Chapter –VI

Resisting Technocapitalism: Security and Rights of Migrants in Paolo Bacigalupi's *The Water Knife*

Anthropogenic narratives explore the politics of the Anthropocene and its impact on the exchanges of intraspecies and interspecies relationships. The negotiations between the human and the more than human in the light of anthropogenic necropolitics form the argument of climate justice put forth in major works of climate fiction. Arguably, climate fiction have turned into investigations "Of the major realms we inhabit—ecology, economy, and politics—politics was the first to be recognized as unavoidably artificial." (Purdy) Such a theoretical approach probes into the role of the so called "artificial systems" that takes into account the impact of nearly ten thousand years of corporatism, capitalism and neoliberalism that have led to the degradation of ecological systems "and that their health or collapse, as well as the shape in which they will survive (if they do), is substantially down to human choices." (Purdy) Perceiving the geological epoch of the Anthropocene inclusive of the politics not only assigns accountability to human actions but also comprehends the crisis in accord with the ecological, economic and political transformations that will manifest.

The chapter explores the margins of anthropogenic necropolitics of survival and persecution. Amidst the margins of anthropogenic politics lie necropolitical spaces of "sacrifice zones" (Lerner 15) where the lives of climate refugees are expendable, and climate proofing technological spaces wherein lives of the rich and powerful are protected. Paolo Bacigalupi's The *Water Knife* takes into account such a demarcation of lives and challenges the idea of the Anthropocene as merely "a cultural idea" and views it with regard to its potential which is "political and ethical" (Purdy). The politics of the Anthropocene relies on the mobility of the inhabitants: physical, social, and economical as

routes of escape from climate hotspots determine survival. The amount of losses in the climate events exposes the risk of 'othering' as it iterates the human population as "socially constituted bodies, attached to others, at risk of losing those attachments, exposed to others, at risk of violence by virtue of that exposure" (Butler 20). It is through the fear of such exposure to risk arises the demarcation of the figure of the 'homo sacer' or the climate refugee, who is viewed as an object of fear, and disgust. This chapter aims to explore the segregation of the necropolitics of the Anthropocene and the transcorporeal vulnerabilities it evokes in the climate refugees and delves into the acts of resistance employed to counter technocapitalism.

The narrative of climate politics must also address its major problem: "inequity in global capitalism." (Purdy) Political dysfunction and its inefficiency in formulating effective solutions lie in the irrelevant climate mitigation policies that are adopted. The implementation of climate mitigation policies rely on the economic status of the country. Developed nations implement policies at ease due to access to technological solutions and political formulations whereas developing or least developed nations are fabricated into 'sacrifice zones'. Climate policies must overcome national self-interest as it "breeds weak responses and failure to cooperate." (Purdy) Global politics in the Anthropocene to formulate an effective climate negotiation "turns into a troubling meditation on the barriers to a political solution" (Purdy) due to resource competition and climate conflicts among the nations.

The necessity of a differential framework of politics for the Anthropocene needs to address the disparities and inequalities that exist in the global system amidst the first world and third world countries simultaneously taking into account the structures of internal racism among the first world countries. In the novel, the inequities that exist within the political and ecological geographies of the United States amidst water scarcity are

explored. Such persisting inequities transition civilised and democratic societies towards a Darwinian struggle for survival. The impending water scarcity creates climate conflicts among the residents and the climate refugees in the novel.

This approach of resource accumulation, corporatism and scarcity leads to the formulation of the new genre of 'hydrofiction' as put forth by Hannah Boast in *Hydrofictions: Water, Power and Politics in Israeli and Palestinian Literature*. The theoretical approach by Hannah Boast is not only a depiction of the water crisis but is also an investigation into the "'hydrosocial relations', or the ways that water is not simply acted on by humans but 'is both shaped by, and shapes, social relations, structures and subjectivities'" (Boast). It also takes into account the technological fixes of modernity like "hydraulic engineering schemes – including dams, regularised rivers and drinking water infrastructures" (Boast) which have been developed to conquer nonhuman nature.

Most hydrofictions are dystopian representations of the possibilities of a climatically altered future. Fictions like *Hydromania* set in Palestenia presents a dystopian portrayal of the world politically governed by countries that have an upper hand in terms of access to the technological fixes for climate induced disasters. *Hydromania* bears close resemblance to the dystopian imaginary in The *Water Knife* as both the novels predict the dominion of an outside party, wherein the country's democracy is subdued by the authority of capitalist corporations. The authority is exerted as per a few advantages like access to habitability in a climate proofed location, economic wealth, political dominion and technological power. In *Hydromania*, it is predicted that corporations from China, Japan and Ukraine would take control over the democracy whereas *The Water Knife* solely predicts the dominion of China as a developed nation that would yield authority in an age of global warming. Both the fictions portray how the lives of the citizens are capitalised and monopolised through the commodity of water. Hydromania depicts the control on the

lives of Israeli citizens "through their monopoly on the scarce commodity of water, now known by its brand names of 'Ohiya Water' or 'Gobogobo Water'" (Boast 1). The state of affairs and water supply "is policed through heavy surveillance, including tracking and identification chips in every person's arm. In Gavron's novel the loss of easy access to water alters every aspect of Israeli existence." (1)

In *The Water Knife,* Paolo Bacigalupi puts forth the dystopian imaginary of the United States, amidst droughts and climate induced water scarcity. The climate is under flux with unpredictable dust storms, severity of drought, and ruthless heat waves. The climate crisis leads to the privatisation and rationing of the water resource, wherein water is treated like a commodity rather than as a necessary resource for survival. It leads to scuffle and conflicts between the southwestern states like California, Nevada and Arizona compete with each other for a greater share of the Colorado River. Arizona and Texas are on the verge of collapse due to lower economic status leading to the rise in the number of climate refugees, relocating for survival. The political climate is unstable as it is governed by the technocapitalist ventures and corporations that prioritise the survival of the elites over an equitable distribution of resources that would enable communal harmony. Such governance gives rise to heightened border security and vigilance with state militias assigned to murder those who illegally cross the Colorado. Denied access to water, restricted mobility, and resource induced conflicts lead to death and violence in the novel.

The characters in the novel battle the climate induced disasters: slow onset as well as sudden onset events. The climate induced weather calamities include frequent dust storms and heat waves. The weather forecast predicted a record for dust storms with "Sixty-five recorded so far, and more on the way." (Bacigalupi 30) The dust storms have tremendous health hazards as the characters wear masks and face respiratory issues due to the same. Lucy being a journalist who has to work in the field, straps "on an REI filter

mask and grit goggles —- Desert Adventure Pro II", and takes "a final breath of clean air" before plowing "into the storm with her camera wrapped securely in plastic." (31) The resources and accessories used to survive the climatically changing situation included care kits to survive in a desert or a drought stricken place. Bacigalupi brings out the irony of the situation by discerning how there was no pattern of predictability in the climatic changes. Weather anchors and meteorologists "used the word drought, but drought implied that drought could end; it was a passing event, not the status quo." (30) The inhabitants began to accept that "they were destined for a single continuous storm — a permanent blight of dust and wildfire smoke and drought, and the only records broken would be for days where anyone could even see the sun" (31). Despite battling with the weather fluctuations, the added burden of water scarcity coupled with the technocapitalist institution of power turns the United States of America into "Collapse 2.0: Denial, Collapse, Acceptance, Refugees." (30)

The water scarcity in the novel is a crisis that proclaims to the inhabitants that "It's the end of times" (Bacigalupi 122) and there is not enough time for the implementation of climate coping measures. The climate naysayers make statements like "If *we weren't wasting so much water on farming, we'd all be fine"* (122). The climate denialists do not understand that *"If you cut off farms, you got dust storms."* (122) The rising heat waves and dust storms are the consequences of deforestation, lack of vegetation and ecological degradation. Dust production and suspension of particles through dust storms can be prevented through "more vegetation and reduced surface disturbance "especially during drought years" (Deems 4411).

The novel's focus is on the political operation: legal and illegal in the age of climate insecurity and resource scarcity. Bacigalupi contrasts the presumed stability offered by the capitalist corporations through the tangible reality of the climate crisis. The

capitalist underground ventures like Catharine Case, assigns "water knifes" that deploy "guerrilla tactics to ensure that the Southern Nevada Water Authority (SNWA) controls the Colorado River in the Lower Basin States of Nevada, Arizona, and California." (Bacigalupi 122)The water knifes deregulate the established stability by indulging in unethical practices to secure the lives of a select population. The water knife, Angel is assigned to get hold of the copy of senior water rights so that Nevada, Las Vegas and California can get hold of the greater share of the Colorado River instead of its rightful owner, Phoenix.

The fight for the possession of senior rights to access the Colorado River also reflects the desperation of developed nations to fight for the civilisation they have built and not be wiped off without any trace like the "Hohokam". The particular community "*ran out of water, too! Look at them now. Gone. You know what Hohokam means? "All used up." In another hundred years people won't even remember us. Won't even remember what Phoenix was"* (Bacigalupi 122). The reason for the persistent search for the water rights is not due to the indomitable spirit of humankind to persist but essentially is a testament of anthropocentric pride that wants to be in control of the changes and extract from nature to build the visions it has for humanity. The conflict to take possession of the water rights is not for the sake of alleviating the water crisis but is for securing the futures of a select few while simultaneously turning the rest of the population into sacrifice zones.

The water knifes in the novel take up radical measures steeped in violence like blowing up water storage facilities and dams. California's guerrilla warfare did not heed to the climate ethical norms or the fact that "'Lot of people end up dead around these rights'" (Bacigalupi 285). The disparity and inequities between the states of America forms the foundation of the plot as the entire focus is shed on the developed country and the

American Dream. The parental generation in the novel, who had migrated to America with a vision of excellence began grieving for the loss of the nation and all the values it had stood for. Maria's father who held tight to the former ideology, changes his mind while relocating from Texas as he "kept saying that this was America and America was all about freedom and doing what you wanted, but the crumbling America that they drove across, where Texans were strung up on New Mexico fence lines as warnings, most definitely wasn't the America he kept inside his head." (Bacigalupi 49)

America was no longer perceived as a unified country but was considered to be a country that prioritised the needs of the wealthier states over the poorer states. Bacigalupi through such a portrayal brings to light internal climate racism through disparity within the states of the nation as well as external climate racism through the domination of other countries in power. Such a transition stands close to Dipesh Chakrabarty's view of how climate change can alter the geographical divisions of the world by blurring the global and marking the planetary, where in borders do not hold the same relevance as it did pre-Anthropocene. The characters in the novel are faced with such a dilemma as some had got accustomed to the politics of the Anthropocene whereas the rest were still "Living according to an ancient map of the world that no longer existed." (49)

Catharine Case and Angel extend the same debate on patriotism and its irrelevance in the present day. Catharine speaks about how her "daughter still says the Pledge of Allegiance? I've got three different militias assigned to hunting down Zoners and Texans who cross our border, and Jessie is still putting her hand on her breast and saying the Pledge. Figure that one out. Every single state has its own border patrol, and my kid still calls herself an American" (Bacigalupi 70). Angel retrospects the concept of patriotism at the present day context and how they wave "the American flag so the feds won't come down on us for recruiting militias." (70)

The country is divided and segmented to execute one's personal interests over national security and interests. Bacigalupi constructs the plot in sequential juxtaposition of the powerful few, and how such a corporate influence of deregulation, securitisation and privatisation of water determines the survival of the common people. The novel like any other hydrofiction, puts forth "plots of travel and migration, of uncanny and uncontrollable returns, and a preoccupation with language and imagery of flux, circulation, floods and droughts, frequently transferring into representations of the body as thirsty, saturated or overflowing, as well as narrative forms that flow between styles or come to jarring stops." (Boast 24) The novel does not spiral into equilibrium point as the water crisis is unstable, dysfunctional and deregulates from any sense of security.

The plot of the novel is shaped by the overpowering prominence of the riverscape, the Colorado River. The riverscape serves "as a medium in which social and economic power structures are inscribed and reproduced in turn as 'natural', invisible and inevitable." (Boast 35) Riverscapes are considered to be pivotal points in hydrofictions just like landscapes in any genre, and the movement of rivers "play a particular role in a national environmental imaginary, standing in, as Tricia Cusack writes, 'for the passage of time, for life, and for renewal'" (Boast). The riverscape of the Colorado River, which has been aiding the continuance of communities, has now begun to "disrupt the 'comfort and security, both material and symbolic'" (162) which humans require.

The Colorado River is not presented as an entity with agency because in the Capitalocene, the politics of nature has been about corruption, extraction and the diminution of the more than human agency. The river before the capitalocene "had run more than a ~ thousand miles, from the white-snow Rockies down through the red-rock canyons of Utah and on to the blue Pacific, tumbling fast and without obstruction. And wherever it touched — life." (Bacigalupi 12) Angel speaks of the riverscape as the

foundation of humankind and life by offering endless possibilities: “A body could thrive in 115-degree heat. A city could blossom in a desert. The river was a blessing as sure as the Virgin Mother’s.” (12)

Such a riverscape, around which the civilisation was built relying on the bountiful resource of freshwater was now “low and sluggish, stoppered behind huge dams. Blue Mesa Dam, Flaming Gorge Dam, Morrow Point Dam, Soldier Creek Dam, Navajo Dam, Glen Canyon Dam, Hoover Dam, and more.” (Bacigalupi 12) Despite the masses relying on the Colorado river being the major water source, the inequities and internal discrimination have prevented the circulation and access of the same to the marginalised states: “These dana Adedion: never saw a drop of water hit its border, no matter how much it complained about the Colorado River Compact and the Law of the River. Children down in the Cartel States grew up and died thinking that the Colorado River was as much a myth…” (12)

The systemic racism and marginalisation in the distribution of resources have been the argument in the genres of hydrofiction and petrofiction. Most capitalist corporations like the capitalist venture through arcologies in *The Water Knife,* operate under the notion: “water is the new oil” (Boast 21). Most developed countries accumulate wealth and power through the capitalisation and development of the primary source of wealth: oil. Most literary texts analyse the particular “hydrocarbon lifestyle” (22) as it has been crucial to the formulation of development and modernity, a primary barrier distinguishing the developed countries from the rest of the world. Petrofiction consumes on the dialectic of the extraction and transaction of oil and the deeper transitions in wealth and power. It also delves into not only how the oil source produces power hierarchies but also how it operates on the residues left behind by such a trajectory of over consumption, ecological toxification, and exclusion.

Hydrofiction borrows from the genre of petrofiction by presuming how the hydrocarbon relations bear glaring semblances to the hydrosocial relations in a modern society. Like the source of petrol, water also "requires significant capital, technology and expertise to make it usable, and this can entrench international and local relations of domination." (Boast 22) Though water is often considered to be an inexhaustible natural resource, critical texts and theoretical approaches on the hydrosocial relations of a society brings out a contrasting idea of how water is a product of multiple "social processes and discourses." (22) The series of processes include how "Nature's water is captured, pumped, purified, chemically adjusted, piped, bought and sold, regulated, used by households, agriculture and industry, transformed into electricity, biochemically metabolised by plants, animals and humans, integrated in public displays like fountains, often turned into sewage, eventually returned to 'nature'" (Boast 20).

The manifold steps involved in the processing of water leaves space for the domination of the water corporations, which rise to power through the acquisition of the technology to access, process and supply water in times of climate induced water scarcity. The water corporations are predicted to partner with "politicians, militaries and corporations" (Boast 23) to further privatise and securitise the limited resource. Hannah Boast's comparison of oil and water takes into account the differences of how water breeds life whereas oil leaks death but the semblances also "unravel what it might mean to think about water as a motor of literature in the same way as oil." (23)

The water corporations through illegal measures or the state governance in the novel work under "Automation bias" (Wells) as they operate under the rule "that economic systems unencumbered by regulation or restriction would solve the problem of global warming as naturally, as surely as they had solved the problems of pollution, inequality, justice, and conflict." (Wells) This forms the essential irony of climate change

altered politics that engulfs justice, and climate security. Rob White in *Transnational Environmental Crime* draws an association of an "examination of dominant world political economic trends" and "reveals the close link between capitalism as a system and environmental degradation and transformation" (Wells). The significant aspects of the modern political economy include:

> expansion – growth as progress, accumulation as economic engine, exploitation of natural resources, nonhuman animals and people; privatisation – from common property to private property, concentrated ownership and management, reliance on market mechanisms rather than government controls; commodification – transformation of use-value into exchange-value, more and more aspects of social life and environment are commercialised; massification – mass production including for niche markets, simplification of consumables including foods as well as goods and services to a narrow range of choices; globalisation – monopolisation of control over production via takeovers and mergers worldwide, penetration of the transnational corporation into local markets and practices. (92)

Such dominant political and economic trends determining the course of development of a country had termed nature and the nonhuman as commodities which were privatised, reserved using vigilance and surveillance, and common people demanding the resource were labelled as trespassers and were persecuted using rigid militant measures. But through the transition from the Holocene to the Anthropocene the major societies of the world have witnessed a burgeoning change in collective attitudes of pandering in the politics of nature. *After Nature, A Politics of the Anthropocene* predicts such a rise of politics that "will be something different and more intense: an effort at active responsibility for the world we make and for the ways of life that world fosters or destroys." (Purdy)

The anthropogenic crisis demonstrated in the novel abides by the recurring debate in the area of climate studies about referring to the Age as Capitalocene instead of the Anthropocene. The debate about the labelling of the geological epoch characterised by the impacts of capitalism takes into consideration the accountability of human actions especially the role of developed nations and corporations. Fossil capitalism as put forth in major petrofiction has been the pioneering factor in causing anthropogenic degradation and disparity within human communities. Under the guise of development, it segregates and segments the population based on the access and accumulation of capitalistic resources. In *Facing the Anthropocene*, Angus demonstrates that "fossil capitalism" if not stopped would lead "to global environmental apartheid and what the great British Marxist historian E. P. Thompson referred to as the threatened historical stage of "exterminism," in which the conditions of existence of hundreds of millions, perhaps billions of people will be upended, and the very basis of life as we know it endangered" (Angus 15). The practice of fossil capitalism and technocapitalism in Bacigalupi's portrayal is akin to "imperial capitalism," as it imperils "the lives of the most vulnerable populations on the planet in a system of forced global inequality." (15)

The climate induced resource scarcity leads to unfair climatic encounters between the wealthy and the poor, wherein the wealthy approach the crisis through the security of economic and political power whereas the poor are prone to victimisation in all aspects. In the novel, the water shortage is manipulated and falsified to favour the technocapitalist ventures and its propaganda. The water rights and the unethical struggle to get hold of the senior water rights for a greater share of the Colorado River forms the basis of the creation of sacrifice zones and the manufacturing of risks. The water rights' history can be traced from the Native Americans, from Hohokam back in the twelve hundreds, who

> made a deal with Phoenix to shift all their tribal water rights over to the city. The Pima had water rights to Central Arizona Project water because of old reparations;

> Phoenix needed that water when the rivers around here started drying up, so it was a win-win. Phoenix got the water it wanted to keep growing, and the Pima got a massive cash settlement that they used to buy land up north.' Angel smirked. 'Where it actually rains.' (Bacigalupi 282)

The water shortage can be relieved only with the water supply from the Colorado River. At the moment, California has "got senior rights on four million acrefeet of water, but if that gets taken away from them — they've got the Imperial Valley and fifty million people depending on that water." (Bacigalupi 284) This marked the ambition of Catharine Case, who had employed water knifes to secure the welfare of their state even when it meant turning states like Phoenix, Texas and Arizona into sacrifice zones. Catherine Case's plan would fall apart:

> If Phoenix shows up in court, waving these senior Pima water rights, everything changes. For everyone. Phoenix could have the Bureau of Reclamation drain Lake Mead. Send all the water down to Lake Havasu for Phoenix's personal use. They could make Los Angeles and San Diego stop pumping. Or they could sell the water off to the highest bidder. They could build a coalition against California, keep all the water in the Upper Basin States. (Bacigalupi 284)

The possibilities or the upturning of favour from California's dominion to Phoenix's threatens Catherine Case and the water corporations. California was ready to blow up CAP and the dam in Colorado. California has been manipulating the water and climatic situation by blowing up a dam for water that is supposedly theirs. It is unethical for political domains to begin "an open shooting war" that proclaims: "America might be broken, but it still exists." (Bacigalupi 284) The water crisis was severely manipulated to the masses and by canvassing that Phoenix was booming with the technocapitalist practices like arcologies and so on when in reality Phoenix was "not rising the way they

say it is" (127). The people in the novel belong to two major categories: climate deniers, who believed that the water shortage was *"just a natural cycle. It'll get wet again."* (124) The statement is countered by climate realists who bring out the contradiction underlying the age of the capitalocene: *"Even when we had swimming pools, it was never wet.*" (124) The unsustainable lifestyle amidst climate induced resource shortages have exacerbated the issue at hand by duplicating it to various aspects as "The only difference between Phoenix and a dozen dying cities in Texas and Alabama and every coastal city around the world was that Phoenix had taken hits not just from climate change and dust storms and fires and droughts but also from a competing city." (169)

The competition in the novel penetrates into the mundaneness of everyday life where survival depended on people "doing whatever they needed to get a little money, to buy a little water, to keep going for another day." (Bacigalupi 124). The water crisis in the novel is "true apocalypse. The world after all the rules had stopped existing." (137) The common people are unequipped to comprehend the magnitude of the water shortage as the risks and the consequences were constantly manipulated to justify the ways of the arcologies. The construction workers in the arcologies, the common people purchasing water in friendship pumps or water sellers, and the refugees in camps were all "scrambling and wishing for a future that was already out of their reach." (171) The people in the arcologies, the elites carried on with their unsustainable life by "pretending they had a life." (171)

Such scavenging for water subverts the position of the civilised human by turning it into barbaric nomadism, hunting for water to quench one's thirst and prolong survival. Water supply and circulation is viewed as an "emblem of inclusionary citizenship" as it "provides a material and symbolic connection between individual bodies and the national body politic" (Bacigalupi 163). Nikhil Anand in *Hydraulic City: Water and the*

Infrastructures of Citizenship in Mumbai undertakes an evaluation of "hydraulic citizenship" and how the process of attaining and sustaining citizenship emerges through the ability to manage the city's water. In the age of modernisation, water infrastructures assumed more significance and power than before where it "was seen as one of the hallmarks of modernity, with new projects demonstrating technological capability and serving as monumental concretisations of hopes for future social 'progress' and emancipation." (Boast 163) Such infrastructural projects like the hydraulic infrastructures were undertaken in postcolonial states after independence to seek power and were also "viewed as testaments to the power of 'man' to 'conquer' and 'civilise' unruly nature, and to use it to serve the relatively new idea of the 'public good'" (163).

The technocapitalist infrastructures that profit and wield power through water technologies like the arcologies implement the concept of emancipation and civilisation of nature and its resources as put forth above. The CAP is such a project that is equated to being "Arizona's IV drip as 'It pumps water up out of the Colorado River and brings it three hundred miles across the desert to Phoenix." (Bacigalupi 52). The other water resources like the "Roosevelt Reservoir is about dried up. The Verde and Salt Rivers are practically seasonal. The aquifers around here are all pumped to held, But Phoenix still has a pulse because of the CAP." (52)

Catharine Case is known for her reputation and power of monopolising water and supplying it only to her state. The Lake Havasu is being used by California as well "Catherine Case up in Nevada doesn't like letting water down into Havasu at all because she needs it up in Lake Mead." (Bacigalupi 52-53). The water wars between the northern states and the southern states of the country determine the access to water for basic survival for the people situated in the lower parts of the region. People in positions of

power upriver in Colorado, Wyoming and Utah do not send water to the Lower Basin States, “They like to say it’s theirs. Their mountains. Their snowmelt.” (53)

The climate deniers persisted to deny the water shortage and undertake short term fixes that were unsustainable, and it is amidst such practices did Michael Ratan prosper. He was one of the few capitalists who understood the binary of both the Anthropocene and the Capitalocene, as he did not deny the anthropogenic crisis but also created technological fixes that were highly capitalistic in nature, to cash in on the water shortage. He says that people amidst such resource scarcity “will grab after whatever mirage they think will save them if they’re thirsty enough. So I go out with my maps and my drilling crews, and I look busy, and I tell people where to punch holes in the desert, and Phoenix keeps hoping we’ll come back with some mother lode of aquifers” (Bacigalupi 53) to stop worrying about the water rights and the resource conflicts between the states.

The attitude of Ratan is a testament of the technocapitalist ventures, who understand that there are no solutions to climate change as unlike climate coping measures and resources, the anthropogenic crisis is equitable and does not discriminate in the long term. Catharine Case employed water knifes like Angel who were taught everything from reading “a legal contract” to planting “heavy explosives” (Bacigalupi 65).

The process of selecting and training a water knife is proportional to the manipulation of risks and the creation of sacrifice zones as it brings to light the scope of unethical practises inherent in the society. Catharine Case is known for manipulating the masses as she says that even “‘Journos have the attention span of gnats. By tomorrow they’ll be chasing a supertornado in Chicago, or some Miami seawall break. We’ll lie still, and everyone will forget this ever happened.’” (Bacigalupi 67) Case had employed water knifes to shut water supply for the lower basin states assuming authority like “The Queen

of the Colorado" and "slaughtered the hell out of these neighborhoods: her first graveyards, created in seconds when she shut off the water in their pipes." (10)

Case expresses her capitalistic pride when she says if such people cannot police their water, "they can drink dust" (Bacigalupi 10). The unethical contestation for the water rights has affected "a hundred thousand people's lives!" (18). Angel labels the community as a sacrifice population who deserve to be victimised when he says, "'You should be glad we're letting you keep what you already got in your pipes. If your people are careful, they can live on buckets for a couple of days, till they clear out.'" (17) The sacrifice population are not treated as citizens but are treated as cargo that will be stored or discarded as per the climatic situation.

The privatisation of water through Case's manipulation or other technocapitalist ventures curbs the survival of the citizens as "Water infrastructure does not just provide for a country's citizens: it produces them." (Boast 163) The act of monopolising the water source is contrary to "governmentality" and "is closely related to Foucault's concepts of 'biopolitics' and 'biopower', in which power is conceived as the management of the life of a population rather than the capacity to deprive a population of goods, services or life" (163). In climate regimes like ecofascism or technocapitalism, the tenets of "governmentality" encircle deprivation rather than circulation of resources.

The major tenet of democracy is inclusive participation in decision making and collective welfare of the nation, whereas in the novel there is no trace of emancipation "not only… from oppressive and exploitive conditions but also participation in the governance of society" (Villa 1). In the novel as in contemporary times, the role of participatory democracy is "overwhelmingly determined by corporatism and its authoritarian power over technology." (1) The water rights that determine the future of the

entire country are based on a water rights issue that no citizen can exhibit a participatory role over.

America, a country that was earlier celebrated for harbouring the dreams of immigrants have now changed drastically in the light of climate change and climate induced political decisions. In *The Shock Doctrine: The Rise of Disaster Capitalism*, the chapter titled "The United States: "The land of the free has become a country of prisons"" brings out this transition of incarcerating a higher proportion of its population than other political regimes. The American government "operates a system that demonizes and stigmatizes African-Americans and immigrants on an unprecedented scale, resembling a social experiment in population control" (Klein). This is shown in the novel when Texan refugees and Merry Perrys, group of religious fundamentalists in the novel are discriminated and prohibited from having a decent standard of living. The refugees, immigrants, and the common people from the lower economic strata comprise the sacrifice zone, whose interests, needs, and lives are sacrificed for the welfare of the elite.

The developed countries have been "couched in a long history of environmental injustice and racism that conditions the "polluter-industrial complex"" (Little 2) but the complex is displaced on the already victimised and racialised section of the population instead of the culprits. Such a demarcation of the "sacrifice zone has been revived and recycled as a trope used to describe disadvantaged communities and landscapes disproportionately contaminated and neglected in the name of capital accumulation." (2) In the novel, the residents of the sacrifice zone are all marked and monitored without their knowledge, "Each one tagged, not a single one knowing it." (Bacigalupi 8)

The surveillance of the citizens had created insecure mob mentality that "they don't trust anyone except themselves, and they don't rely on anyone except themselves." (Bacigalupi 303) The insecurity among the entire population and its distrust on the

government arises due to the unsaid rule that "Some people had to bleed so other people could drink." (443) The rising toll of the dead and injured from the climate conflicts reflects how a citizen did not get to decide how they died "Someone else decided. Someone else always decided." (363)

The control exerted over the population has led to the formation of sacrifice zones, "an iteration of capitalist colonization and decolonization" (Little 14) Colonist practises take new form amidst the climatic changes like the rationing of water, selective access to climate coping technologies and discrimination. The water corporations like The Imperial Valley companies have been in the forefront as a colonist and capitalist venture thereby "killing places for water for five generations." (Bacigalupi 200) Such water corporations aim to segregate the population into Merry Perrys, refugees from Texas, other climate refugees, poverty stricken citizens and the elites.

Slow onset events like desertification have been an implication affecting millions of people. But the capitalist practises have preyed on the lives of a select population that later develops into sacrifice zones. Catharine Case accepts the demarcation of sacrifice zones when she says, "I made all these refugees. Live by the sword, die by the sword." (Bacigalupi 431) Thereby she admits that the sacrifice population is treated as goods, ready to be destroyed and discarded. The zones encompass the "lived experiences of late industrial decay and community decline, namely self-sacrifice and staying put as key dimensions of surviving corporate neoliberal and technocapital sacrifice." (Little 4)

Climate politics deals with two major issues: on one hand, it naturalises "one version of politics while excluding others from serious debate" whereas on the other hand, certain political agendas claim "that certain collective questions must be decided by nature, not by human judgment." (Purdy) But the water shortage in the novel is not mitigated through equal supply and instead of letting nature decide the survival of

communities, the political corporations do. Such an approach "sharpens inequalities within and between countries – between core and periphery, and between developed and less developed regions." (Welzer 70) The climate induced migration coupled with climate induced resource shortage is predicted to lead "to greater levels of violence" as "environmentally determined migration (for example, where land and water run short or, in economic terms, demand outstrips supply) must certainly be regarded as a potential source of violence." (70) The same situation occurs in the novel as "competition breaks out among those seeking to acquire the scarce resource" (70). The "social and political consequences of climate change" exacerbate the risks of "fragile societies, whose situation may grow even worse as a result." (70)

Fragile societies then turn into sacrifice zones and risk societies where political manipulation of information and manufacturing of risks determine the survival of the people. In the novel, the presence of water knifes is denied. The public is not aware of the water knifes and their influence is seen as a hoax that spreads through the state. But Lucy questions Angel about the same and reveals how water knifes "infiltrate other cities' water", "make farmers disappear in the middle of the night when they won't sell their water rights", "organize and arm militias on Nevada's southern border to attack people from Arizona and Texas and New Mexico if we try to cross the Colorado River and get into your state" (Bacigalupi 197), and "have black helicopters that blew up Carver City's water-treatment plant" (198).

Lucy accuses Angel and other water knifes by saying "Everywhere you go, people suffer." (Bacigalupi 198) The fabrication of the data regarding the climatic situation and the governance is not accessible to the masses as the state had resorted to a non-participatory form of democracy that prioritised profit over the lives of the citizens. Lucy's voice throughout the novel possesses high value as she expresses to Angel: "'It's not the

lies. It's the silence. Silence is what gets me. All the things you don't say. All the words you don't write. That gets to you. After a while it just kills you. All the stories you teach yourself not to tell. All the truth and lies that you never ever print because all of it is too dangerous.'" (199)

Maria similarly reflects and demands for the same answers when she says: "I don't need books about how things used to be. Everybody talks about how things used to be. I need a book about how I'm supposed to live now" (Bacigalupi 220). Such fabrication of data and failure of democracy have led the state to the doom of 'Fragile statehood' for which the citizens especially of the poorer states pay the price. In states like Phoenix, Texas and Mexico, the "state institutions and organizations do not function adequately because of a lack of political will, a legitimacy deficit or financial shortfall" (Welzer 71). Such a collapse has led to the imploding of state infrastructures that predicts "that all other social structures will collapse in short order." (71)

The fragile statehood creates inequities that lead to violence and death as put forth in the novel: "*It never rains in Phoenix, except when it's raining bodies*." (Bacigalupi 245) The dead bodies are of "Texas hookers and Ibis execs and Las Vegas spies and Phoenix water lawyers and stubborn journalists." (245) The dead bodies hoard narratives of exclusion and discrimination. Such an upsurge in violence, death and exclusion proposes the need for the discipline of environmental justice to shed more emphasis on climate justice and climate mobility. Marxist environmentalism holds significance in the light of climate change as it asserts "that instances of environmental injustice result from the same abuses of corporate and capitalist power which underlie class injustices, and to find evidence for this in narrative." (Maughan 23)

Bacigalupi's depiction of the country expresses the reluctance of the rich and the powerful. Stan Cox in *The Path to a Livable Future: A New Politics to Fight Climate*

Change, Racism and the Next Pandemic reasons out the dilemma of the developed countries, wherein they have to choose either "ecological sustainability or capital accumulation, but not both. We can have economic sufficiency for all or wealth for the few, but not both." (Cox) In the novel, the country chooses capital accumulation and economic sufficiency for a few over an equally distributed share of resources.

An unsustainable lifestyle and an unsustainable economy escalate the greenhouse gas emissions, ozone depletion and lead to a surge in the climatic consequences through slow onset and sudden onset events. The dystopian characters in the novel despite going through climatic apocalypse still "spend their tomorrows today" (Streeby 70) as Butler points out at neoliberals "who sacrifice the future for short term gains and economic growth in the present, prioritizing immediate profits over water, the climate, and the earth." (70) The prolongation of unsustainable lifestyle practices like water fountains, flight travel, arcologies and so on in the novel parallels Bacigalupi's depiction with the neoliberal society, wherein "isolated individuals" indulge in an unhealthy competition among themselves "to turn resources into property and extract profit in ways that supposedly are best for everyone." (70) Donna Haraway offers a critique of such tendencies of neoliberalism that are highly parasitic by proposing "possessive individualism" as a template for understanding nature." (70)

The water scarcity in the novel is an exaggeration of the realistic scenario of water scarcity in rivers "such as the Colorado in the western United States and the Yellow in China, often run dry before they reach the sea." (Tietenberg 4) The resource scarcity is inevitable and narratives like *The Water Knife* serve as a learning experience to prepare for the crises ahead, wherein water will be treated as currency and capitalised as "climate change is expected to intensify both the frequency and duration of droughts, simultaneously increasing the demand for water and reducing its supply." (Tietenberg 4)

In the novel, "the ownership of water becomes not only a tool of domination, but actually bestows its owners with power over life and death." (Mehnert 192)

The climate induced water scarcity exacerbates the crisis despite Karen Bakker's consideration of water as an "'uncooperative commodity', with a degree of resistance to being privatised and commercialised inherent in its fluid materiality." (Boast 16) Despite being a fluid entity, water is solidified through technocapitalistic infrastructures and economic enclosures in the novel. Even for the people from the poor strata, "water was sold at very high rates, ten to twenty dollars a litre" (Malik 225). Phoenix government had not taken any measures to ensure an equitable share of resources and even the Red Cross pumps with higher prices "are probably the only smart thing Phoenix has done for the water" (225).

Resource scarcity especially "in many parts of Africa, Asia, Eastern Europe, South America, the Arctic and the Pacific islands, more and more people will have fewer and fewer means to ensure their survival." (Purdy 5) Such competition for limited resources is predicted to "lead to violent conflicts" and consequently, it will become difficult "to distinguish between war refugees and environmental refugees." (5) Such climatic conflicts that are "environmentally driven" (5) will lead to climate migration and relocation which will cause the transfer of conflicts to the host country as well. This leads to political and ethical dilemma "on the borders of countries they want to enter but which have no wish at all to receive them" and do not know "what to do with them" (Purdy 5). The dilemma on the borders is reflected in *Necropolitics* as the residents of the host country face the ethical question of "would it not be better for my life to stop being linked" (Mbembe) to the presence of the 'Others' who carry the overwhelming burden of ruin and collapse. This ethical dilemma dictates the destinies of the displaced population. Such transgressions of ethics and the blurring of responsibilities turn "the brutality of the borders" (Mbembe) to be a fundamental criteria rather than an issue to be resolved.

The borders act as sites of "militarized spaces" (Purdy 71) that are not meant for border crossing but for separation and exclusion. Necropolitics and the competition for limited resources aggravate the brutality of borders: geographical and metaphorical. The competition not only splits and divides the population but also unites a few groups who have similar ideologies and interests. For instance in the novel, Vegas and California form alliances and express resistance against the weaker states like Phoenix and Texas. It is foreseen that "Fragile societies" will "display weak national integration, consisting of a multiplicity of ethnic, cultural, religious, regional or political groups" that are competing for resources will "enter into conflict and form alliances." (Purdy 71)

Bacigalupi's dystopian world takes into account the futuristic critique of climate change and consequences. The political situation in Bacigalupi's *The Water Knife* is a reflection of a fragile society that has been witnessing multiplicities of degradation as "traditional structures undergo erosion, without being replaced by well-functioning modern ones" (Purdy 72) in the novel thereby leading to dysfunctional political trends. Despite living in a climate hotspot, "there is no state monopoly of force but a plethora of competing, often private, players" (72) who capitalise on the climate events. The climate events have exacerbated into a greater magnitude that "the state no longer plays an active role but simply provides opportunity structures for political, entrepreneurial and military elites to impose their interests." (72) This leads to unequal power hierarchies within the sections of the population in the novel.

Rob White in *Transnational Environmental Crime: Toward an Eco- Global Criminology* analyses the four major concerns that arise within the climate induced transformations. White predicts the series of climate conflicts that are predicted to rise: "conflicts over environmental resources", "conflicts linked to global warming", "conflicts over the differential exploitation of resources", "and conflicts over the transference of

harm" (White 39). The novel circumvents such conflicts and the "poor" and the "desperate" find ways "to stay on the right side of the border" (14).

Water dictates the futures of the common people, water corporations and its proponents. This aggravates the gulf of disparity as the poorer countries are not able recover from the climate events due to restricted access to climate solutions. The commercialisation of water has made the fight for water rights a necessity. For instance, Vegas had been a climate hotspot and was predicted that the city would degrade but the people wonder how "a city that should have dried up and blown away about a million years ago — does so well" (38) in the present. Vegas had escaped or rather postponed doom through its adoption of unethical climate coping mechanisms, whereas the poorer states unequipped for the same bear the brunt of the consequences first.

The value of the water lies not only in its availability but also in its location. Water pumps near arcologies and the oasis were more expensive than water in the friendship pumps. Maria takes advantage of the persisting inequity of how "Fifty dollars' worth of water had just become $120, and as soon as she hauled it away from the oasis..." (Bacigalupi 106) The construction workers of the arcologies were not permitted to use the water and they had only two choices "either go line up at a Friendship pump and pay the humanitarian pump price, or they could pay Maria and get water conveniently." (57) Maria's water sale relied on the fact: "Cheap water made valuable, just by the act of moving it from the Red Cross pump to this dusty sidewalk beside the Taiyang Arcology's construction site." (106)

The climate induced disparities aggravate the existing inequalities as "Over the last decade, researchers have even managed to quantify some of the nonobvious relationships between temperature and violence: for every half degree of warming," it is predicted that "societies will see between a 10 and 20 percent increase in the likelihood of armed

conflict." (Wells) Likewise in the novel, with purging heat waves and water scarcity, violence spirals and people die due to climate conflicts. The harrowing brutality in the novel is expressed through the violence of the water knifes, refugees' persecution and the murder of Jamie. Jamie "was trying to sell the rights to California. And he was planning on jerking Vegas around." (Bacigalupi 261) His scramble about the water rights had turned him into a target of immediate persecution.

Jamie believed in the water rights and had attempted to comprehend the water politics in the novel but was brutally killed. The "executioners had carved a story into his ruined flesh" (Bacigalupi 139). Lucy, being Jamie's friend and a journalist who also was attempting to unravel the water politics was threatened by the murder of Jamie as it was a glaring reminder that anybody who embarks on a similar trajectory might be put through the same fate. Jamie's corpse had "'Electrical burns on the genitals. Adrenaline injected into the body. Signs of trauma at the anus. Rape with blunt object. Probably a club of some kind.'" (139)

Such acts of violence are performed by gangs of underground mafia like The Vet, who runs an underground mafia gang that had also moved up the ladder of power through their malicious practices and violence. Maria and Sarah owed money to the Vet and he not only blackmails to get the debt repaid at the earliest but also destroys their illegal water sale as it is a threat to their authority. People try to seize water by pumping "water out of the river themselves, start running black-market rings" amidst "disease and the guardies all over them" (Bacigalupi 427) which also minimises their chances of survival.

Michael Ratan, a hydrologist who comprehended the political workings of the system like Jamie was also killed with "a bullet in his face. His nose and eye were missing, and a huge hole yawned at the back of his head. Shards of hair and skull and brain had sprayed across the white carpet, potterylike. A wide streak of blood was smeared

across tile and carpet where they'd dragged him." (Bacigalupi 233) People like Michael Ratan, Jamie and James Sanderson were killed because of their involvement that brought to light "freelance opportunities.'" (317) which was a threat as privatisation was essential for the stability of the technocapitalist franchise.

The water shortage is glaringly different on the greener side of the world as Maria had "spied inside the Taiyang Arcology" at the fountains which was built outside and "They were just letting water evaporate. Letting it go." (Bacigalupi 48) Maria's father had forced her to relocate from Texas to Vegas as it was the land of booming opportunities and when she looked at the fountain "right out there in the open, she'd finally understood why her father had been trying to get them to Vegas. Why he'd been so sure that city was the place to go." (48) The difference between Texas and Vegas was not in the climate situation but relied on the question rightly posed by Jamie: "'How much would you pay to keep a city alive? Or an entire state?'" (84). The cities that were willing to splurge money in technological innovations that kept the city climate proofed to a certain extent thrived and survived whereas the others turned "into a dust bowl" (84).

The gulf of disparity existed not only in terms of wealth and power but also in access to technological solutions to climate change that were restricted only to a select few. Ratan, a hydrologist brings out this fact as he tells Maria "how the Earth held hundreds of millions of gallons of water deep underground. Ancient water that seeped down into it when glaciers melted" (Bacigalupi 44). The wealthier section of people, who could afford accommodation in arcologies had access to the groundwater information which determined their dominion over the rest. It is through such navigation that "people like Ratan and Tau Ox were using water like they own a river." (Malik 225)

The technology based governance has scheduled a list of advancements to climate proof select areas and communities to alleviate the water crisis. Though technological

advancement is necessary for the progress of humankind, it compromises ecological wellbeing in almost all cases. At the same time, "Ecological survival does not mean the abandonment of technology. Rather, it requires that technology be derived from a scientific analysis that is appropriate to the natural world on which technology intrudes." (Commoner) It is essential for a climatically changing terrain to resort to the adoption of technological solutions that provide effective climate coping measures.

Amidst water shortage and brewing climate conflicts between the states of the United States over the water rights, the Chinese opt for a different approach that is far-sighted by building arcologies in Las Vegas and Phoenix to gain profit and power. Arcology is

> is a self-sufficient living environment created by man that recycles 95% of the water. Not only the water is recycled; but almost everything needed to survive is recycled. Therefore, an arcology can be climate controlled, crops can be grown, the air can be filtered and kept clean and safe from the repeated dust storms outside, people living inside can then pretend like life is normal. These arcologies are built by the poor and distressed who never make enough money from their work to live inside them. The wealthy and powerful people of the society get to live in these arcologies full of comfort and safety. As we saw in the above quotation that the senior hydrologist knowing the disastrous condition in the Phoenix lives safely in an arcology. (Malik 225)

In Bacigalupi's depiction, technological solutions and advancements feature an alternative realm of accommodation called the arcologies that shields the inhabitants from all climate induced changes. The arcologies are built for the future and implement sustainable practices like water recycling within the infrastructure. The architecture consistently plans on "how to balance all the plants and animals" and how to clean up the

waste and turn it into fertilizer" to be used in greenhouses. The infrastructure has an efficient water recycling treatment that runs "black water down through filters and mushrooms and reeds" and lets it enter "into lily ponds and carp farms and snail beds, and by the time it comes out the other end, that water, it's cleaner than what they pump up from underground." (Bacigalupi 111) The Taiyang and arcology contracts shift its focus into incorporating sustainable and ecological based lifestyle wherein "Nature does all the work, all the different little animals working together, like gears fitted inside an engine. Its own kind of machine. A whole big living machine.'" (111)

The arcologies were built by the Chinese, who had invented the required technology and had formulated it to cater to the problems of climate change that also lead the country to exert dominion over the rest of the world. The citizens believed that "The Chinese knew how to make big things happen. Those cabrones knew how to build. The Chinese had money, and they made magic happen — and they'd train anyone to use their tech who was willing to sweat a 12/12 shift." (Bacigalupi 42) They recruited people to work under their authority but did not provide the scope for progress sans their authority.

Maria's father witnessed the transition and was in complete awe of the infrastructures that offered hope to the masses. He describes the construction of the arcology with "massive construction printers that poured solids into form, the shriek of injection molds," and "the assembled pieces" that were "craned up into the sky." (Bacigalupi 42) The arcologies "had silicon PV sheeting that they poured over walls and windows to generate power." (42) Maria's father dreamed of the Chinese lifestyle and persuaded Maria "to study Chinese, and we don't just got to go north. We can cross the ocean, too. The Chinese, they build things. After this job we can go anywhere.'" (43)

Catharine Case partnered up with the Chinese in offering accommodation structures that were functional and resistant to climate change. Like Toomie says "Some

people did okay in this world. Some people knew where to place their bets" (113) and people like Case placed their bets on the technocapitalist future that multiplied their investment. The arcologies were an alternative to the planet before the anthropogenic crisis that provided all resources that were essential for survival and advancement as in the "Outside, there was only desert and death. But inside, surrounded by jungle greenery and koi ponds, there was life, and Catherine Case was a saint, offering salvation to her flock as she guided them to safety inside the technological wonders of her foresight." (Bacigalupi 62) Case had understood the politics, landscape and the people of the country, using which "She found patterns, fit them together, and then turned them to her use." (66) Taiyang focussed on the details of the lifestyle technologies of the residents and would even "pump the raw sewage into the building, where they'd put it into big methane composting systems", and "baked out the gases and distilled out the water and turned the rest into nutrients for the weird plants that grew inside the building and turned into trees." (115) The Cypress arcologies was "surrounded by waterfalls and climbing vines" and it "could run on its own water for up to three months at a stretch without even having to dip into the Colorado River" (62) because of its water recycling system.

The Taiyang Arcology has "triple-filter apartments" (Bacigalupi 109) that shields the residents from the frequent dust storms and heat waves in Phoenix. The arcologies were located in the same city but Phoenix looks decent "when you got decent air filters and you're up high.'" (48) But for the poor people like Maria, the Taiyang was a distant dream that she yearns for, "'Wish it was for me.'" (113) Throughout the novel, the "rich people always come out good, and poor people always get nothing." (112) The rich people not only include the politicians, industrialists, and arcology residents but also include "Relief agency workers, drilling speculators, borderland contractors with gold teeth" who indulged in unethical practices by preying on the lives of the poor and "prospered in the

heart of disaster." (125) Catharine Case and the other people in positions of power were all "rats of the apocalypse, chewing into the guts of development boosterism" (125).

The infrastructures had two sides: on the one hand, it promoted sustainability but on the other hand, it was discriminatory and destructive as it prioritised a comfortable standard of living over a climatically suitable lifestyle pattern. Butler speculates how in California, lawns existed because "non-Hispanic whites from the east— from wetter climates" recalled them and "wanted the living green fragrant mats as bits of the homes they'd left." (Bacigalupi 10) Humans had always urged to maintain and continue the old standard of living or a lifestyle pattern despite realising that it would cause issues in the future. For instance, the cypress arcologies have "Hotels and balconies. Domes and condensation-misted vertical farms, leafy with hydroponic greenery and blazing with full-spectrum illumination" (10) and had fountains placed in the open air, drained an extraordinary amount of electricity and fuel for sustenance. Butler considered such a venture, lacking foresight to be a reflection of anthropocentric pride "to hubristically transform the desert into lawns, golf courses, and "power-eating cities of light and night" such as Las Vegas, Laughlin, and Phoenix." (Streeby 70)

The novel's geoengineering projects promote the same approach as they build fountains, aesthetic gardens, and overuse of fuel, transportation and other resources. The development projects taken up by the Chinese and Case "carry significant risks", "as Hamilton puts it, the earth's climate is a nonlinear, complex system and introducing changes may create unpredictable effects" (Streeby 3). The geoengineering projects can be categorised as a coping measure in the extreme as "Outside the arcology's walls, Phoenix was collapsing into whatever hell it was destined for, but the Taiyang wasn't like that." (208) Such a climate proofing measure required an enormous amount of investment that did not rely on eco-friendly raw materials or sustainable architecture.

Catharine Case rightly called the "Queen of the Colorado" (Bacigalupi 5) dictates the tenets of market capitalism, neoliberalism, and technological dominion in the novel. She is depicted as the dictator, "leaning over her desk, with maps of the state of Nevada and the Colorado River Basin floor to ceiling on the walls around her" with "real-time data feeds" about the stream flow, snow cover, and "Other numbers, displaying the depths of reservoirs and dams, from the Blue Mesa Dam on the Gunnison, to the Navajo Dam on the San Juan, to the Flaming Gorge Dam on the Green" (5-6). She also had access to information regarding purchase prices and "futures offers scrolled via NASDAQ" (5-6).

Her possession of knowledge, secret data and truth that were restricted from public access promoted the disparaging power dynamics inherent in the transactions between the elite and the common people. The elites created, developed and ruled various technocapitalist ventures like the arcologies, cypress housing, water rights, and monopolised decisions that determine the survival of the rest of the state. Technocapitalist structures in the novel are "a new kind of corporatism that is more clever, rapacious, and invasive than any previous form and that is imperial in its quest for power and profit as it tries to control any and all aspects of the public domain." (villa 2) Through such development of innovative accommodation, the capitalists frame a new means to accumulate wealth and exert power. Such people turned "the end of the world" into an opportunity to "make good eating." (Bacigalupi 4)

Technocapitalism can be approached as "an emerging form of market capitalism, rooted in invention and the development of new technologies." (Villa 4) It also frames "modes and means through which knowledge is used and commodified." (4) The arcologies and the housing permits are rooted in the ideologies of technocapitalism as they commodify knowledge and the discovery of technological fixes to the crisis of climate change by incorporating a politics of Darwinism. The rise of such governance has the

potential to “decide which societies prosper.” (Villa 5) The societies “that emerge at the top of technocapitalism’s global hierarchy will be the ones that can build up and reproduce new knowledge more effectively.” (5) Technocapitalist systems and education become an imperative to advancement.

The institutions of justice and security have also been corrupted by the capitalist efforts as “‘Market pricing keeps control of everything’” (Bacigalupi 50) from water to climate justice. Case’s fight for hold of the water rights is a pure monopoly as she indulges in corruption by “giving away Cypress housing permits to some judge’s nephew” (6) so that they can acquire the judge’s favour. The bribe possesses significance as the housing permits cannot be bought but had to be earned through Case’s favour. The admission into the residence was crucial to sustain life and it altered the entire climate negotaiation between the states into a monopoly of the wealthy. The climate negotiation for unrestricted and equitable water supply worsens due to the technocapitalist influence as it prioritises “economic gain more than at any previous time in human history.” (Villa 5)

The bribery and monopoly extends to all positions in power as even politicians get “their payoffs so they can buy a nice villa over in California.” (Bacigalupi 167)The only mode of resistance displayed through media is by journalists like Lucy but their life is also under threat as they use “the cops to drive journos into the desert when they start to ask questions.” (167) Contrary to the slogan: “Phoenix Rising”, Phoenix is falling apart and the elites are prepared for the change as “half the state reps have “vacation” homes up in Vancouver or Seattle, making sure they got special travel visas so they can get out of the state.” (167)

The injustice in the novel is meted out in the regulation of media content, border security measures, privatisation of water, and restriction of the mobility of refugees. The inequities and disparities of the rights of citizens and refugees varied according to their

location, power and position. The refugees are met with violence at every stage of displacement as they resort to illegal measures by paying coyotes "who would spirit them across the final boundaries and lead them north." (Bacigalupi 46) The coyotes smuggled refugees across the border and advertised guaranteed entry by brainwashing people to gain mobility: "GUARANTEED ENTRY! THREE TRIES into CALIFORNIA, or your MONEY BACK! ONE PRICE, ALL INCLUSIVE: Truck to border. Raft and Floats. Bus or Truck to San Diego or Los Angeles. MEALS INCLUDED!" (46)

The borders are populated with an "odd mix of broken souls, bleeding hearts, and predators who occupied the shattered places of the world. Human spackle, filling the cracks of disaster." (Bacigalupi 35) The unjust measures promoted leads to the manufacturing of sacrifice zones that persecute climate refugees from Mexico, Texas and Arizona. The institutions of power crumble in the novel and leads to "Collapse 2.0: Denial, Collapse, Acceptance, Refugees." (30) The political plight of displacement dynamics in the novel "highlight the diversity of displacement in the Anthropocene, diversity of its drivers, and its complex temporality. Together, these factors underscore that displacement is an inherent feature of this new epoch rather than an unfortunate consequence." (Lunstrum and Bose 644)

The refugees were discriminated and they were faced with statements like "shagua pendejos don't even know how to take a bath." (Bacigalupi 45) Even Sarah is disgusted by the refugee camps and says "'I can smell 'em from here.'" (45) The Texan refugees are labelled as "a bunch of dirty fucking Texans who don't know shit." (45) Damien and Maria get into a hate filled disagreement and they unite in agreement over a statement that disrespects Texan refugees: "This water?' She held up the Clearsac, full of dark yellow pee. Damien laughed. 'I don't drink that shit. That's for Texans.'" (40) The stages of violence aimed at the refugees from border crossing, illegal smuggling, relocation and

settlement “was a feedback loop, building itself into something bigger and more horrifying.” (40)

The horrifying ramifications extended to every aspect of the society especially “The blocks around the Friendship pump”, “among the McMansions and strip malls, refugees clogged parking lots and streets with their prayer tents.” (Bacigalupi 46) The refugee camps were grounds of infection and diseases due to power sanitation filled with “Doctors and volunteers wearing filter masks against the dust and valley fever fungus, tending to refugees lying on cots, and crouching over infants with cracked sandy lips as they took saline drips into their hollowed bodies.” (46). The plight of the refugees worsened despite relocating to the host country.

Border surveillance and security measures had increased in Vegas, wherein the state militia was planning “to lock them all into eighteen-wheelers and drive them south. Whoever made it down to the border, made it. Whoever roasted, roasted.” (Bacigalupi 63) Catherine Case also had her “second army, all of them doing their bit to keep refugees from swamping their fragile promised land.” (98) The refugees who crossed the borders illegally through the coyotes were killed. The number of dead bodies rose with each passing day, and they were mostly of Texan refugees. Lucy describes the gruesome murders and describes the body of a girl in her teens, who was dumped like trash. The corpse was surrounded by wild dogs “tugging her back and forth, worrying at her guts, leaving trails of bloody mud” (77).

The rising toll of dead refugees was a topic that was not discussed in the media and the journalists were threatened to not publish articles about it. Lucy investigates the dead bodies but she is warned and asked not to “write about the bodies. They got a way of making more trouble than they’re worth.” (Bacigalupi 77) The bodies of refugees were marked as objects to be discarded as most “Swimming pools are full of girls” (92) like her.

The violence inflicted on the refugees is considered to be an outcome of the struggle for survival. The research team under Günther Bächler has unravelled the links between climate disasters and the consequent violence as "'violent actions are not attributable to drought, flooding or sea levels per se, but rather to the weakness of political institutions, the unsustainability of social-economic structures or the dissolution of traditional conditions of life.'" (Welzer 75)

The state militas were offered "work, money, water — life." (Bacigalupi 99) They were instructed to "Stop shooting at Vegas and start shooting Zoners." (99) The zoners employed multiple tactics to enter into the host country and the coyotes instructed them to march into the river "and told to swim for the other side. Some people even made it." (99) The refugees had to get past the border security guards by "attempting a midnight run across the river, right into the teeth of the people Angel had recruited to stop them" (100). The refugee encampments were widespread from Lake Mead to Lake Havasu. The group of refugees indulged in the nightly ritual of exhibiting border defying mechanisms, wherein "Texans and Mexicans and Zoners would rush the river." (100) Though a few refugees got through, "Most of them wouldn't." (100)

The refugee encampments were locations of politics, and strategic manipulation of the impacts of capitalism. The industries responsible for the crisis: "Pure Life and Aquafina and CamelBak had set up relief tents" (101) in the refugee zones. Accountability is denied and manipulated as acts of philanthropy that are performed by the industries with the intention of getting "good PR photos of how they cared for refugees." (Bacigalupi 101) They further manipulate the situation by advertising their acts of so called charity: "*Your purchase helps us mitigate the impacts of climate change on vulnerable peoples around the world".* (101)

Merry Perry refugees were stereotyped as a frenzied population who were overtly religious, superstitious and naive. They were religious fanatics, “Whipping themselves into a frenzy as they prayed to the same God that was hammering them with drought to give them some luck as they attempted their runs across the river.” (Bacigalupi 101) The Merry Perrys were neglected and marginalised as they were treated “like roaches. You really can’t smash them fast enough.” (103) The death toll of the refugees escalated with every passing day as throughout the Red Cross tents and army camps, “bodies lay in bags, long rows of people whose journey had ended. Rows and rows of bodies, waiting for guardies to bury them.” (103). All the refugees, dead or alive harboured hopes of a better future with “passes that would get them into Nevada or else California, some all the way to Canada. All of them were wistful for what they were leaving behind. All were desperate for the place ahead to be better” (105). The refugees wandered through the city within camps and into the cities, illegally transgressing borders and defying security for a chance of survival. The refugee situation was an intrusion of the reality of climate change, which the city tried to decentre.

The coyotes made huge profits at the expense of treating refugees like cargo, illegally shipped. The “Coyotes were taking people’s money and just burying them out there in the desert” (133). The event covered widely by the media brings to light how the refugees were cheated with false promises of how they could get across the border. The number of corpses escalated as “They found half of Texas buried out there in the desert! Bodies just keep coming!” (Bacigalupi 133)

The refugees underwent displacement due to turbulent ecological events like “tornadoes and hurricanes and swamped coastlines” (Bacigalupi 135). The dead bodies found in the desert were refugees “who had tried to buy their way north to places with water and jobs” (135) in order to build a new life that meets their basic needs. Lucy had

been tracking the movements of refugees, their displacement trajectories and crises yet when the major digging up of numerous corpses of refugees in the desert occurs, she could not wrap "her head around the number of bodies she was seeing. She'd written enough stories about populations on the move to know that refugees numbered in the hundreds of thousands, and yet still, how had a single pair of predatory human traffickers managed to get their hands on so many?" (135). The event marked how migration had turned to be contingent with survival in the Anthropocene as "cross-border migration becomes the most viable, or even the only option." (Behrman and Kent 4)

The necropolitics of climate displacement is wired through issues of individual, communal, and societal crises that lead to the decision of relocation. Under the international law until recently, the category of 'climate refugee' is not clearly outlined as "the decision to flee may result from war, massacre, extreme weather, rising sea levels or loss of a subsistence base; several of these typically come together when people decide to seek salvation elsewhere. Nothing that brings human beings to make a far-reaching decision can be traced back to a single cause." (Welzer 73)

In the novel, climate change is one of the drivers of human insecurity along with political derangement, poverty, violence and so on. Gleditsch and Nordas note how climate change will lead to "particularly transition effects, on peoples and societies worldwide. The hardships of climate change are particularly likely to add to the burden of poverty and human insecurity of already vulnerable societies and weak governments." (Welzer 74) Despite displacement being contingent with survival, the government in the novel prioritises the lives of a few over the rest as it is predicted in *'Climate Refugees': Beyond the Legal Impasse:* "it is likely that some governments will deliberately prioritise some segments of their populations over others for relief and internal resettlement." (Behrman and Kent 11)

The tipping point of climate change leading to unsustainable ecological and political coping mechanisms stir revolutionary tendencies in the characters of the novel. The characters resist technocapitalism despite the autocratic nature of its implementation. The characters seek to establish climate justice and freedom to break free from the stringent policies. The question posed by the characters like Simon Yu and Lucy in the novel is echoed in *Anthropocene or Capitalocene: Nature, History and the Crisis of Capitalism*: "And in a world where the idea of freedom enjoys superlative status, why are we not pursuing larger possibilities of freedom for people and nonhumans alike, beyond those of liberal politics, trade agreements, technological innovations, and consumer choices?" (Moore 22). The idea of freedom has been denied to the characters including mobility justice, economic stability and political security.

Throughout the novel, the major form of activism expressed by the characters is mobility. All the characters in the novel, at one point or the other turn into climate refugees who defy borders, capitalistic norms, autocratic policies, and border security to assert their mobility. The refugee crisis in Texas had now befallen on Phoenix as "The residents of Phoenix and its suburbs were the new Texans" (Bacigalupi 29). Texans turned into climate refugees, marginalised and discriminated against a larger network of insecurities, which had been slowly penetrating into Phoenix's cityscapes. *From Climate Migration to Anthropocene Mobilities: Shifting the Debate*, puts forth a mobility concept that re-characterises the people displaced due to climate change "not as 'climate refugees', but as displacees of a globalised network of intersecting mobility regimes fuelled by fossil fuel extraction." (Baldwin et al. 291)

Simon Yu was one of the characters introduced in the beginning of the novel, who voiced out for justice regarding the water rights issue. He was described as "one of those good government guys who got a job because he wanted to make the world a better place.

Genuine old-school civil servant genuinely dedicated to the old-school benefit of the people." (Bacigalupi 17) Despite realising that adhering to his duties will only amplify his victimhood, he stood up for justice till he was murdered. The activist measures and resistance expressed by the characters not only include people in positions of power like Simon Yu, and Lucy but also the protest put forth by the common people.

Online activism has been exhibited by the common people through the online forum of social media posts and events that demonstrate the need for climate justice. The social media posts and the activists behind the online records of injustices and events hold significance in the novel as it is the only way to obtain data that is close to reality. The voices that have been suppressed and subjugated by the political enterprises find the online platform as a free space to vent and protest. Lucy had "been tracking Phoenix residents, their hashtags and commentaries, for years. A proxy map for the city's implosion. Virtual echoes of a physical disaster." (Bacigalupi 29) Lucy had been studying the city, its present and its future through various data and analysis, and "imagined Phoenix as a sinkhole, sucking everything down — buildings, lives, streets, history — all of it tipping and spilling into the gaping maw of disaster — sand, slumped saguaros, subdivisions — all of it going down." (29)

The masses have been brainwashed into believing that Phoenix is rising and thriving despite the climate catastrophe, whereas the reality of the water shortage, economic disparity, violence, persecution, discrimination and weather events are discarded from records. The journalists like Lucy and the protesters retaliate against the pretension of "PHOENIX RISING" and put forth awareness "of Carver City's evisceration" (Bacigalupi 28). Social Media protests and activism were on the rise as the regime had implemented policies that the citizens had to be subservient to, if they required residence. Lucy turns to social media posts and entries by

> hunting for leads in the sloshing sea of social media, stories that she could get to first and claim as her own. Dozens of new comments, hashtag #Phoenix DowntheTubes: Supposed to leave again today, except for another damn storm. #Depressed #PhoenixDownthelTubes How you know yow're at the end: You're drinking your own piss and telling yourself its spring water. #PhoenixDowntheTubes #ClearsacLove Score! We're going North! #BCLottery #Seeyoubitches Choppers in the canyon. Anyone know who's out there? #CoRiver #BlackHelicopters They're still outside my door! Where the fuck is the cavalry?!! @PhoenixPD Don't use Route 66,#CaliMilitia #DronePack #HMM16 WTF? When did Samm's Bar Close? #Ineedadrink #PhoenixDowntheTubes Pic: PHOENIX RISING Billboard stuccoed with Clearsacs. LOL. #PhoenixDowntheTubes. #PhoenixArts #PhoenixRising. (28)

Lucy has been an activist, whose resistance through the articles she writes, the narratives she unravels and the stories she excavates create transparency and necessary media coverage. But the extent of her self-sacrifice to the cause has made her realise the position of a victim in the regime, "*This is us. This is how we all end. There's only one door out, and we all use it*." (Bacigalupi 29) The slim chance of surviving aggravates competition amidst the population that resembles a Darwinian nature of struggle.

Despite facing hurling death threats and Torres advising Lucy to not write about the dead bodies as it might invite trouble, she persists with her journalism. Torres dissuades her from writing about the dead bodies of the refugees by pointing out how the corpses of climate refugees "'aren't worth the heat.'" (Bacigalupi 78) Lucy reflects on the reality of the climate crisis and says that Phoenix would definitely face its end and her journalism would not put an end to the collapse as "Everything died. Places were blown away, or drowned or burned, and it just kept happening. The equilibrium of the world was

shifting." (86) But she also wants to practice ethical journalism as "She didn't want safety. She wanted truth. For once, she wanted truth. Nothing lasted forever, so why should she try to fight her own end?" (86)

Lucy's journalism stood apart from the journalists who published stories that sided with the technocapitalist government as most journalists covered the bodies and the death rates but excluded "the stories behind the bodies" (Bacigalupi 201). She had spent the last ten years documenting "people like this, and now she was one of them. Part of the story, just as she'd always known she would be." (291) Lucy dedicated herself to the cause of excavating truth from the city of Phoenix even if that meant being "in the smoke and the dust and the heat and the dying. She was a part of Phoenix, just like Jamie and Torres. This was home. She wouldn't run." (87) She undergoes risk to uncover the stories that are manipulated despite knowing the public do not read "stories about paperwork the way they look at pictures in the blood rags" (203). Despite winning a Pulitzer Prize for her reporting, her articles were not widely read. Instead she faces a lot of threats and her tires were knifed before she could reach her interview. This led to her moment of realisation that the limited readership mattered "And that one person is the only one who matters." (203)

She expresses resistance and claims the water rights be returned to its rightful owner, Phoenix. She takes her stand against Angel by saying, "'I'm going to give them back to the city. The papers are theirs. The rights are theirs. They own them. Not California. And not Nevada. Definitely not Las Vegas or your boss.'" (Bacigalupi 441) Angel persuades her to leave the city and move north with the benefits the water rights would provide them but she replies "I've spent too much time with those people, and too much time with all their suffering, to just walk away when there's something I can do to help them.'" (441) She persists against Angel but Maria shoots her saying "'She thinks the

world is supposed to be one way, but it's not. It's already changed. And she can't see it, 'cause she only sees how it used to be. Before. When things were old.'" (448)

The characters like Simon Yu, Jamie and Lucy put forth a feat of struggle against the tycoons in power not only for short term survival but in the fear that "in a thousand years humanity would become a burrowing species, safely tucked underground for survival" (Bacigalupi 422) Their protest is for a better standard of living for the climate refugees and can be perceived as a call to implement Kalin and Schrepfer's categorisation of laws and regulation related to climate change. Climate change has to be encountered in three levels: "mitigation-related; (2) adaptation-related; and (3) protection-related laws." (Behrman and Kent 7) In the novel, the mitigation related laws of monitoring greenhouse gas emissions that would prevent climate displacement were not carried out, and the adaptation related laws of migration as an adaptation strategy are also neglected. This leads to the urgency of the implementation of protection related laws as it would address "the vulnerable position of migrants", and protect "migrants' basic rights; notably their human rights." (7)

Barbara Harlow's *Resistance Literature*, a canonical work of postcolonial writing investigates third world narratives of resistance against slavery and forms of oppression. It argues for the liberation of the third world population from the oppression of the West and the Western practices. Throughout the work, she perceives resistance from the standpoint of politics and social critique. Resistance is not viewed as an action or a response but is regarded as a palimpsest of political, social and cultural critiques. Harlowe's resistance as a theoretical context possesses weightage in the discourse of climate justice as it takes into account the burden shouldered by the third world nations. But climate justice has widened to envision the political awakenings not only of the third world population but also the marginalised section of the first world nations like

Bacigalupi's novel does. Climate fiction like *Water Knife* undertakes not only a literary purpose of weaving a plot amidst a socio-political context but also attempts to put forth a political purpose that transcends the text and motivates climate action stands akin to Harlow's perception of literary texts.

The characters like Simon Yu, Lucy and the common people fight for the protection related laws of climate change as climate migration is contingent with survival and mobility is the only way to attain climate security. They also resist technocapitalism and the hegemony of corporatism put forth by the regime through acts of questioning, and opposition. In such acts of resistance and activism lies "the possibility of retracking technocapitalism toward an emancipative trajectory" (Villa 5). The climate crisis has amplified the existing issues of population and resource scarcity. The climate related events are in most cases the consequences of the abuse of technological, economic and political power. The technocapitalist enterprise in the novel functions in the same manner but it is not the removal of such stringent coping measures that are required but the formulation of effective solutions that lie "in this same difficult arena." (Commoner)

Davis argues for the need for the enactment of abolition democracy which will turn out to be the foremost challenge faced by most countries during the age of global warming. It includes "the abolition of institutions that advance the dominance of any one group over any other." (Davis 15). Abolition democracy is an assertion of the tenets of various abolition movements in American history, and believes that it is after such abolitionary practices can a politically right democracy be formulated. The characters in the novel are victimised by the structures of technocapitalism and revolt against the necropolitics of climate change exhibited by the state. Abolition of capitalistic institutions, injustices in the distribution of resources, and discrimination in the light of global warming are resisted and retaliated to establish climate justice for mobility.

Through acts of border defiance, and resistance to counter the technocapitalist necropolitics in the light of climate induced resource conflicts are means to establish climate justice. Climate justice that the characters seek includes equity, access to climate coping measures, and climate proofing solutions. Though climate justice is not established in the novel, the efforts of the characters bring out the urgency to retaliate and counter the capitalistic hegemony. The activism put forth breaks the façade of the glory of technocapitalism and puts forth life under autocratic corporations amidst anthropogenic toxification.