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The Red Man's on the Warpath: The Image of the "Indian" and the Second World War. By R. Scott Sheffield.

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## **Copyright Information**

This work is made available under the terms of a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial License, available at <u>https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/</u> two areas of the world. It will stand as a valuable sourcebook on a wide range of historical events and situations in the Pacific and in North America in the same way compendiums such as Ralph Linton's (ed., 1940) *Acculturation in Seven American Indian Tribes* and William Lessa and Evon Vogt's (eds., 1965) *Reader in Comparative Religion* did for previous generations of scholars, teachers, and students.

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**The Red Man's on the Warpath: The Image of the "Indian" and the Second World War**. By R. Scott Sheffield. Vancouver: UBC Press, 2004. 232 pages. \$85.00 cloth; \$29.95 paper.

R. Scott Sheffield has written a well-researched and richly detailed account of how the dominant English Canadian society viewed the First Nations Indians of Canada, as well as of various events that occurred during the eighteen-year period from 1930 to 1948. The audience for this book consists of historians, sociologists, and psychologists. Because the work is formal and academic, it is not intended for the casual reader. Several black-and-white illustrations are included from newspapers, advertisements, and posters during the period under examination.

The author utilizes secondary sources much more than primary sources, which include newspapers and government records. Sheffield credits himself and his sources when he mentions that the previous work of two authors overlaps with his research chronologically, conceptually, and methodologically (9–10). The author uses five social constructs of the Indian to organize his narrative: the administrative Indian, the public Indian, the Indian-at-war, the Indian victim, and the potential Indian citizen. The bulk of this work discusses how these constructs evolved; it also analyzes the impact of World War II on Canada as viewed through the dominant society's image of the Indian.

The first construct, the administrative Indian, constitutes the way the Indians Affair Branch (IAB) viewed the Indian. The IAB considered the Indian to be lazy, irresponsible, uncivilized, primitive, morally weak, intractable, stubborn, and culturally and intellectually inferior to whites, which Sheffield characterizes as "a highly conservative, nineteenth-century view of the Indian" (40). Forcing Natives to serve in the military during the war was directly opposed to the voluntary nature of military service in most Canadian Indian cultures. The Natives expressed their anger and distress at being subject to conscription. In reaction, the IAB argued that the First Nations' resistance to conscription resulted from ignorance, a lack of intelligence, and obstinacy, as well as the influence of agitators and subversives. Nevertheless, administrators hoped military experience would teach young First Nations men Western values, not understanding that First Nation people might not want to assimilate. The IAB believed that First Nations' mistrust of its motives was inbred, inherent among Natives, and handed down from generation to

generation. Administrators believed Natives had a racial inferiority complex and that they were backward, primitive, illiterate, and ignorant.

Sheffield draws a distinction between the administrative Indian and the public Indian, with the latter being the image most commonly held by the general public. In the 1930s the image of the public Indian among English-speaking Canadians was based on ambivalent stereotypes, from images of the "noble savage" destined for extinction to media portrayals that belittled, trivialized, and caricatured Indians. Although the male was viewed as strong, wise, and honorable, at the same time he had vices and racial flaws, was weak and depraved, and could not resist liquor.

World War II added another social dimension to Canadian Natives, which the author calls the Indian-at-war. Because Indians were proving their ability in battle, the dominant Canadian society needed to adopt a new image of the Indian. This new icon, the Indian-at-war, was sympathetic, generous, and patriotic, enabling Canadians to consider Indians as positive, intelligent, and respectful human beings with promising futures. Canadians also changed their social constructs concerning Indians because Canadians felt guilty about their historical treatment of the Natives. In essence, the general population blamed the Indian problem on policy and its administration and on racism, apathy, and ignorance.

As a result a new image arose, which Sheffield calls the Indian victim. This new icon exemplified poverty, social dysfunction, substance abuse, and poor health, but the victim no longer bore the blame for these shortcomings. Many also now understood that the maltreatment of Natives had resulted from legislative or administrative inadequacies, past errors, and the degree to which Canadian society marginalized the Natives. Generally, English Canadians were willing to grant Indians full citizenship and equality through assimilation but only if the Indians surrendered all special rights. For the Native people, this meant the possible loss of their culture and tradition as Indians. Nevertheless, Canadians assumed they knew what was best for the Indians and what the Indians wanted. Little attention was paid to what Native people desired or to the reforms they believed were necessary. In short, although perceptions may have changed, the power relations between the dominant society and the Natives had not. As a result a new image emerged, which Sheffield calls the potential Indian citizen.

Overall, World War II and its immediate aftermath marked the beginning of the end of the trivializing of Canada's First Nations. Nevertheless, the author admonishes the reader: "This study provides a useful caution against a tendency within the war-and-society field to assume that war's impact is inevitably profound. Even a war as pervasive as the Second World War can leave continuity in its wake" (181). For all the attention given to the Indians before, during, and immediately after the war, Natives in North America engendered debate surrounding questions of categorization and social construction. My own research has discovered that mainstream Americans regarded Native Americans in the American Southwest with awe and curiosity. Indians had been isolated on American Southwest reservations for so long that when World War II began and American Natives enlisted in record numbers, white Americans had never encountered them personally. But even while non-Native people finally learned about Southwest American Natives and their bravery in the war, the war did not profoundly change the status of Indians in the Southwest.

Although Sheffield's work analyzes the way the dominant society viewed the Natives, this is not a history of Native people. No analysis is presented from the Native point of view, leaving the reader to wonder how the Natives viewed the dominant society. When writing with regard to Canada's other ethnic groups, Sheffield states: "There were no comparable calls for change expressed in favor of Chinese, East Indian, or those of African ancestry" (146). Indeed, this was as true in the American Southwest as it was in Canada.

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**Tsawalk.** *A* **Nuu-chah-nulth Worldview**. By E. Richard Atleo. Vancouver: UBC Press, 2004. 160 pages. \$75.00 cloth; \$25.95 paper.

The French philosopher Jacques Derrida died on 8 October 2004. Reflecting on the scope of his influence, Emily Eakin stated in the *New York Times* (17 October 2004) that Derrida's death marked the end of big theory, the discipline-transcending, paradigm-breaking attempt to explain the nature of language, existence, and reality. Why is this relevant to a review of E. Richard Atleo's *Tsawalk*? A careful reading of the book reveals it as yet another attempt at big theory. *Tsawalk* does not attempt merely to provide an understanding of Nuu-chah-nulth life and culture. Its goal is much loftier: to use Nuu-chahnulth origin stories "to provide another interpretation about the nature of existence" (xi). The author makes abundantly clear that his aim is big theory. He is proposing a "theory of everything," summarized by the Nuu-chah-nulth expression *heshook-ish tsawalk*, or "everything is one," that embraces "the contemporary universe of quantum mechanics, superstring theory, philosophies and political ideologies, biodiversity, and every expression of life known and unknown" (117).

Atleo, whose Nuu-chah-nulth name is Umeek, is a hereditary chief and serves as cochair of the Scientific Panel for Sustainable Forest Practices in Clayoquot Sound, British Columbia. He also teaches in the First Nations Studies Department at Malaspina University College. His background prepares him well to undertake an exegetical study of Nuu-chah-nulth origin stories. It is doubtful, however, that this background prepares him to develop and defend the theory "everything is one."

The book begins with a prologue that demonstrates the author's true strength. In five paragraphs Umeek describes a whale hunt undertaken by his great-grandfather. Throughout, Umeek combines historical events with Nuuchah-nulth origin stories to provide a simple yet poignant glimpse of the Nuuchah-nulth worldview. An introduction follows in which Umeek outlines his indigenous theory, "everything is one." The first four chapters analyze Nuu-chah-nulth origin stories—"How Son of Raven Captured the Day," "Son