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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-chah-nulth 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 Nuu-chah-nulth origin stories to provide a simple yet poignant glimpse of the Nuu-chah-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

of Mucus and Pitch Woman,” “Son of Mucus Returns Home,” and “Son of Mucus as Transformer.” Chapter five examines Nuu-chah-nulth methods of knowledge acquisition. Chapter six discusses certain Nuu-chah-nulth ceremonies and practices. Chapter seven presents the author’s theory of Tsawalk and, importantly, its “implications for today” (xix). The book also includes an epilogue, notes, bibliography, index, and photos and maps.

Umeek analyzes each origin story within the context of Nuu-chah-nulth culture and belief and explains the role the stories play in the Nuu-chah-nulth’s worldview. The stories are familiar to students of Native American thought and culture. His analysis of the stories is interesting but offers few new insights. He makes no attempt to compare the Nuu-chah-nulth stories to similar stories in other cultures. Instead the author uses the stories to provide “a very accurate reflection of the human condition” (16). For example, after presenting the “Son of Mucus and Pitch Woman” story, he draws this conclusion about human nature: “This origin story is about family and community as a natural state of existence. In the Nuu-chah-nulth worldview, it is unnatural, and equivalent to death and destruction, for any person to be isolated from family or community” (27).

In drawing this philosophical conclusion, Umeek reveals the weaknesses of his approach. This origin story might reveal that it is unnatural for a Nuu-chah-nulth person to be isolated from family or community, but the story says nothing about the fundamental nature of human existence. Origin stories disclose a group’s worldview, but they do not offer a description of the primordial conditions of existence or manifest metaphysical clues to being and becoming. Origin stories reveal how ancestors explained the mystery of being that confronted them daily. These stories are both descriptive of the teller’s ancestral life world and prescriptive of behavior that would allow for the survival of the group and the individual, but they cannot be used to develop Umeek’s grand theory of “everything is one.” To develop and support such a theory, he must go beyond the “myths that go back to the misty past” (as Boas described origin stories) and follow the example of the ancient Greeks. It was only when the Greeks moved beyond myths that they developed philosophy—the exploration and articulation of the fundamental principles and conditions of being. Origin stories could provide an understanding of one’s world, but this worldview is not the same as philosophy.

Umeek returns to firmer ground in chapter five, where he writes about the acquisition of knowledge and power through various human experiences. He uses his great-grandfather Keesta as an example of “the countless numbers of Nuu-chah-nulth who practiced this methodology of knowledge and power acquisition over the millennia” (74). Umeek’s biographical account of the spiritual training and ritual cleansing done in preparation for the acquisition of knowledge is wonderful. Likewise his accounts of his family’s life and experiences (including photos) contribute directly to one’s understanding of Nuu-chah-nulth knowledge acquisition.

Umeek expands this argument in support of his “everything is one” theory, however, and encounters more difficulties. Rather than merely using Keesta’s personal experience of knowledge acquisition as an example, he

argues that Keesta's experience of knowledge acquisition manifests the way precontact Nuu-chah-nulth acquired knowledge. He uses Keesta not simply as an example but as an archetype. To do so, Umeek adopts the seemingly unsupportable position that external (Western) influences had little impact on Keesta's life (81). In fact, he goes beyond this singular claim and contends that the contact between Nuu-chah-nulth and European sailors and traders might have "brought new material goods into the homes of the indigenous people along the Northwest Coast, but this contact did not alter in any significant way their values and general way of life" (76). To the contrary, Umeek maintains that these new materials "served to enhance rather than to alter the heart and soul of a way of life" (81).

Unfortunately, his claims are not supported by independent ethnographical or archeological sources. In fact, the evidence supports the contrary view: "Encounters with the new arrivals during this early period of trade were to have unforeseen and catastrophic effects on the Nuu-chah-nulth" (Alan McMillian, *Since the Time of the Transformers*, 1999, 191). Contact between Nuu-chah-nulth and Europeans (which began in earnest with Captain James Cook's arrival in Nootka Sound in 1778) initiated the trade of sea-otter pelts for metal objects, especially firearms. This economic exchange radically changed the Nuu-chah-nulth traditional hunting technique, leading the groups of the Northwestern Coast to hunt the otter nearly to extinction. The exchange also radically altered the dynamics of intertribal life. According to McMillian, external demand, the ensuing scarcity of product, and the introduction of new technology (especially firearms) led to intensified warfare and catastrophic loss of life among indigenous people, with the Ahousaht nearly exterminating the Otsoaht in the nineteenth century.

In addition to these economic-related consequences, contact brought infectious diseases that ravaged the indigenous people and reduced the Nuu-chah-nulth population from around 6,000 at the time of first contact to about 3,500 in 1885 and 1,600 by 1939 (McMillian 193). In a word, contact introduced new goods and technologies, modified resource control and hunting, intensified warfare, and resulted in a precipitous decline of the indigenous population—none of which classifies as an enhancement to a way of life. But Umeek is prepared to defend the heterodoxy of his claim that contact does not degrade authentic indigenous culture. He simply labels the consensus view a "most arrogant position" and an "unrealistic assumption" (76).

This is not the only instance of scholastic arrogance. Umeek frequently supports his arguments with nothing more than an appeal to his heritage. For example, he offers this significant yet unsubstantiated conclusion: "In general, it is my indigenous perspective that the Americas were pristine prior to contact less due to nature ... and more due to sound and deliberate management" (127). In spite of the scope of his work and the self-importance he assigns to his efforts, he rarely cites corroborating sources. (The work contains only twelve notes.) His bibliography omits the works of some of the most recognized scholars in the field like Sapir, Drucker, Curtis, McMillian, and Koppert. But Umeek anticipates these objections to his scholarship when he writes near the end of the book that he will not and cannot accept the

authority of Western scholarship. Instead, “The authority [of this work] will rest with the tried perspectives and practices of ancient heritages” (133).

Such pronouncements do not change the fact that contrary evidence exists. Contact with Westerners brought change. As desirable as it might be to claim Western contact had only a negligible impact on Nuu-chah-nulth life, such a claim must be substantiated with more than Umeek’s recollection and an appeal to his indigenous perspective and the practices of ancients, especially when one is building a theory of *Tsawalk*. (In a startling remark that reveals a further inconsistency in the author’s work, Umeek contradicts himself and concedes that “the theory of *Tsawalk*, at this point in time, must utilize the same research methods, strategies, and measurement instruments as other theories” [131].)

And this takes us back to where we started—to Derrida. Big theory does not just explain everything; it seeks to be the catalyst for social and political change. In an interview published in *The New York Times*, Stanley Fish told writer Emily Eakin, “There was a general desire [among big theorists] for there to be a political payoff for theoretical formulations. The hope was to revolutionize the world” (“The Theory of Everything, R.I.P.,” 17 October 2004). This is certainly true of *Tsawalk*. Umeek’s goal is not to provide an understanding of traditional and contemporary Nuu-chah-nulth belief and culture. His goal is to develop a comprehensive indigenous theory of everything that will make clear the inadequacy of Western thought, science, and society and offer an authentic alternative that will result in a better world. The motive for developing this rather disjunctive and unsupported theory of *Tsawalk* can be found in Umeek’s dire assessment of the contemporary Western world. He argues that a paradigmatic change must begin immediately or we will face the extinction of the human species (66). It is Umeek’s theory of *Tsawalk* that will bring about this transformation to “a postmodern perspective” and save humankind.

What he offers in *Tsawalk*, however, is not the palliative he envisions. Origin stories are tools for understanding one’s world and are expressions of a community’s worldview; they are not substitutes for rigorous philosophical reflection. Accordingly, Umeek never builds a meaningful theory of *Tsawalk*, and what he does offer will not provide the model for the usurpation of Western culture and global transformation. In the end, big theory did not work for Derrida, Foucault, and Barthes. It does not work for Umeek either.

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**Unaffected by the Gospel: Osage Resistance to the Christian Invasion, 1673–1906: A Cultural Victory.** By Willard Hughes Rollings. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2004. 255 pages. \$45.00 cloth; \$22.95 paper.

Willard Rollings, an associate professor of history at the University of Nevada Las Vegas, part Cherokee, has written an interesting account of the Osage Nation, tracing the effects of colonial contact and conquest. In particular, Rollings