

Water Reflections

On Water, Climate and Humanity

A Collaboration Hosted by the Rainmaker Enterprise
For World Water Day 2020

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PART 1

| On Water, Climate and Humanity
2020 World Water Day Reflections



Collective Water Ceremony at the Waters Edge Nearest You

By: Susan Bell Chiblow

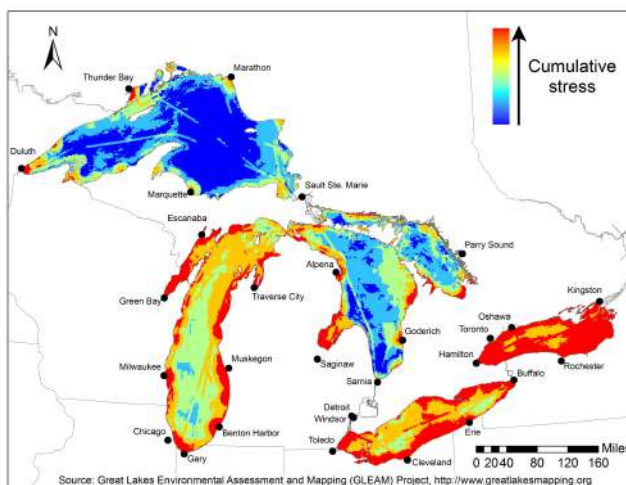
Water in my language, which is Anishinaabemowin, Is N'bi. This word encompasses all the different waters and I capitalize the word because my teachings explain that water is alive, it has a spirit, it can heal, it can transform with prayer and song, it has its own responsibilities, and most importantly – it can govern itself.

I grew up on a landform known as a point surrounded by two different rivers, the Root River and the St Mary's River. Being raised by a single parent with 7 siblings had its challenges, but I had the waters, the two rivers that I could go to for comfort. When I was feeling lonely, or upset, I would go to the waters sitting on the shore listening, allowing myself to feel the comfort provided. The waters have had a profound effect on my life. Learning to listen to the waters and feeling the comfort provided gave me insight to how special the waters are at an early age. I did not understand exactly what was happening, I just knew I needed to be by the waters and through the participation of water ceremonies, the Water Walks, and discussing water issues with the Old Wise Ones, that the waters are medicine, having curative powers. This is the Anishinaabek knowledge about the waters.

Anishinaabek peoples have unique relationships to and understandings of the waters. Anishinaabek peoples are often the first to take notice of the degradation of the waters, and the first to suffer from due to their close relationships with the waters. Anishinaabek peoples treat the waters as both providing the source for all life and having a spirit, not something to be owned, managed or acquired. The Anishinaabek knowledge and worldview are in stark contrast to the Canadian worldview that water is a resource and can be managed by human law.

Elder Willie Pine told me of a time when he remembered being able to dip a cup into the Mississaugi River and the in-land lakes to get a drink of water. When I worked for the Chiefs of Ontario over 10 years ago, there were 45 First Nation communities on boil water advisories. I feel not much has changed as many communities are still on water boil advisories and can no longer drink from the lakes.

The image below is show the environmental stresses on the Great Lakes. The environmental stresses are caused by humans and their activities. It is not the animals or birds or plants that cause these stresses, it is done solely by humans.



There are currently several agreements and policies that are supposed to protect the waters such as the Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement. It is apparent that regardless of the agreements and policies, the waters are contaminated and all humans need water to live. No human is capable of surviving without the waters, so something has to change and it needs to change immediately.

It has been stated by numerous Elders that water is life and without clean water, we as the human family will not survive. The waters are a common ancestor to all humanity and all life. Current colonial laws for the waters are failing all peoples. It is important to remember that Anishinaabek peoples were living sustainably with the Great Lakes always respecting the waters. Anishinaabek peoples have knowledge and laws that can protect our waters.

There has been a movement more recently, to educate all peoples of the waters as a commons. All humans need to understand that water means life. We need to relearn our responsibilities to the waters and let the water govern itself as it has always done. Our relationships need to be reciprocal in all that we do, we need to be grateful and check our own behavior (not manage the behavior of our relatives through such paradigms as natural resource management).

We need to re-centre the political in new and different ways, Anishinaabek women need to be involved in collaboration with other cultures in all water decisions as women are the carriers of the waters. An educational reform is needed to inform peoples of the Anishinaabek ways of living with the waters, which will contribute to the future of how the waters are regarded and governed. The understanding of Anishinaabek ways of living with the waters is old but will be “new” to many current water decision-making regimes. It is urgent that the “new” understandings of politics and governance in relation to the waters be accepted as the waters are not infinite, the waters are needed for all life to sustain itself, and the human family is water.



About the Author: Susan Bell Chiblow

Indigenous Environmental Justice Project, York University;
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Ms. Susan Chiblow is an Anishinaabe qwe born and raised in Garden River First Nation. She has worked extensively with First Nation communities for the last 26 years in environmental related fields. Sue has her Bachelors of Science degree with her major focusing on biology and a minor in chemistry and her Masters degree in Environment and Management.

She is currently appointed as an Adjunct Member to the graduate program at the Faculty of Environmental Studies at York University, and serves as the Environment and Resource portfolio holder in her First Nation. She is currently assisting the Mississauga First Nation in the development of the community's environmental laws and management regimes under a self-government process. She is appointed member of the national Aboriginal Traditional Knowledge Sub-Committee for Species at Risk.

Chiblow's research examines humanity's relationship to water and efforts on improvement for humans, animals, and the waters themselves. "My work is directly related to environmental justice for Anishinaabek peoples and to the revitalization of Anishinaabek law," she said. Chiblow's research project N'be Kendaaswin (Water Knowledge) focuses on four sub-themes: (1) Water governance and gender – How does Anishinaabek law construct the role of women in decision making about water? (2) Water memory – How does Anishinaabek law understand the relationship between water and memory? (3) Indigenous laws – What responsibilities do humans have under Naaknigewin (law/Anishinaabek legal traditions)? And (4) Reconciliation and relationships with water – Can the broader discourse in Canada about reconciliation assist with improving relationships to water?

PART 2

On Water, Climate and Humanity
2020 World Water Day Reflections

On Water, Diplomacy and Human Security

By: Dr. Dan Macfarlane

At the turn of the last century, it was, and maybe still is, common to say that “water is the new oil.” But that is to fundamentally misunderstand water. Water is so much more than a mere commodity – though we certainly need it for trade, commerce, transportation, and energy. We need water for civilization; but we also need it to live.

Water is inextricably intertwined with not only the history of Toronto, but the bilateral Canada-US relationship. Other parts of the world are defined by liquid scarcity; we live in an area of water abundance.

Water bodies powerfully shape central Canadian conceptions of itself. Echoing aspects of University of Toronto professor Donald Creighton’s “Laurentian thesis”, Canada arguably exhibits a powerful type of “hydraulic nationalism” in which the waters of the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence basin are tightly tied to Canadian history and identity. Such ideas have played a tangible role in important Canada-US negotiations and agreements.

Locally, Lake Ontario, and the Niagara and St. Lawrence Rivers, have been the canvass on which much of the bilateral Canada-US relationship has played out. Prior to the 1950s: the War of 1812; the Underground Railroad; the Boundary Waters Treaty; failed Great Lakes agreements in 1929, 1932, and 1941. Since the middle of the twentieth century: a Niagara Treaty in 1950; a St. Lawrence agreement shortly thereafter; the Great Lakes Water Quality Agreements of the 1970s; the region of the world’s largest transborder trade.

At the same time, those same water bodies and waterscapes have been indelibly shaped – literally – by US-Canadian transnationalism and diplomacy. Niagara Falls is a fraction of its former self, while the St. Lawrence, the second-largest river on the continent, was transformed into a hydropower reservoir. The “death” of Lake Erie in the 1960s and the many polluted rivers flowing into the Great Lakes that caught fire at this time reflected the region’s industrial transformation.



Because of its ample waters, southern Ontario is a hydro-electric superpower. The shores of Lake Ontario also host several nuclear power plants and refinement facilities – and when you think about where such facilities are placed, it is because they need water for cooling. Same thing with the many coal plants in the area.

The so-called “water-energy nexus” refers to the relationship between the water used globally for energy production. Long before Canada became the go-to source for American oil, southern Ontario was the focus of the world’s largest crossborder energy integration: electricity from falling water.

Of course, the irony of using water to produce fossil fuel-powered energy is that the resulting emissions drive climate change, which in turn has significant impacts on security – human and water.

Despite the Great Lakes Water Quality Agreements, which were pioneering pieces of global environmental transborder governance, we are now returning to many of the problems of the 1960s. And climate change is only throwing curveballs into this.

Human security is impossible without access to the right amount of clean water: too much, too little, too polluted – all are dangerous. Our security and resilience only goes as deep as that of our water.





About the Author: Dr. Dan Macfarlane

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Dr. Dan Macfarlane is an Associate Professor in the Institute of the Environment and Sustainability at Western Michigan University (Kalamazoo, MI) and a Senior Fellow in the Bill Graham Centre for Contemporary International History at the University of Toronto. He is the author of *Negotiating a River: Canada, the U.S., and the Creation of the St. Lawrence Seaway* (UBC Press, 2014), winner of the Champlain Society's Chalmers Prize for Ontario History, and *Fixing Niagara Falls: Environment, Energy, and Engineers at the World's Most Famous Waterfall* (forthcoming September 2020). Most recently, he edited an Open Access collection on the history of the Boundary Waters Treaty and the International Joint Commission, titled *The First Century of the International Joint Commission*, which was published in January 2020.



PART 3 | On Water, Climate and Humanity 2020 World Water Day Reflections

K(no)w Water, K(no)w Life – What Water Means to Me

By: Nasreen Husain

1. What does water mean to you?

My name is Nasreen Husain. As a researcher and artist, my goal is to evoke the mystery of water and how we as humans can conceptualize it with greater interest and respect. Throughout my life, water has been more than a liquid consumption. It has been a teacher of lessons, a source of necessity and enigma, and a conduit for thought and storytelling. In 2017, completed my Masters Degree in Environmental Studies at York University. I focused my research on the significance of water through Anishinabek and holistic worldview. In 2018, I completed a diploma in Documentary Filmmaking at Seneca College. As a research associate and content producer for the Indigenous Environmental Justice Project (Osgoode Hall, York University) and event coordinator for Water Allies (New College, University of Toronto), I seek to build dialogue and form alliances with researchers, artists, academics and activists who are interested in building more sustainable relationships with water by incorporating more storytelling and sample based/lived history analysis into consultation and educational settings.

My research does not focus primarily on the scientific components of water, but rather looks at it from a place of connection, reciprocity and justice through interdisciplinary approaches and multimedia. As a part of my Masters project, I created my very first film entitled 'The Significance of Water'. It was an [official selection of the Downstream Film Festival](#) in Northfield, Minnesota in 2018. Through my work, I aim to broaden perspectives and provide people with opportunities to reflect upon the philosophies and worldviews underpinning and informing our solutions to climate change.

1. What is the relationship between water and climate change?

Ensuring an adequate water supply for humanity is rapidly emerging as one of the major global environmental concerns of the 21st century. Many people see it as the most important issue we will face in the coming years. By 2030, the world is projected to face a 40% global water deficit under the business-as-usual (BAU) scenario (Water for a Sustainable Future, 2015). Fresh water sources may become more valuable than gold under these circumstances. Water is a necessity for the continuation of life, and plays a central role in the survival of all life forms, including the air, the soil, plant and animal life, and the broader environment. It is important to understand the duality of water – it has the power to nourish and purify or poison and destroy. Climate change is occurring rapidly with serious impacts on our global water supply. This will only accelerate if people, governments and corporations do not shift their attitudes and actions towards a more sustainable and reciprocal approach to water; one that goes beyond the material view of it.



3. How does this impact security?

The Western view of water emerges from a material view, one based on commodification. This shapes the human relationship with it quite significantly through ideals of wealth, consumption and power. The commodification of water limits the potential to sustain life and threatens people's access and relationship to it over time. Bottled water drains the environment and negatively affects human health. If one has the option, stick to tap! I have personally always been skeptical of bottled water, not just because I found it to be un-quenching, but also because it epitomises the destructive and wasteful nature of modern society. Another aspect of commodifying water is bottling it in plastic. The properties in plastic bottles have been linked to health-harming compounds that undermine water's beneficial properties. Further, the bottle manufacturing process itself is thoroughly destructive to the environment, as the process "releases toxic compounds like nickel, ethylbenzene, ethylene oxide and benzene, and the amount of oil used to make plastic water bottles could fuel a million cars annually" (Mercola, 2016, p.6). One must take into consideration all of these factors associated with how water is currently being treated, or mistreated. Knowledge and awareness of these issues can influence a positive change in what people decide to consume and where they choose to invest their money. When people become informed and are in a more direct relationship with water, a shift can occur within the social conscience of where water comes from, its purpose within the bigger picture, and the roles it has to fulfill in order sustain life. This shift can ultimately lead to more sustainable cultural, environmental and economic solutions.

4. What can be done?

Water is relative. It takes many forms and can have many meanings across different cultures and experiences. When I lost my father a few years ago, I turned to water for solace and began to realize how water enters human lives in a myriad of ways. Water has a compelling effect on the senses, and can help one to understand complex ideas about change. By engaging with water more directly, I welcomed a sense of freedom to project thoughts onto it and see them reflected back clearly. For example: ripples reminded me of the consequences of choice and how far-reaching they can be; ice reminded me of treading consciously or risking cracks and damages; snow reminded me of mystery, purity and potential of the unknown; dew drops reminded me of peace, sweetness and the unborn; and tears reminded me of pain and how they symbolize a renewed desire of life after a storm. Human beings A deeper understanding of water in all its dimensions is necessary for humans to develop in order to survive.

As humans rely on water to live, water also relies on humans in ensuring it can fulfill its responsibilities. When we begin to understand water as our relative or as a gift, it becomes worthy of our respect, protection, gratitude and generosity. This understanding begins by recognizing the water living within ourselves, since we too are comprised of water, and can ultimately enable people to defend and love water. Water supports the functioning of all life, and when one component as integral as water is out of balance, the entire system of creation will suffer. While we still have time, we must learn how to respect water once again and respect each other once again. (Cont'd)

We can do this by bringing ideas and worldviews together – by turning to the traditions that have not failed Indigenous peoples for thousands of years and are still viable and adaptable to modern systems today. Water is more than a right and more than a commodity. Water justice begins with a renewed relationship with water – by understanding that all life shares this need, and by relating to it through love, respect and a commitment to ensure the well-being of future generations. K(no)w Water, K(no)w Life.



About the Author: Nasreen Husain

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Nasreen completed her M.E.S from York University's Environmental Studies program, where she focused on the significance of water through Indigenous and holistic worldview. In 2018, she completed a diploma in documentary film-making from Seneca College.

Presently, she is a researcher and video editor for the Indigenous Environmental Justice Project at Osgoode Hall, York University and the event coordinator for Water Allies, a research hub for water issues based at New College, University of Toronto. Her work addresses the differences between water in the Western worldview and in Indigenous law. As an artist and researcher, her goal is to evoke the mystery of water and to explore how humans can connect to it with greater interest and respect by incorporating multi-media and critical reflection.



PART 4 | On Water, Climate and Humanity
2020 World Water Day Reflections

Be the Water

By: Dr. Debby Wilson Danard

(Article first appeared in Women and Water. Canadian Women's Studies Journal. Guest Editors: Kim Anderson, Brenda Cranney, Angela Miles, Wanda Nanibush and Paula Sherman. Inanna Publications and Education. Summer/Fall Vol. 30 No. 2, 3, 2015.)

Abstract

What we do to the water, we do to ourselves. Be the water. This paper discusses, from an Anishinaabekwe perspective, the physical and spiritual interconnectedness, the sacredness of water and our responsibilities particularly as women to help Mother Earth continue to do her work by protecting and speaking for the water.

Connecting to Water

My English name comes is Debby Wilson Danard, and I am from Rainy River First Nation in Northwestern Ontario. I have accepted the responsibility of carrying the life teachings of the Ojibway Anishinaabe as they have been share with me through my family, my community, the Three Fires Teaching Lodge and my personal connection to Spirit, the sacred space of creation. From the Three Fires Lodge, I have accepted the role and responsibility of protecting and ensuring that the water's teachings, songs and ceremonies are remembered for the next seven generations.

As Anishinaabekwe I understand my full responsibility to protect the life of water, the life blood of Mother Earth. Through our teachings, Earth is our Mother as she gives us everything we need to live. My Anishinaabe name, Niogwanaybiik comes from the Thunderbirds: from our oral histories and teachings, they are the protectors of the water that is held in the sky realm. The water is kept clean through the balance of the Thunder-birds (thunder) and the Snakes (lightening). The connection between the physical water and the sky realm water is made through water ceremony. Women, as the protectors of the water, conduct the water ceremony with gratitude to the water that sustains all of life. The women hold a copper vessel of water, speak to the water, sing to the water...

Ne-be Gee Zah- gay- e- goo
Gee Me-gwetch -wayn ne- me – goo
Gee Zah Wayn ne- me- goo¹

The petition to the water through prayer and song acknowledges with humble gratitude the life-blood of Mother Earth. From Mother Earth's continuous giving we have been sustained, are sustained, and will be sustained for future generations.

¹ *This song was gifted by Doreen Day at the request of her grandson. English translation: "Water, we love you. We thank you. We respect you."*

I travelled to Machiasport, ME, to sit at the ocean where the grandfathers and grandmothers called me. I open my heart to hear the Anishinaabe creation story through the sound of the water moving to the rhythm of the universe. Turtle Island shifts to awaken the ancestors..."she is here, she is listening"...I look as far as I can...Waynaboozhoo on the back of a whale...the water helps petition for strength...the water needs our help. I sing to the water...I offer my tobacco and receive the gifts of this eastern doorway, a renewal of knowledge and understanding of my connection to the spirit of creation.

Owidi waubunong buh-onji-wausay-yawbung...anduso geezhig (there in the eastern direction from whence the dawn emerges each day). From this direction we are gifted with kendassiwini meenwa sitwin (knowledge and understanding). It is from this direction we understand the past, present and future at once through biidaaban (brings light at dawn). We are told all of life comes through this direction; this is the place where the life journey begins.

I place my tobacco offering in the water

"What are you asking of me?"

We do not govern mother earth

She governs us

She teaches us how to care for her

When She is sick we must take care of her

Unconditional in her love for all of Creation

We must also be unconditional in our love for her

What we do to the water, we do to ourselves
We see our reflection in the water.

Water is a warrior

Life brought forth from the waters
of mother earth
of birth
the first tears

'Man'-made dams and structures
stagnates her life-blood
Throws her off-balance
straining under the pressure.

We thirst from 'Man'-made promises
of a good-life rooted in greed and economy
We destroy our past, our present and our future
Leaves us Thirsty

False promises replace
Creators promise
That water would always companion
To bring life

Be thankful

Be grateful

The way of the water teaches us

Love unconditional for all of life

For ourselves, for each other

The water inside of us

Speaks to the water outside of us

Reflects itself outward

What we do to the Water

We do to ourselves

Be the water...

Women Govern the Water

Women govern the water; this role as our inherent right has never been relinquished, as women we must stand up for the water, as Elder Josephine Mandamin instructs: “The water is sick...And people need to really fight for that water, to speak for that water, to love that water” (qtd. in McMahon). The men’s responsibility is to support the women in a manner for the women to do their work.

Women govern the water as caretakers; as women are gifted to carry and bring forth life through birth, so women are considered to be like Mother Earth who sustains life through her continual creation. Each child is born through the water, and nourished within the sacred space of creation. With the help of the men, the balance is to protect the future generations.

The role of men is to understand their relationship to the fire (vision) and keep the sacred fire burning strong. The fire is at the heart of Mother Earth and represents the vision to see ahead seven generations. Working together, the male and female human beings ensure Mother Earth is taken care of. How we take care of the water and Mother Earth is how we will be taken care of. The human beings were entrusted to ensure the rights of Mother Earth are protected and respected. As Anishinaabeg this was understood from our culture, governance, and way of life. Through our teachings, Anishinaabeg followed the natural laws and lived *mino-bimaadiziwin* (good life) in balance with all of creation.

This way of understanding the relationship with Mother Earth has been acknowledged recently through the Universal Declaration of the Rights of Mother Earth submitted by Bolivia to the United Nations. The Declaration articulates the relationship between the many Nations of Earth as “indivisible...interrelated and interdependent with a common destiny.” It acknowledges Mother Earth as the source of life for all living beings. It states, it is our human right to ensure that Mother Earth is recognized as having inherent rights that include “the right to life and to exist; the right to be respected...the right to water as a source of life...and clean air...” As human beings we are obligated to ensure these inherent rights of Mother Earth are respected and recognized...in accordance with their own cultures, traditions and customs...” It is impressive that the people of Bolivia took this lead, following their “water war” in the beginning of the twenty-first century, as detailed by Vandana Shiva. The World Bank’s involvement in water privatization is well-documented (see Barlow and Clarke) with worldwide implications that water as commodity results in huge profits at the expense of human beings and Mother Earth’s right to water as a source of life.

Significantly, uniting South America and North America to raise awareness of the cry for Mother Earth to help heal the water was Josephine Mandamin, Ojibway from Manitoulin Island, Ontario. Along with a small group of women, men, and often children this Grandmother lead the water walks around the perimeter of the Great Lakes, beginning in 2003 with Lake Superior. The water walkers proceeded around (upper) Lake Michigan in 2004, Lake Huron in 2005, Lake Ontario in 2006, Lake Erie in 2007 and (lower) Lake Michigan in 2008. Women alone carried a copper vessel of water, accompanied by an Eagle Staff primarily carried by the men.

Rising before sunrise every morning for several weeks, the water walkers raised awareness of the pollution by chemicals, vehicle emissions, motor boats, sewage disposal, agricultural pollution, leaking landfill sites, and residential usage taking a toll on our water quality. Even when she believed she was finished her mission, Grandmother Josephine was reminded that the Great Lakes flowed into the ocean, and so in 2009, and she led the water walkers from Kingston, Ontario to Gaspé Peninsula along the St. Lawrence River. The commitment of Grandmother Josephine Mandamin is admired and honoured, and her work to raise awareness of the water has led to a great rebirth in communities to take action and to work to protect the water in their surrounding environment.

I am grateful to have participated as a water walker around Lake Ontario (2006) and briefly Lake Erie when I was carrying the life of my soon to be born daughter in 2007. In 2009, my then 17-months old daughter joined in the water walk along the St. Lawrence River. The blessing of this journey was watching my daughter and Grandmother Josephine sitting at the ocean at the end of the walk.

Grandmother Josephine handed my daughter the copper vessel, entrusting my daughter to continue to work for the water, protect the water and love the water. In 2011, we continued our work for the water participating in the Four Directions Water Walk.² This walk united all the waters of Mother Earth. Waters from the Pacific Ocean, the Gulf of Mexico, the Atlantic Ocean and Hudson Bay were gathered in copper vessels and walked to Bad River, WI, on Lake Superior where the first water walk began. Through this ceremony, the waters were united to bring the message from the four directions of Turtle Island that the water needs our help, it needs the human beings to continue to care for the water, to care for each other and respect all of life as it was placed here from the beginning of creation.

Like walking for the water, one step at a time...there has been demonstrated movement towards support for women's role in "governance" and water including policy and governance. The Assembly of First Nations Women's Council is one such supporter, as is the Anishinabek Nation (Union of Ontario Indians), which announced the creation of a Women's Water Commission aimed in part at providing input to the Ontario government on Great Lakes water issues in 2007. Since the first water walk, communities from all over the world have shown their support to Grandmother Josephine through social media, and many groups of first time water walkers are being raised up to continue the work inspired and awakened through Grandmother Josephine's commitment.³

² *The journey of this Four Directions walk is documented in the film, Water Journey, 2011 directed by Jeff Bear and Marianne Jones.*

³ *More information of Elder Josephine Mandamin can be found at www.motherearthwaterwalk.com*

“Man” Governs Water

Water is a human right and should be guaranteed to all people regardless of their ability to pay.

Over several decades the concern for water quality and unsanitary conditions has been an issue for First Nation communities. Sustainable water management and governance continues to be of concern for the present and future generation. As of February 2015, 92 First Nations on “boil water advisory” (Health Canada). This includes First Nations who have been on long-term advisory. In 2011, The Council of Canadians continued to advocate for drinking water and sanitation on First Nations, including concerns for the Safe Drinking Water For First Nations Act (Bill S-11).

Currently, First Nations are under the federal jurisdiction of the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada (AANDC, formerly INAC), and therefore provincial regulatory water standards do not apply on reserves. First Nations are responsible for the construction, design, operation and maintenance of their water systems, and 20% of the cost. They are also responsible for ensuring that water systems are operated by trained operators as well as for monitoring drinking water quality through effective sampling and testing. However, both the 2006 Report of the Expert Panel on Safe Drinking Water for First Nations (19) and a 2008 report prepared by the Polaris Institute, in collaboration with the Assembly of First Nations (Harden and 7), identified lack of sufficient financial resources as a cause of inadequate water treatment systems on some reserves.⁴

⁴ The Commissioner of the Environment and Sustainable Development also recognized the issue of First Nations’ financial capability to cover the 20 percent of operating costs not funded by the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development.

AANDC (one of 34 federal departments and agencies involved in Aboriginal and northern programs and services) provides partial (80%) funding for water provision subject to the appropriate technical review and funding approval process. It then oversees the design, construction and maintenance of water facilities and is responsible for water system technicians training dollars. Unfortunately, to meet the training criteria, the water system infrastructure must be classified, and potential technicians must have a minimum grade 12 education, and when they do qualify First Nation technicians get paid significantly less than mainstream technicians;⁵

...it appears that while the Canada Labour Code (at a minimum) may apply to workers on reserves, there does not seem to be a program of regular inspection and enforcement." (Expert Panel 42)

Health Canada ensures the delivery of drinking water monitoring programs on reserves located south of the 60th parallel, either directly or indirectly through third party quality monitoring. Although Health Canada is responsible for providing Water Quality Data there seems to be gaps, with information not being directed to AANDC, and there is little or no funding for First Nations to take samples of their water (including source waters) for testing. This is a significant shortcoming, as many First Nations access water directly for recreational and traditional purposes.

⁵ ...It appears that while the Canada Labour Code (at minimum) may apply to workers on reserves, there does not seem to be a program of regular inspection and enforcement" (Expert Panel on Safe Drinking Water).

For additional information on jurisdictional issues see Tonina Simeone's Federal-Provincial Jurisdiction and Aboriginal Peoples. Additional resource information can be found at (<http://www.great-lakes.net/humanhealth/drink/regulation.html>)

Environment Canada is involved in source water protection through its powers to regulate wastewater discharge into federal waters or into water generally where water quality has become a matter of national concern, and its powers to enforce effluent discharge standards into water throughout Canada. The Clean Water Act in Ontario is the only Canadian model for a comprehensive watershed management system for source protection (Expert Panel 38). Distribution systems on reserve are sized to deliver about half the water per capital available to other Ontarians.

Unclear coordination of water management and governance, which is divided among different sectors within the three departments or four departments (i.e. source water protection, water management training, infrastructure, water quality, design and construction, maintenance and monitoring) continues to demonstrate systemic barriers for First Nations social, political and traditional knowledge positions and inherent rights to water governance. As Tonina Simeone suggests:

Section 91(24) of the Constitution Act, 1867, grants to the federal government exclusive jurisdiction over “Indians and lands reserved for the Indians.” As a result, legislative authority for the provision of drinking water to on-reserve First Nations communities vests with the federal government. (Drinking Water 1) In the Federal Government’s jurisdictional relationships within their own structures of management, First Nations inclusion in primary discussions at the community level and a Nation to Nation basis is absolutely necessary to develop alliances that ensure Treaty rights and inherent rights are recognized and protected.

Traditional knowledge and practices challenge technical aspects with the social aspects of water management and governance including source water protection where industries such as mining, and forestry impact First Nation communities overall health and access to safe drinking water.

A major concern is that federal government will continue to promote privatization through facilitating public-private partnerships (P3s) on First Nations. Unfortunately, this solution continues to take community accountability, management and economy (local community employment) out of First Nations into the mainstream private sector.

It is imperative that First Nations participate in shaping their own systems and that “man” made structures understand the words of our great uncle Jim Dumont:

We must remember about the traditional ways of community organizing...and we must remember that in our creation stories, the people came together first, and together they create the structures that they need, so that everyone has a voice and everyone contributes to the formation of a shared vision, and a shared plan of how to meet all the needs that the people have. (Personal discussion, 2015)

Traditional Knowledge that recognizes the spiritual and relationship value and includes our basic right to water needs to be addressed nationally, provincially and with First Nations. The future depends on us all.

Water Governs Us

Where does the water flow through?

Can you not hear it my relatives?

*It flows through from that most beautiful place
in the sky realm.*

Water is life.

the foundation

for all of life to

come into Creation.

Water governs us

sustains life

water teaches wisdom

love

courage

truth

respect

humility

honesty

From drought

Floods

Destruction

The power beyond

Human capacity to control

We are governed by

the water.

How we understand ourselves in relation to all of creation, particularly our connection with water, the life-blood of Mother Earth, will determine our future survival. The living web of life, human and otherwise, is interconnected through Mother Earth and her waters. The responsibility must be shared through family and community and the many Nations. Life within ourselves is dependent on the life outside ourselves. The water songs, teachings and ceremonies petition the human being to be remembered for the next seven generations. "Can you hear it my relatives?"

Connecting to the water both inside of me and outside of me, I acknowledge that one-ness. The significance of this understanding and advocacy for the water connected to the development of a youth training curriculum that integrates water teachings and suicide prevention and life promotion (Ontario Federation of Indian Friendship Centres, "Strengthening Life through Water Teachings", 2010). These modules focus on the relationship between caring, respecting and valuing both water and life. Water governs us: if we are listening will can hear the teachings.

The concept of a governance structure by the water for the water may sound impossible. However, it is within this impossibility that there is possibility. Water will continue to demonstrate its creative and destructive form, doing the work that the water was instructed to follow at the beginning of creation, nourish life. As human beings connecting to the water inside and outside of us, we begin to understand governance from the perspective of water.

In the spirit of decolonizing thought, connecting to water connects us to the understanding the desire of water to fulfill its teaching to nourish life and our desire as human beings to continue to exist from the blessing of waters generous gift. As with any gift, we are indebted to the water and should attempt to “repay” that debt with love and gratitude. Continued attempts to rigidly and systemically control the power of water demonstrates the limitations of man-made governance as being a centric belief of man in dominion over the natural laws.

The possibility of water governance from the perspective of water can be made possible through accessing and incorporating traditional knowledge and teachings as a method of consultation and participation in decision-making, clarifying roles and responsibilities through consultation and examining water’s perspective in relation to stewardship, management and governance. Be the water.



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About the Author: Dr. Debby Wilson Danard

Anishinaabe, PhD, MEd, BEd

Dr. Debby Wilson Danard (Anishinaabe, PhD, MEd, BEd) is Anishinaabekwe traditional knowledge practitioner, multi-disciplinary artist, lecturer, writer, water protector, life promotion ambassador and sturgeon clan member from Rainy River First Nation. Growing up, she was raised with her grandmother's love and commitment to sharing traditional Anishinaabek teachings and way of life. As a Water Protector and Mother Earth Water Walker she has spoken alongside Maude Barlow at the University of Toronto to raise awareness of the spiritual nature of water and rights of water. She has worked with the Women's Human Rights Institute, community organizations, and schools sharing traditional teachings through water ceremony. She gratefully acknowledges the spirit of the water for teaching love as a reflection of life.

Recently awarded a 2019 Provost Postdoctoral Fellowship in the Women and Gender Studies at the University of Toronto, she is writing her first book, that engages both graphic and creative narrative to re-interpret her original doctoral research, "Medicine Wheel Surviving Suicide-Strengthening Life Bundle" (2016). As reciprocity, this revision will challenge dominant colonial interpretations of Indigenous history, identity, culture (languages and land), traditional knowledge and ceremony as archival artifacts.

As a Suicide Prevention Coach at the Ontario Centre of Excellence for Child and Youth Mental Health, she co-founded the Feather Carriers: Leadership for Life Promotion (2015) an aspiring national wise practice for youth mental health and wellness. She also held a postdoctoral fellowship at Waypoint Centre for Mental Health Care (2017), and is owner of Union Star Consulting Life Teachings Lodge. As a leader for change, Debby strengthens life from the heart of Indigenous identity, sovereignty and autonomy as an evolving, creative, and living continuum of knowing and being.

PART 5

| On Water, Climate and Humanity
2020 World Water Day Reflections

Water and International Relations

By: Dr. Greg Donaghy and Dr. Jack Cunningham

In February 1994, The Atlantic ran a cover story by the American journalist Robert D. Kaplan entitled “The Coming Anarchy”. This story, based on a then-forthcoming book by Kaplan bearing the same title, looked a few years into the future and predicted a bleak dystopia for much of the world, a Hobbesian environment of all against all. Kaplan saw climate change (not yet a commonplace of daily conversation), overpopulation, and rampant pandemics leading to resource wars, intractable conflicts fueled by accelerating demands on ever-scarcer resources, water included. Sometimes it seems that predictions about future resource issues have scarcely advanced beyond Kaplan’s baleful expectations.

Yet there are less pessimistic scenarios on offer. Not quite a decade after Kaplan wrote, a quartet of experts on water management and governance, Torgny Holmgren, Anders Jaegerskog, Jens Berggren, and John Joyce wrote in the Guardian about cooperation on water management across borders, noting that many of the world’s major supplies of water are transboundary; in other words, they traverse national borders. Many are without formal agreements governing their use, to boot. Yet there are exceptions. Under the 1960 Indus Waters Treaty, India and Pakistan cooperate to develop and manage the resources of the Indus River system, and have done so for decades despite a generally tense relationship. And after the 1993 Oslo Agreement, and then the 1995 Taba Agreement, Israel and the Palestinians cooperated to manage West Bank water resources, albeit not without difficulties. The point is that cooperation to manage scarce water resources is possible and often necessary, even where the relationship is fundamentally conflictual. The future of the world’s water resources depends on whether we follow the logic of interdependence or the logic of exclusive exploitation. **The future is up to us, as always.**



About the Author: Dr. Greg Donaghy

Director, Bill Graham Centre for Contemporary International History

Greg Donaghy is Director of the Bill Graham Centre for Contemporary International History. Prior to joining the Centre on 1 July 2019, he was Head of the Historical Section, Global Affairs Canada. Dr. Donaghy received his BA from the University of Toronto (1986), his MA from Carleton University (1989), and his PhD from the University of Waterloo (1998).

He has written over fifty scholarly articles and reviews on the history of Canadian foreign policy and edited or co-edited another twelve collections of scholarly essays on Canadian history, diplomacy, and foreign policy. These include, *A Samaritan State Revisited: Historical Perspectives on Canadian Foreign Aid* (with David Webster, 2019), *Canada and the Challenges of Globalization, 1968-2017*, a special edition of *Canadian Foreign Policy Journal* (with Stéphane Roussel, 2018), and *From Kinshasa to Kandahar: Canada and Fragile States in Historical Perspective* (with Michael Carroll, 2016). He is co-author (with John Hilliker and Mary Halloran) of *Innovation and Adaptation: Canada's Department of External Affairs, 1968-84* (2017). He is also the author of the monograph, *Tolerant Allies: Canada and the United States, 1963-1968* (2003, 2008) and of the biography, *Grit: The Life and Politics of Paul Martin Sr.* (2015), a finalist for the 2015 Shaughnessy Cohen Prize for Political Writing.

About the Author: Dr. Jack Cunningham

Project Coordinator, Bill Graham Centre for Contemporary International History

Jack Cunningham holds a BA in English and an MA in History from the University of Calgary and a PhD in History from the University of Toronto. His publications include *Australia and Canada in Afghanistan and Australia, Canada, and Iraq*. He is also editor of *International Journal*.



PART 6

On Water, Climate and Humanity
2020 World Water Day Reflections

Yemoja: Goddess of Water

By: Laura James and Symon-James Wilson

Yemoja: Goddess of Water

In Yoruba cosmology, Òrìṣà are spirits sent by the higher divinities in Òrun (The Spirit World) to Ayé (Earth) for the guidance and protection of all planetary Creation. Òrìṣà offer important lessons on how to live a successful and satisfying life on earth. Yemoja is one of the central water Òrìṣà in Yoruba cosmology. As the mother of water, she is a protector of women and fishermen, an aid to those conceiving and giving birth, a supporter of parents, and a source of love and healing for all. In Yorùbáland— the cultural region of the Yoruba people in West Africa— Yemoja has many bodies of water that are dedicated to her, including the Ogun River. In African diasporic communities, Yemoja is strongly associated with the ocean, cowrie shells, pearls, and river stones, and she is often depicted as a mermaid. She is commonly known as Yemanjá in Brazil, Yemayá in Cuba, and Lasirenn in Haiti. Yemoja teaches us that in a world of constant transformation we, too, are agents of change.



Yemoja © 2020 Laura James | Used with Permission

Yemoja is a major water deity from the Yoruba religion. She is an Òrìṣà and the mother of all Òrìṣàs, having given birth to the 14 Yoruba gods and goddesses.

In our current global moment, I have been reflecting a lot on theories of change. To me, art and spirituality have a lot to say about this subject. Inspired by my aunt Laura James's captivating depiction of Yemoja, I composed the followed poem in celebration of World Water Day 2020. There is so much potential when we all join together in reimagining our world. Thank you to all of the artists and cultural producers who assist us in visualizing and actualizing this.

– Symon James-Wilson



The crescent moonlight is willowy.

Radiant in its newness.

Pale in its agony.

Glittering in its movements.

I bathe a string of pearls in the soft luminescence.

I tickle my toes in the rising tide.

The gentle current moves my soul, slightly, as I stand still.

The salt water shivers, as I scrub the night into my skin.

It has been an uncertain spring.

It has signaled a need for retreat.

A need for recovery.

A need for rebirth.

I select a shell from the sandy shore.

I pick it up.

I hold it to my ear.

I hear an echo from the beyond.

I hear my ancestors whispering.

I trace the edges of my memory
with the wisdom of hindsight.

I revisit weary passageways
with a renewed sense of hope and vigor.



As I look out over the horizon,
I meet her gaze.

She swims towards a bouldering cliff,
and I swim behind her,
in the wake.



Yemoja.

Yey - Omo - Eja.

“The Mother
Whose Children
Are The Fish.”

We find our way to the rocks,
and she invites me to sit.
We take note of the prevailing winds.
Under the auspices of her presence, I am engulfed with the warmth of gentle communion.

She shares her maternal wisdom,
her protective energy,
her fierce aura,
with me.

She encourages me to find comfort in change and transformation.
She reminds me of the responsibility that comes with free will.
She supports me to use compassion and grace when choreographing manifestations.
She reemphasizes that all of her children have been bestowed with
the gift of creating amongst Creation.



“What are you waiting to give birth to?”

“What is waiting to be created in our world?”

“How can you contribute your creative power, time, and energy towards these actualizations?”

“Where do you feel called to manifest transformation?”



Water is fierce.
Water is protective.
Water is nurturing.

Water holds maternal wisdom.

Water gives birth to new life.

Water is more than white rivers of absence.
Than punctured vessels, and sinking ships.

Water has its own plans and its own schemes.
Water has its own
consciousness.

As her children, we are her fish.

As her children, we must listen attentively.

As her children, we must learn from her example.

With her compassion and grace, we are empowered as creators.

With her guidance and support, we can repair our uncertain future.

With her love and forgiveness, we can rebuild our wellsprings.

We can recover.

We can be reborn.



About the Artist: Laura James

Laura James is an artist, illustrator, independent curator, and cultural producer based in the Bronx, NY. She is well known for her paintings of sacred images from various spiritual traditions, and for her creative portrayals of women, families, and scenes of everyday life. Her work is

widely collected and exhibited, and has been shared in hundreds of publications on a variety of media platforms. In addition to painting, she is the co-creator of BX200 Bronx Visual Artist Director, a website featuring portfolios by 200 professional visual artists who live or work in the Bronx.

About the Author: Symon James-Wilson

Symon James-Wilson is the current Director of Knowledge Management at the Rainmaker Enterprise. She received her HBA with a specialization in Human Geography and BEd in Elementary Education from the University of Toronto, where she is currently completing an MA degree that explores the intersection of urban infrastructure and school segregation. Symon is passionate about human and civil rights, sustainability, education, and community building. She enjoys finding ways of infusing art making and poetics into these pursuits.



