

At the Forks: Where Indigenous and Human Rights Intersect

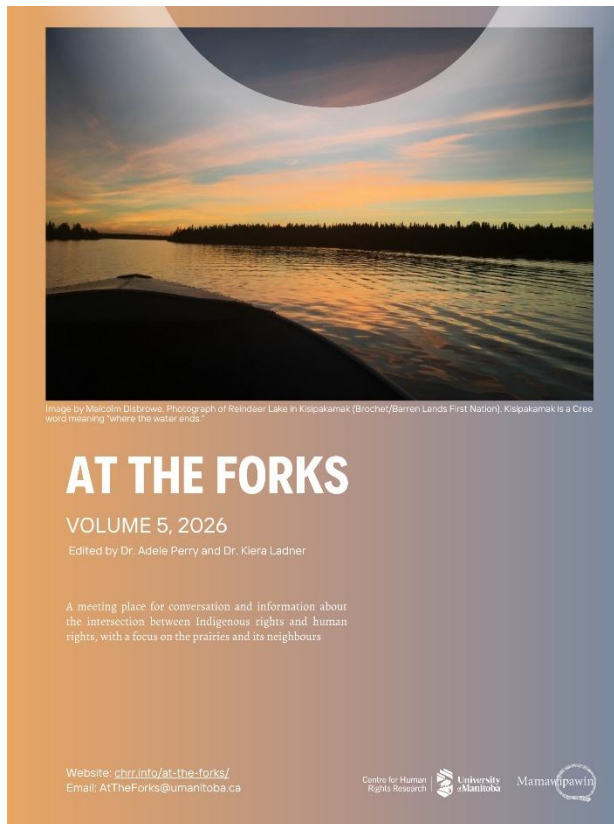
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Introduction to Volume 5

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It is all connected. The mandate of *At the Forks* is to bring together accessible, engaging writing that engage and connect Indigenous rights and human rights. We begin with the meeting of the Assiniboine and Red Rivers in what is now Winnipeg, but this place has always been connected to other parts of North America and the Indigenous world. This articles in this fifth volume make further connections between issues of water, Two-Spirit health and knowledge, and information and disinformation.

The volume begins with Malcolm Disbrowe’s generative discussion of Indigenous sovereignty and governance around water. Disbrowe highlights Indigenous peoples “traditional and long-standing relationships with water” and how these are destabilized by colonialism and capitalism. “Water,

Stories, and Ceremony: Exploring Indigenous Sovereignty and Governance Through Water” draws together the growing scholarship on water, sovereignty and governance, and reminds readers that moving toward water justice requires “centring Indigenous sovereignty and storytelling in governance frameworks.”

The next article is Gillian Brown, Catherine St. John, Hope Ace, and Kiera Ladner’s analysis of a comparative Indigenous politics project that directly engaged

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misinformation and disinformation around 2023 Australian Indigenous Voice to Parliament referendum. Using social media, the team tried to “break through the echo chamber of participatory disinformation that circulated and reinforced harmful ideas about the Voice and Indigenous Peoples.” These efforts prompt Brown, St. John, Ace, and Ladner to reflect on Manitoba’s 2023 provincial election, and to urge more consideration of the relationship between misinformation, disinformation and settler colonialism. They argue that “Canadians can learn from our kin across the world that access to reliable, trustworthy information is more pressing than ever before.”

The third offering is a conversation between Elder Albert McLeod, Elder Charlotte Nolin, and Danielle Hart on Two-Spirit history and health. This began in a 2024 University of Manitoba event, where the audience heard what Hart describes as “sacred knowledge” and a “tobacco question.” Elder McLeod and Elder Nolin discuss personal, national, and global histories, and the pressing need to challenge what Nolin calls “the homophobia, the transphobia, and all the other phobias.” They discuss Anishinaabeg and Cree knowledge, the erasure of Indigenous people, and especially Queer Indigenous people, and urge us understand human’s place in long histories. It was a wide-ranging, funny, and generous conversation, and the audience — and now readers — are all wiser for it.

In different ways, each of articles in this volume of *At the Forks* speak to relationality, including between the human and other-than-human world. They also speak to the changing terrain of colonialism, the need for change, and how we might build toward change that will honour water, Two-Spirit relatives, and be capable of responding to mis- and disinformation.

About the Author



[Dr. Adele Perry](#) is director of the Centre for Human Rights Research and distinguished professor of history and women’s and gender studies. She is a historian of colonialism, gender, race and western Canada in the 19th and 20th centuries. From 2003 to 2014, Perry held a Tier 2 Canada Research Chair and she is a fellow of the Royal Society of Canada and past president of the Canadian Historical Association.