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WOMEN & WATER : CONFRONTATION

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from multiple perspectives within and beyond the academy.

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The cover image is sunset in Seoul along the Cheonggyecheon stream. Image by Stefan K on Unsplash.

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INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION TO ISSUE 22

WOMEN & WATER: CONFRONTATION

By Laurie Moberg, Editor

As part of our core values, *Open Rivers* publishes work that recognizes the interconnectedness of human and biogeophysical systems. Rarely, however, have we framed that intersection as a space of confrontation. Perhaps that is because confrontations are often framed as antagonistic; we confront in order to create resolutions, overcome challenges, or be heard. The collection of articles in this issue, however, evokes something different. The confrontations

that emerge here between women and water focus less on conclusions and more on ever-on-going processes of engaging with water as a site of trauma, of change, and of possibility. For that reason, we call this issue “Women & Water: Confrontation.”

Several articles demonstrate how confrontations between women and water can be tied to trauma. Two features in this issue offer narratives of



Sunset in Seoul along the Cheonggyecheon stream. Image by Stefan K on Unsplash.

personal struggles intertwined with water. Shannon LeBlanc shares an essay detailing her experience of how competitive swimming became entangled with sexual assault. Aizita Magaña takes us to the San Francisco Bay as she braves swimming in open water with the support of a pod of women after being scarred by a near drowning in a riptide. In her review of Diane Wilson's *The Seed Keeper*, Racquel Banaszak guides us through intergenerational traumas wrought in the lives of Dakhóta women in the novel and paralleled in her own experiences. Caroline Fidan Tyler Doenmez's republished article details how the legacy of some of these traumas manifests in new forms by mapping the ways several Canadian rivers are linked to the crisis of missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls. Together, these four articles demonstrate not only how water flows through these traumas, but also how it might contribute to the ever-unfinished process of confronting difficult lived experiences of women.

Ongoing changes in the physical or social landscape, or both, also instigate confrontations. Some of the articles in this issue draw our attention to these kinds of confrontations and the actions they provoke. In the face of recurring and intensifying flooding in the Driftless Area of southwestern Wisconsin, Caroline Gottschalk Druschke, Margot Higgins, Tamara Dean, Eric G. Booth, and Rebecca Lave share narratives from the Stories from the Flood project. They "argue for the power of feminist praxis" like this as a methodology for coping with the unpredictability of these physical upheavals. Natalia Guzmán Solano's article traces the work of water *defensoras* in Peru, detailing a variety of adaptable strategies women employ in the work of opposing extractive mining corporations that will irreparably change the land- and waterscapes. In her article republished from *The Conversation*, Ifesinachi Okafor-Yarwood explains the ways that women are central to the West African

fishing industry, but especially vulnerable to shifting physical and social conditions—from climate change to fishery depletion to the Covid pandemic.

Other articles discuss confrontations that open up possibilities. For example, Anne Whitehouse's analysis of Pak T'ae-wŏn's novel *Scenes from Ch'ŏnggye Stream* explores the commonalities in experiences between women and water and their potentialities in 1930s Korea and today. In her photo essay, Lee Vue reflects on the challenges of extended canoe trips; her perseverance created a lifelong commitment and relationship with water as "a parent, teacher, mentor, therapist, and friend." Finally, in our Primary Sources column, we offer a variety of resources that are inspirations for the authors in our last two issues on women and water. From art installations to music, podcasts to articles, these resources challenge us as readers to confront new perspectives on women and water and to see the possibilities they present.

As a whole, this issue illustrates myriad ways women and water are entangled in messy personal, social, and physical confrontations. Rather than single moments of collision and resolution, a single breaker crashing upon the shore, these articles emphasize the complexities and the possibilities of ongoing relationships between women and water, like the ceaseless flow of water over rapids. Whether complicit in change, a source of trauma, or a partner for creating new possibilities, water has a profound influence on women's lives. Similarly, women's choices and practices, whether engaging water directly or indirectly, shape our water systems. We share this collection of articles as a reminder: we are always in relationship with water. Perhaps what matters most is determining what kind of future we want and acting to build relationships with water that make that future possible. Enjoy.

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About the Author

Laurie Moberg serves as editor for *Open Rivers: Rethinking Water, Place & Community* and as the project manager for the Environmental Stewardship, Place, and Community Initiative at the University of Minnesota. She earned her Ph.D. in anthropology from the University of Minnesota in 2018. Her doctoral research investigates recurrent episodes of flooding on rivers in Thailand and queries how the ecological, social, and cosmological entanglements between people and the material world are reimagined and reconfigured in the aftermath of disasters. In her current work, she approaches public scholarship as a critical strategy for expanding whose stories are heard, for shaping our public conversations, and for forming solutions for our shared ecological challenges.