

generous public funding severed the traditional connection between SMO leadership and a mass-base. Yet, state funding facilitated SMO interventions in a number of Canadian rights controversies including the Gastown Riots, mandatory treatment for drug users, police abuse in Toronto, the October Crisis, the denominational school question and the repatriation of the Canadian constitution. As Clément demonstrates, SMO success was mixed but there is little evidence that any of the organizations failed to engage political authorities because of its financial dependence on the Canadian state. As Clément argues, the conservative and patient approach adopted by Canada's civil liberties and human rights associations was more a reflection of statist conceptions of human rights than any state funding received.

Clément's study contributes to our understanding of several historical subjects including: activist mobilization and the influence of a particular historical context, SMOs and social/political change, the proliferation of SMOs during the 1960s and 1970s, Canada's rights revolution and the power of rights discourse to inspire social or political change. Longitudinal historical case studies hold much promise for further exploring activist mobilization, Canada's rights revolution and, more generally, the role played by SMOs in the process of political/social change. Future studies might explore the creation of a political consciousness among SMO activists. Of all the events that might trigger group formation relatively few events ever do. Social movement theory suggests that group formation only follows a period during which political consciousness is bred among potential activists and is most successful when certain resources — including leaders, communication networks and existing organizations — are available to potential activists. Where and how this occurs within a particular historical context and among particular groups deserves more attention. As Clément so convincingly demonstrates, because activism is so strongly correlated to historical context, the answers posited are likely to be contingent upon the time and place studied. It falls to historians to properly situate extra-parliamentary political action within its historical context. Hopefully Clément's study and other recent works are the first of many.

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**Christopher Armstrong, Matthew Evenden, and H.V. Nelles, *The River Returns: An Environmental History of the Bow* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2009).**

In *The River Returns*, authors Armstrong, Evenden, and Nelles decisively raise the bar for river history. If a book can be described, like its subject, as sweeping, majestic, turbulent and full of surprises, this is it. This comprehensive and ele-

gantly written history of Alberta's iconic Bow River successfully brings together approaches from political economy, cultural and environmental history, exploring at once the ways in which the river created opportunities and imposed limits for different groups in different periods, and the ways that shifting perceptions and ideologies worked alongside political and economic imperatives to transform the river.

The book's thirteen chapters are grouped around the diverse ways of experiencing the river over time, as a homeland, as a source of wood and power, as irrigator, sanitizing flow, fish habitat, parkland. Not only do chapter divisions represent the experiences of different kinds of river users in different periods, but also the experiences of different *parts* of the river. As the authors conclude, the river is "many places simultaneously" (25). "The Fishing River," for example, refers to a 46 kilometre section of the river below Calgary where certain game species have thrived, unexpectedly, in the rich aquatic environment created by nutrient loading from Calgary's sewage system. In other places and for other species, the authors show, human-induced changes to the river have had deleterious effects.

Highly readable, the book achieves a rare balance in its suitability for public and academic audiences alike. Drawing upon diaries and correspondence from explorers, scientists, and settlers in the Bow Valley, together with government records, photographs, and reports from various constituency groups, the authors create a sense of immediacy with a place that many know only from the static vistas of postcards. Here is enough detail to satisfy the local river enthusiast, without sacrificing the organization and analytical acuity expected of an academic work. While it is clear that omissions were made—twentieth century industrial activities along the river, for example, receive limited treatment, while artistic representations of the river are relegated to a separate volume [Armstrong and Nelles, *The Painted Valley: Artists Along Alberta's Bow River, 1845-2000* (2007)]—the book nevertheless covers substantial territory.

As has come to be expected of environmental histories, time does not constrain the narrative. Moving from the geological formation of the river valley through to present conditions and conflicts, and circling back to trace the origins of contemporary developments, the book mimics in method and form the path of the river. Just as the river "returns," somewhat, moving through a period of heavy engineering in the early twentieth century to receive increasingly stringent protections (its recognition as urban parkland ironically contingent upon its "tamed" state as a highly managed, deindustrialized waterway), and ultimately delivering consequences for actions received, the narrative moves backwards and forwards in time without losing its overall sense of direction.

In their treatment of the Bow as a conduit linking not only landscapes but diverse themes in environmental history, from agriculture and forestry to fisheries, sanitation, and parks development, Armstrong, Evenden and Nelles

effectively revitalize rivers as compelling subjects for historians. They also succeed in resisting the declensionist narrative that has become so predictable in environmental history, taking care to highlight how change brought unexpected consequences and “environmental surprises”—and not always for the worst. At times species diversity, for example, increased in particular places at the expense of others. Irrigation projects resulted in the creation of beaver and muskrat habitat—developments which brought their own challenges for prairie farmers—while dam construction created conditions that favoured some species and decimated others.

My criticisms are minor. On the whole, the three authors achieve a remarkable consistency of tone and writing style throughout. This slips somewhat in chapters 10 through 12, which, perhaps due to the complexity of the diverse constituencies and jurisdictional authorities that they cover, lose some of the lyricism and elegance of construction so notable in preceding chapters. Early in the book the authors introduce the idea of the river as an archive, reflective of William J. Turkel’s notion of the “archive of place” forwarded in his 2007 history of British Columbia’s Chilcotin Plateau. Rivers, however, are as much forces of erosion and erasure as catalogues of past uses and decisions. The tensions within this analogy could have been more fully explored, and elaborated upon more consistently through the text. The book concludes by looking ahead to sources of conflict in the future, mobilizing the river’s past to generate potential insights for public policy. Chief among these concerns is the very real threat of water scarcity as a result of global warming. The authors speculate upon what kind of place the Bow basin will become, and how such changes will affect the different uses and users of river discussed in the book. I found myself wanting to know more about this largest of issues facing the Bow in the years to come. Perhaps this was the authors’ intent.

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**Jean-Francois Constant and Michel Ducharme, eds., *Liberalism and Hegemony: Debating the Canadian Liberal Revolution* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2009).**

Jean-Francois Constant and Michel Ducharme are to be heartily commended for bringing together such a wide range of stimulating and highly sophisticated articles which together challenge, test and revise Ian McKay’s original liberal order reconnaissance. Unlike the majority of collected works which usually contain but a handful of first-rate articles, *Liberalism and Hegemony* contains such a critical mass of thoughtful articles which display a great command of theoretical and empirical perspectives, that I would recommend that it become a benchmark text