvantaged peoples” (Huggan, Tiffin 2010: 4). This is clearly evident in the documentary film by Irena Salina, *FLOW, For Love of Water* (2008), where

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major private multinationals play the role of the wolf and the poorer people in the world – mainly slum dwellers, and dispersed communities in the heart of underdeveloped rural areas – unwillingly become their victims.

Private Corporations controlling water act by “greenwashing in the countries of the rich, through high-minded advertisement campaigns,” and

through rarified talk about being fine stewards of our delicate planet. Meanwhile, back on planet Earth, they persist in their profitable devastation of impoverished, less regulated societies – societies that have little visibility and recognition value in the rich-country corporate media. (Nixon 2011: 37)

It must be said that the poor are by no means passive victims, for the opposition between them and financial powers is tackled differently in the words of scholars such as Harden and Naidoo,

the central conflict [is] between agendas of major transnational corporations with respect to water on the one hand, and the global citizen movements and critical non-governmental organizations (what we refer to as the “water justice movement”) that oppose these agendas and advance an agenda of human rights on the other. A Gramscian approach to hegemony and counter-hegemony is helpful in framing this understanding of global water conflict. (Harden, Naidoo 2007: 2)

The “water justice movement” includes various grassroots transnational organisations, a citizenship on the move, at war with those same multinationals that claim profits for themselves from the privatization of water resources.

Arundhati Roy’s critical essay *The Greater Common Good* (1999) is inscribed within this “global water conflict” as one among many contemporary ‘translations’ of Aesop’s fable. It shares with the docu-film *FLOW* a precise attitude in naming names, and in accusing the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. Roy’s essay is a text that Graham Huggan and Hellen Tiffin define as “the most eye-catching ecocritical intervention by a recognised postcolonial writer” (2010: 44). This does not mean that it is unconditionally praised. Both Huggan and Rob Nixon (2011) critically appraise also the flows of Roy’s enterprise, of her voice and style:

Roy takes rhetorical liberties with her disempowered Adivasi subjects, converting them into mythologised victims in her own highly personal moral crusade against the tyrannies of the modern Indian state. (Huggan, Tiffin 2010: 46)

In referring to the “complex, often vexed figure of the environmental writer activist”, who engages “the environmentalism of the poor” Nixon includes Arundhati Roy in this category: “Indian opinion about her interventions split between those who lauded her for putting her celebrity in the service of the poor and those who lambasted her for behaving in a self-serving manner” (Nixon 2011: 23-24).

India’s Federal Government and State-powers together with foreign multinationals embody the voracious power of the wolf, thirsty for profits and financial gains, while dalits, or untouchable, and particularly adivasis or tribals, the indigenous inhabitants, play the role of the sacrificial victims: those who are thirsty for clean water for they are used to living off – and by – natural resources. They are the “people lacking resources who are the principal casualties of slow violence” (Nixon 2011: 4).

Roy’s essay, which sounds like a *j’accuse*, is by now a classic example of ecocritical postcolonial discourse. It has been included in various anthologies of postcolonial ecocriticism.

Since the text is well-known, I am not going to deal with it in too much detail. It is certainly an example of committed and activist literature, which contributed to “global consciousness-raising” (Huggan, Tiffin 2010: 33). It may be also thanks to Arundhati Roy that megadams have become an interesting and fascinating topic for literature, for after all, it is “a highly *literary* text” (Huggan, Tiffin 2010: 49).

In Roy’s text, discourse about water inevitably becomes political discourse “on the very nature of democracy.” She then asks: “Who is the owner of the land? Of the rivers, of the forests, of the fish?” The answer from the State has been a violent armed response (Roy 1999: 10). To Roy this is the crucial issue to be debated. A plea for democracy is also Vandana Shiva’s preoccupation, when she – a famous physicist and eco-activist, author of the well-known essay *Water Wars* – claims that: “the solution to an environmental crisis is environmental, while the solution to injustice is democracy” (Shiva 2002: 32). Now, to separate the environment from democracy is risky, for, after all, is not the environment a concern for everybody? And, with Roy and with Shiva we might ask: who “owns” the environment?

Roy demonstrates how only the popular movement that slowly coalesced against the construction of megadams, called Narmada Bachao Andolan, had a chance not only to defeat the Federal Government of India but also to draw the attention of international newspapers and televisions, and also international environmental movements on the Narmada project, and it managed to convince the World Bank to withdraw its investments. That was true until the year 2000 when the Supreme Court established that works on the Narmada should be completed according to the original plans. In terms of hegemonic power, India displays its material power:

This most visible form of power includes economic power, military might, technological prowess and international political and financial support. India’s ability to undertake a massive river interlinking programme, with little consideration of the upstream or downstream protestations from Nepal and Bangladesh, serves an example. Asymmetries in material power can influence the control exercised over water, in particular when combined with bargaining and ideational dimensions of power. (Cascão, Zeitoun 2010: 31)

With the same determination, dams along the course of the Nile had been planned in the mid-twentieth century:

President Nasser’s engineers drew a white line on the banks of the Nile to mark where his monument, the Aswan High Dam, would be built. Egyptian advisers strongly opposed the project, in favour of canals to link African lakes and a reservoir at Wadi Rajan – already a natural basin. But Nasser would not be dissuaded. In October 1958, after Britain declined to support the dam, in retaliation after the Suez conflict, Nasser signed an agreement with the Soviet Union to provide plans, labour, and machinery. (Michaels 2009: 23)

Apparently, nothing can stop progress. Yet, Arundhati Roy is not alone in idealistically believing in – and actively promoting – grassroots engagement, not so much against the advancement of progress, but in favour of local negotiable solutions. Arjun Appadurai, too, speaks of the importance of new transnational grassroots movements:

The knowledge and democracy revolutions of the last few decades, powered by the spread of new information technologies, have combined to encourage the greatest diversity of popular and transnational civil society movements that we have witnessed in the history of mankind. (Appadurai 2011: 34)

These civil movements are instances of what Appadurai calls “deep democracy”, that is to say, not a general democratic principle that involves larger and larger groups of people, but a

democracy capable of including the slum dwellers, the outcasts of society, the dalits and the tribals and all those who are kept in extreme poverty:

a rather different sort of cosmopolitanism can be discerned in the world of internally generated forms of activism incubated among the world's poorest populations, [...] what I call "cosmopolitanism from below" has [...] the urge to expand one's current horizons of self and cultural identity and a wish to connect with a wider world in the name of values which, in principle, could belong to anyone and apply in any circumstance. (Appadurai 2011: 32)

In short, The Alliance, a triad of slum dwellers' organizations in Mumbai, is a working example of democracy that does not spread horizontally but that reaches deep down the social ladder and produces a new "capacity to aspire, the raw materials of a politics of hope" (Appadurai 2011: 41).

The above-mentioned docu-film *FLOW, For Love of Water* (2008) may be counted as proving the effectiveness of popular movements of mobilisation of citizens, which shows various examples of effective activism in various parts of the World, fighting for the right to clean, drinkable water.

Leaving Arundhati Roy's India for a while and moving to the other side of the globe, the Torontonian poet and novelist Anne Michaels seems to respond to that political call, and transforms the building of dams into a lyrical subject matter. Writing from inside one of the capitalistic economies of the First World, in her touching novel *The Winter Vault* (2009), the perspective from which Anne Michaels exposes representations of megadams construction is completely different from Roy's perspective. This novel is particularly interesting because of its complex structure, because of its historically and geographically multi-centered, yet interconnected narratives.

Set in 1964, *The Winter Vault* chronicles two great mid-century displacements caused by massive engineering projects – the building of the Aswan dam in Egypt and the St Lawrence seaway in Canada – likening these, in emotional and political terms, to upheavals caused by war. (Brownrigg 2009)

It is also a novel about present-day migrants, and last but not least, it is a novel about gardening as a therapy which goes hand in hand with mourning. Both issues are well intertwined by means of metaphors of transplantation (Hayward 2009).

In this respect Anne Michaels's novel seems to satisfy Nixon's argument about the aesthetic and cosmopolitan agency of ecocritical literary works:

Ecocritics – and literary scholars more broadly – faced with the challenges of thinking through vast differences in spatial and temporal scale commonly frame their analyses in terms of interpenetrating global and local forces. In such analyses cosmopolitanism – as a mode of being linked to particular aesthetic strategies – does much of the bridgework between extremes of scale. (2011: 34)

In Anne Michaels's novel all the major themes have in common the theme of loss – individual and collective losses, destruction and reconstruction of physical places as well as cultural spaces – and what might be salvaged.

In the novel, Egypt and Canada are somehow likened as sites appropriate for the building of megadams along the Nile and along the St Lawrence. England looms behind the two countries' history, as the old colonial power, which provides the know-how, for everything had happened there before, as, for instance, the construction of big dams in Scotland.

Roy's ironic, pamphlet-like reportage and Michaels's lyrically disheartening novel share an emblematically ethical reading of reality, in a way that seems to echo Appadurai's politics of "hopes and aspirations."

Both Arundhati Roy and Anne Michaels focus their gaze primarily on the rivers per se and on their sacredness, as ancient, resourceful cultural sites, thus producing an ethical approach to environmental discourse:

The Nile had been strangled at Sadd el Aali, and its magnificent flow had been rerouted before that [...] Avery knew that a river that has been barraged is not the same river. Not the same shore, nor even the same water. [...] Holiness was escaping under their drills, was being pumped away in the continuous draining of groundwater. (Michaels 2009: 5)

As a second stage in their criticism, both writers mournfully lament the forced removals of people, while describing the material process of the building of dams. Forced displacement and relocation become the main targets of their ethical discourse. Arundhati Roy ironically writes that:

the preoccupation of the Supreme Court judges in Delhi (before vacating the legal stay on further construction of the Sardar Sarovar Dam) had enquired whether tribal children in the resettlement colonies would have children's parks to play in. The lawyers representing the Government had hastened to assure them that indeed they would, and, what's more, that there were seesaws and slides and swings in every park. (Roy 1999: 8)

Similarly, Anne Michaels mentions resettlement policies: "No word would be uttered of the Nubians who had been forced to leave their ancient homes and their river, nor of the twenty-seven towns and villages that had vanished under the new lake" (2009: 35). The long list of names of the Nubian villages is paralleled with a similar list of names of Canadian towns along the St Lawrence Seaway. Naming their names, as if they were dead people, the writer creates a map of dead towns:

Abri, Kosh Dakki, Ukma, Semna, Saras Shoboka, Gemaii, Wadi Halfa, Ashkeit, Dabarosa, Qatta, Kalobsha. Dadub, Faras...
... Farran's Point, Aultsville, Maple Grove, Dickinson's Landing, half of Morrisburg, Wales, Milles Roches, Moulinette, Woodlands, Sheek Island... (Michaels 2009: 35)

In describing both Nubia and Quebec, Michaels creates a parallel and identifies a common destiny for the two geographies and the people who used to inhabit them. All those places have been submerged, and therefore are now lost both to history and to geography. The complete erasure of villages and small towns from the world map is represented as an act of unjustified State violence and as an infringement of democratic principles. It gives the citizens the status of non-existence. Thus, forced removals, dismemberment of families and relations are described as terribly painful. A minor character in Michaels's novel tells the story he witnessed back in Egypt:

I was in Faras during the first evacuation. [...] and I went to witness it. I saw a mother and daughter saying their farewells. They had lived in two villages that were side by side, a short walk from each other. The daughter had moved to live with her husband's family when they were married, but the mother and daughter saw each other very often, just a walk of a short distance between the two villages. However, the villages happened to be on either side of the border between Sudan and Egypt [...] and so now the mother was being moved to Khashm el Girba and the daughter fifteen hundred kilometres away to Kom Ombo. [...] The train moved off into the desert, the mother

looked down at her feet and saw the satchel she had meant to give her, with family things inside. Now left behind. (2009: 137-138)

In order to describe forced removals, Anne Michaels uses narrative strategies that are typical of trauma narratives (Caruth 1996). The suffering of bearing witness to the tragedies of others, the trauma of loss and separation, the identification of the effects of symptoms and syndromes in the life of people as the *acte manqué* of passing down some tokens of family life.

What is important to stress here is that the narrative by Roy is characterised by her talent as reporter and as storyteller, and she shares these skills not only with an intellectual such as Mahasweta Devi, whom Roy has chosen as the model of the “organic intellectual”, but also with a writer-reporter such as Amitav Ghosh (*Incendiary Circumstances*, 2006), with whom Roy shares the same urgent need to be there, personally, on the frontline, as for instance in her essay *Walking with the Comrades* (2010), dedicated to the Maoists or Naxalites in the state of Chattisgarh.

In contrast, the poet and novelist, Anne Michaels, produces a narrative of accusation by using a very different tone and style. Well-conscious that her lyricism and aestheticism might attract severe criticisms, she foregrounds this response in her own writing, by mentioning the sentimental factor:

the chairman of the hydro-electric commission, Sir Adam Beck, had referred to the future drowning of the villages along the St Lawrence and the evacuation of their inhabitants as the “sentimental factor.” (2009: 40)

Yet, apart from being “sentimental” Anne Michaels’s novel is a piece of ecocritical postcolonial discourse, too. Her style is ironic when she sums up the history of the colonization of Canada:

Along these leafy shores of the St. Lawrence, towns and hamlets had sprung up, founded by United Empire Loyalists, settlers made up of former soldiers in the battalion of the “Royal Yorkers.” Then came the German, the Dutch, the Scottish settlers. Then a tourist by the name of Charles Dickens [...] Before this came the hunters of the sea, the Basque, Breton, and English whalers. And, in 1534, Jack Cartier, the hunter who captured the biggest prize, an entire continent, by quickly recognizing that, by bark canoe, one could follow the river and pierce the land to its heart. The great trade barons grumbled, unable to depart their Atlantic ports and conquer the Great Lakes with their large ships, groaning with goods to sell. (2009: 37)

And her discourse turns out to be strictly ecological and ecocritical when she describes how dams affect the ecosystem around the Nile:

Instead there would be a massive reservoir reshaping the land – a lake “as large as England” – so large that the estimated rate of evaporation would prove a serious misjudgement. Enough water would disappear into the air to have made fertile for farming more than two million acres. The precious, nutrient-saturated silt that had given the soil of the floodplain such richness would be lost entirely, pinioned, useless behind the dam. Instead, international corporations would introduce chemical fertilizers, and the cost of these fertilizers – lacking all the trace elements of the silt – would soon escalate to billions of dollars every year. Without the sediment from the floods, farmland downriver would soon erode. The rice fields of the northern Delta would be parched by salt water. Throughout the Mediterranean basin, fish populations – dependent on silicates and phosphates from the annual flooding – would decrease, then die out completely (2009: 34).

This passage sounds relevant here, because it echoes what Roy also claimed with regard to the Narmada:

Dams are obsolete. They're uncool. They're undemocratic. They're a Government's way of accumulating authority (deciding who will get how much water and who will grow what where). They're a guaranteed way of taking a farmer's wisdom away from him. They're a brazen means of taking water, land and irrigation away from the poor and gifting it to the rich. Their reservoirs displace huge populations of people, leaving them homeless and destitute. Ecologically, they're in the doghouse. They lay the earth to waste. They cause floods, water-logging, salinity, they spread disease. (Roy 1999: 16)

However, a third point in this analysis of the consequences of dams building regards Human Rights. Often, the Right to water is symbolically and ritually connected to the Right to life. In most narratives water is culturally and traditionally seen as connected with life and death. In Anne Michaels's novel, for instance, according to an ancient tradition, new-born babies are brought to the Nile:

One week after the child is born, he is carried to the river. We must bring the *fatta* and eat by the Nile, but not all – we must share it with the river [...] Then we must wash the baby's clothes in the river and bring a bucket of river water back to the house so the mother can wash her face [...] Then – this is the most important – the mother must fill her mouth with water from the river and pour it from her mouth onto the child. It is only when the river water flows from the mother's mouth over the child that the child will be safe. (Michaels 2009: 142)

Similarly, in the docu-film *FLOW*, Vandana Shiva explains how a drop of water from the river Ganges is put into the mouth of a new-born baby as well as of a dead person. Thus, both Vandana Shiva and Anne Michaels refer to cultural violence. A violence that denies the sacredness of water and implies the control of rivers by means of dams which cause the displacement of masses of people who live by the water.

We bring the ashes of our people to this river when they die. Until those ashes pass the river, the spirits and souls are not considered to have had salvation. When a child is born you put a drop of the Ganges water in his mouth. When someone dies the last rite is a drop of Ganges water ... It is considered purifying in a deep, spiritual sense. [...] It is the river that gives us our humanity. (Vandana Shiva's words. My transcription. FILM 42.50 – 43.52)



Forced removals and relocations do not affect only the living but also the dead. As Nixon also observes, people ask for very little: “access to clean water [...] some respect for the cultural (and therefore environmental) presence of the guiding dead” (Nixon 2011: 41). In Michaels’s novel a woman complains about having to leave behind her husband, who had been buried in the local cemetery:

If you move his body then you’ll have to move the hill. You’ll have to move the fields around him. You’ll have to move the view from the top of the hill and the trees he planted, one for each of our six children. [...] Can you move what was consecrated? (Michaels 2009: 47)

A few pages later it is left to a priest to explain that:

There is such a thing as consecrated ground. In this case, when the congregation moves, the church must move with it. The first place must be deconsecrated so that it cannot be desecrated, even accidentally, by other customs. (Michaels 2009: 69)

The story becomes even more gruesome when the author describes how people are afraid of swimming in the lake for fear that corpses might be surfacing in the water. In another case, huge rocks had been used to seal cemetery, so that the bodies would not float freely because of the flooding. A similar issue is raised by a relocated South African woman in the docu-film *FLOW*:

Many of our ancestors who died a long time ago are still there. But the authorities told us that when we moved, we would have to live our graves behind. Perhaps they are submerged under the waters of the dam. (English Subtitles. FILM 49.20-49.31)



Zooming out of the life of local communities, and writing a global novel, Anne Michaels does not lose the thread of geo-political international implications:

Did you know, said Daub, that the first plans for the High Dam were drawn up by West Germany to appease Egypt, after compensating Israel after the War? There is so much collusion, from every side, it might be possible to sort it out, if only a single soul possessed all the information. (Michaels 2009: 137)

After all, Anne Michaels sets her novel in the two decades after World War Two. Arundhati Roy also denounces the fact that the Indian Government keeps all relevant documents secret, so that the real figures about costs and benefits remain unknown to the larger public:

Though there has been a fair amount of writing on the subject, most of it is for a “special interest” readership. News reports tend to be about isolated aspects of the project. Government documents are classified as “Secret”. (Roy 1999: 11)

One more instance of how Anne Michaels’s novel embeds environmentalism is through the idea of women dedicating themselves to gardening. In the docu-film here mentioned, where white men are the managers of the big water companies, black women and young girls are the ones who walk barefoot for miles in order to fetch water, every day. Their daily routine is not even considered as labour. For, as Vandana Shiva reminds us:

For Third World women, water scarcity means traveling longer distances in search of water. For peasants, it means starvation and destitution as drought wipes out their crops. For children, it means dehydration and death. There is simply no substitute for this precious liquid, necessary for the biological survival of animals and plants. (Shiva 2002: 15)

In Anne Michaels’s novel there is a sort of gender split between the female characters who dedicate themselves to gardening and the male characters who are involved in the engineering projects.

Jean, the protagonist, who is compulsively transplanting her dead mother’s garden into pots and vases and taking them to her small apartment in downtown Toronto, also devotes herself to salvaging little plants from the dried-up beds of rivers which have been diverted by the dams. Later on in her life, Jean becomes a botanist, but she still has the compulsion to transplant herbs and plants into the cracks of Toronto pavements and also in public gardens and parks. Her aim is to provide pleasure to migrants and uprooted people, who might recognize the smells of their home country, there, in the middle of downtown Toronto. Jean’s gesture is timid, invisible and silent. Most of her gardening is done at night. Yet, it is a humane gesture that provides citizenship and rootedness to displaced people/plants.

The docu-film *FLOW* shows very well how solutions for water shortage can be found and adjusted locally and in different ways. Arundhati Roy also claims that “We have to fight specific wars in specific ways” (Roy 1999: 12).

What is needed globally is that the Right to water be acknowledged per se as a Right to life. Vandana Shiva, once more, points her finger at the fact that “people have a right to life and the resources that sustain it, such as water. The necessity of water to life is why, under customary laws, the right to water was accepted as a natural, social fact” (2002: 21). As other critics remind us “the UN Declaration of Human Rights does not explicitly mention water, and though the ‘General Comment 15’ from the UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights has recognized the universal right to water, a *formal* human right to water has not been agreed upon” (Harden, Naidoo 2007: 5). In 2010, the right to water and sanitation has been included among the inalienable human rights, but as subordinated to Article 25 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, to the right to a good standard of living.

The docu-film by Irena Salina closes with the hope and aspiration that a specific article will soon be added to the Human Rights Declaration, that is Article 31 (FILM 1.16.09):

Article 31

Everyone has the right to clean and accessible water, adequate for the health and well-being of the individual and family, and no one shall be deprived of such access or quality of water due to individual economic circumstance.

In order to update this enquiry into the problem of water, I will mention Amitav Ghosh's words. Ghosh is certainly one of the most lucid intellectuals of our age. In a recent public appearance, Ghosh said that only Pope Francis, with his Encyclical Letter *Laudato Si'* has given voice to the only reasonable morally committed philosophy of our times. On the contrary, the document COP 21, or Paris Agreement 2015, is quite unsatisfactory: suffice it to say that the word justice appears only once and between inverted commas. Pope Francis's Encyclical Letter does include a chapter entitled "The Issue of Water" which is in tune with the film's main concern, namely the privatization of water:

30. Even as the quality of available water is constantly diminishing, in some places there is a growing tendency, despite its scarcity, to privatize this resource, turning it into a commodity subject to the laws of the market. Yet *access to safe drinkable water is a basic and universal human right, since it is essential to human survival and, as such, is a condition for the exercise of other human rights*. Our world has a grave social debt towards the poor who lack access to drinking water, because *they are denied the right to a life consistent with their inalienable dignity*. (2015: 23)

In contrast, the article of the Paris document, COP 21, Ghosh refers to, promotes a series of actions on the basis of some matter-of-fact observations:

The parties to this Agreement,
[...]

Noting the importance of ensuring the integrity of all ecosystems, including oceans, and the protection of biodiversity, recognized by some cultures as Mother Earth, and noting the importance for some of the concept of "climate justice", when taking action to address climate change. [...] Have agreed as follows.... (COP 21, Annex: 21)

Controlling the increase on global average temperatures, controlling low greenhouse gas emissions, limiting threats to food production and so on, are some of the measures agreed upon. Megadams and water privatization, even the planetary marketing of bottled water remain crucial issues, and Roy's and Michaels's texts remain among the milestones in the environmental humanities and environmental literature.

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