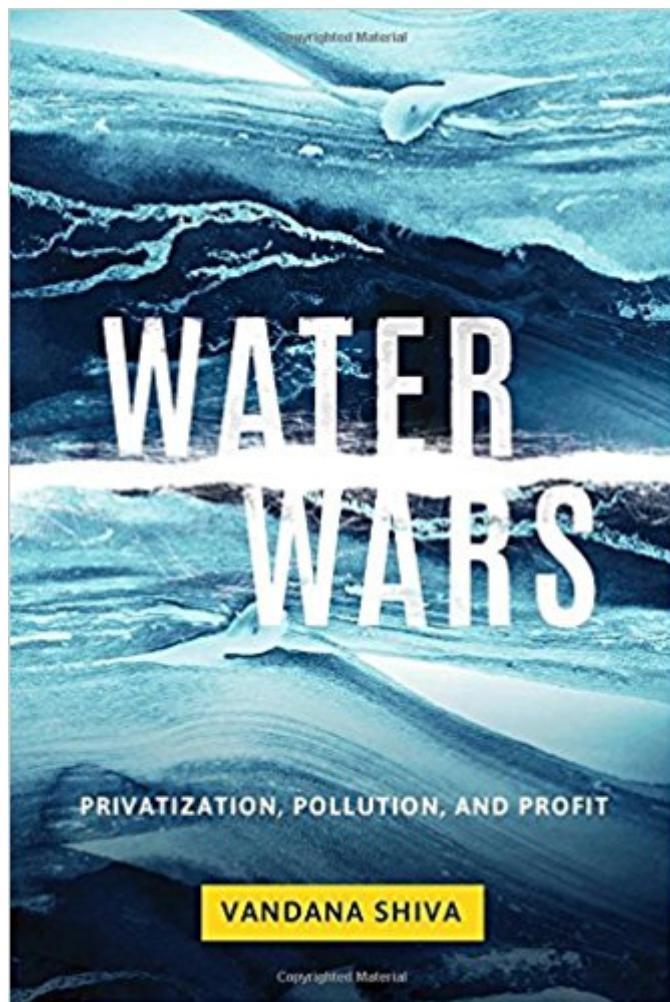


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Water Wars: Privatization, Pollution, And Profit



Synopsis

Acclaimed author and award-winning scientist and activist Vandana Shiva lucidly details the severity of the global water shortage, calling the water crisis “the most pervasive, most severe, and most invisible dimension of the ecological devastation of the earth.” She sheds light on the activists who are fighting corporate maneuvers to convert the life-sustaining resource of water into more gold for the elites and uses her knowledge of science and society to outline the emergence of corporate culture and the historical erosion of communal water rights. Using the international water trade and industrial activities such as damming, mining, and aquafarming as her lens, Shiva exposes the destruction of the earth and the disenfranchisement of the world’s poor as they are stripped of rights to a precious common good. Revealing how many of the most important conflicts of our time, most often camouflaged as ethnic wars or religious wars, are in fact conflicts over scarce but vital natural resources, she calls for a movement to preserve water access for all and offers a blueprint for global resistance based on examples of successful campaigns. Featuring a new introduction by the author, this edition of *Water Wars* celebrates the spiritual and traditional role water has played in communities throughout history and warns that water privatization threatens cultures and livelihoods worldwide.

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Customer Reviews

“An excellent starting point for anyone who wants to understand the forces driving water scarcity today and threatening its future supply.” •Women’s Review of

Books  A chilling, in-depth examination of the rapidly emerging global crisis. In These Times  Shiva is a burst of creative energy, an intellectual power. The Progressive  One of the world's most prominent radical scientists. The Guardian

Vandana Shiva is a physicist, world-renowned environmental thinker and activist, and a tireless crusader for economic, food, and gender justice. She is the author and editor of many influential books, including *Making Peace with the Earth*, *Earth Democracy*, *Soil Not Oil*, *Stolen Harvest*, *Biopiracy*, and *Globalization's New Wars*. Dr. Shiva is the recipient of more than twenty international awards, among them the Right Livelihood Award (1993); the John Lennon-Yoko Ono Grant for Peace (2008); The Sydney Peace Prize (2010); and the Calgary Peace Prize (Canada, 2011). In addition, she is a board member of the World Future Council and one of the leaders and board members of the International Forum on Globalization (whose other members include Jerry Mander, Edward Goldsmith, Ralph Nader, and Jeremy Rifkin). She travels frequently to speak at conferences around the world.

Water wars are global, some subtle and intentionally subdued, but billions of people seek sustenance from water against corporate forces eager to own water rights and commons. The World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) are financial giants aligned with corporate interests looking to influence and privatize water commons. Agriculture is defined as a legacy that began in Syria and endured for 12,000 years. The recent severe drought was aggravated by industrial agricultural farming reflected in 80% crop failures and 75% livestock losses. A mass migration of a million-plus farmers and herders preceded 9 million other Syrians leaving their homes since the civil war outbreak in March, 2011. Water wars now has a new identity dominated by violence against the earth, against water, abetted by new terrorism and extremism. Between 2002 and 2008 more than 26 cubic miles of water has disappeared in North India from aquifers, mostly from Green Revolution-style farming. In the 1970's the World Bank provided massive loans to India for groundwater mining. In Nigeria Boko Haram is seen as a religious extremist movement but the depletion of Lake Chad, once an inland sea that covered 10,000 square kilometers (1983), shrinking to 1,500 by the year 2000, deprived farmers, fishermen and others of employment. They have been supplanted by terrorism and extremism. Deforestation and mining combine with Green Revolution technologies and greed to produce water famine. When water disappears dehydration and death follow; women must travel further in their searches; for peasants water scarcity can mean

destitution. The World Bank oversaw the privatization of groundwater with subsidized withdrawal systems followed by heavy sugarcane cultivation as it consumed 80% of all irrigation water and eight times more water than other crops. Wells owned by small farmers all ran dry. But there's more. A once water abundant region, the Malwa plateau, became dependent on tube wells; they are now dry. In Belawati tube wells (500) replaced traditional systems and only five are now functioning. In Guriaya village 100 tube wells were built but only 10 have water. In Ismailkhada 1000 tube wells dried up the 12 ponds that served the community for centuries. In the 1930's wells provided 78% of the region's irrigation. In 1985 the government and the World Bank designed an \$18 million water project followed by another \$28 million both resulting in a depletion of water resources. During British rule the government took control of water rights by state intervention. Revenues were diverted to departments of bureaucrats followed then with the "right to pollute" judicial decisions. Modern technologies require a lot of water for processing. One silicon wafer uses 2,275 gallons of water... and 285 kilowatt hours of electrical power. Producing 2,000 wafers per week equals 4,550,000 gallons of water. Global warming, or climate change, has a plethora of believers, skeptics, and "I dunno's". Rising sea levels are the predicted result of melting ice caps and warmer ocean waters. Some say the water war began in 1924 when a clandestine agreement to transfer water to Los Angeles from Owens Valley resulted in intense conflict with the might of the army stationed behind public and private investors. The World Trade Organization (WTO) and the World Bank are major forces in the creation of corporate-states globally. A major player in the market is Monsanto whose investment in aquaculture is described by author Vandana Shiva as "highly unsustainable". Many privatization efforts result in reduced efficiency and attendant rising prices. Casablanca consumers saw water prices increase threefold ; in Britain, a 67% rise ; in south Africa water became unsafe, unaffordable and cholera infections were rampant. General Electric and the World Bank are collaborating to privatize water and power worldwide. The endgame is to eliminate individual and community sovereignty. Yes, the crucible of corruption, power and greed seems in step to crush any attempts at returning control of rights to millennia-old beneficiaries.

Excellent succinct review of the ecological disaster affecting much of the world's population. Ms. Shiva is an extremely articulate and informed analyst of the current corporate approach to our natural resources and the impact it is having on millions of people around the world. Here in the United States we may feel immune to this crisis, but as she makes clear, it is just a matter of time before it affects us. The fundamental question becomes is access to drinkable water a human right that should be available to all or a corporate commodity that is available only to those who can

pay? Finally, Ms. Shiva makes clear the disasters caused by so-called progressive advances such as constructing electric pumps to access water and the "Green Revolution" with its thirsty crops that drained aquifers dry. A must read for anyone concerned about Earth and the quality of life on it.

After reading Water Wars and going back through some things in the book I believe that many people will find this book interesting and informative. Shiva seems to believe that the root of all these wars is our disconnection from the water. We turn on a faucet and voila, water. Who cares where it came from, how much there is or where it's going. Now, take that and mix it with socio-political-economic factors and you can see why we are just beginning to see the emergence of water wars. Those looking for any sort of solution to water wars should look elsewhere. She has the grassroots mentality that water need not be privatized but run and managed by the people who use it. I fully agree but the problem remains this is simply impossible for the majority of systems already entrenched. Ultimately, if you have an interest in the state of water on a global scale this is a good book to get you started and asking questions. P.S. I believe John Wesley Powell was quoted out of context on pg. 54. I have a hard time imagining that Powell said that rivers are wasting into the sea in the context of we should dam the Colorado.

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