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Lizard, and stars and flowers. Bear power, Coyote power, serpent power, and primate power or language invests Silko's protagonists with extraordinary vision and medicine. Not knowing a language can cause irreparable loss as in "Lullaby." Writing, photography, and the miraculous appearance of the Blessed Mother at a ghost dance and on a rural Corsican village wall is also a part of Silko's perfect language. Fitz argues that the Blessed Mother's appearance signifies "Silko's and her characters' yearning for an aboriginal serpentine matriarchal spirituality and for the perfect language of love [that] manifest[s] itself as a dream" (205). Ceremonial language for Silko then transcends the orality and writing to include the visionary and maternal. Fitz's pairing multicultural representations of the female principle in *Gardens*—Eve and the Serpent, the Blessed Mary and Mary Magdalene, Spider Woman and Serpent Goddess—with "the gift of languages" suggests Silko's envisioning of a multicultural mother tongue that might suggest further examination.

Throughout his discussion, Fitz draws extensive support from Silko's essays, *The Delicacy and Strength of Lace*, family photographs included in *Storyteller*, Silko's biography, Laguna history and ethnography, seminal interviews, and important criticism. Comprehensive research and knowledge of Silko's novels and short stories make *Silko: Writing Storyteller and Medicine Woman* a rich text for the beginning to the advanced Silko scholar. While Fitz addresses familiar themes of the mixed blood/hybridism, healing, and storytelling, original dimensions such as the trope of the writerly storyteller and a fresh examination of how Silko uses language—spoken, written, and visionary—add new insight into *Ceremony* and *Storyteller* and much-needed critical attention to *Almanac* and *Gardens*.

Delilah Orr

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Travelling Knowledges: Positioning the Im/Migrant Reader of Aboriginal Literatures in Canada. By Renate Eigenbrod. Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 2005. 280 pages. \$24.95 paper.

Renate Eigenbrod positions herself clearly as a reader, teacher, and critic of Aboriginal Canadian literature. She challenges the merit of research on Aboriginal subjects if it remains the privilege of white, middle-class scholars underterred by the many boundaries imposed on Aboriginal people (xiii). She admits her prerogative, several times throughout the text, in a candid effort to reveal her partiality, and to urge the pursuit of "cultural literacy, as a prerequisite for culturally sensitive literary criticism of Aboriginal literatures" (58). Eigenbrod's stated objectives include reading "Canadian Indigenous literature from an immigrant perspective, but in a migrant fashion" (xiii), demonstrating the "complexities of Native literature" (xv), and explicating her "hyphenated immigrant position as a German-Canadian" (xv).

In typical postmodern fashion, she presents her approach but does not name it: "The negotiation of both, the immigrant and migrant perspective,

acknowledging yet also crossing boundaries, constitutes the interpretive method of this study" (xiii). *Travelling Knowledges: Positioning the Im/migrant Reader of Aboriginal Literatures in Canada* is Eigenbrod's sincere attempt to humble herself as an outsider with much to learn from the stories, both oral and written, of Aboriginal Canadians. Even as she strives to move away from her position of advantage, however, she subscribes to academic language that renders her book inaccessible to nonacademic readers, Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal alike. Despite this oversight, Eigenbrod contributes a worthy ethics of criticism for Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal scholars. Just as her credo may be of limited use beyond the margins of academia, the principles she articulates present a necessary "self-conscious, self-contradictory, [and] self-undermining statement" (Linda Hutcheon, *The Politics of Postmodernism*, 1989, 1) for the non-Aboriginal scholar sure to benefit from a cultural education. For precisely this reason, Eigenbrod's book serves a critical need in promoting both cultural literacy and the self-awareness of the university as a powerful appendage of the colonial arsenal.

Eigenbrod's text is necessarily contradictory because of its use of postmodernism to explore the range and indeterminacy of Aboriginal Canadian literature. Having taught Aboriginal literature for more than two decades at various locations throughout Canada, Eigenbrod exhibits deep knowledge of her subject, so deep that she recognizes whatever "expertise" she offers on Aboriginal literature is limited by her "outsider" position. She is compelled to subvert her status as an authority on Aboriginal Canadian literature because of her position in a colonizing society. Such a strategy reveals her ironic portrayal of Aboriginal Canadians as the insiders and the dominant culture as the outsiders. Underscoring this outsider approach, she develops the migrant metaphor to frame her investigation. As a migrant reader of Aboriginal literature she prioritizes movement over stasis, mobility over fixity, and structures the book along the theme of travel in five sections: "Routes or Roots?," "An Ethics of Reading," "Reading for Boundary De/Constructions," "Reading For Movement and Migration," and "Travelling Knowledges." Eigenbrod leans, perhaps ironically, on Basil Johnston's position, describing it as a "(postmodern) adage that there is no absolute truth or no truth at all, but instead only accuracy defined as 'positioned' knowledge" (4). In her quest for a plurality of perspectives she explores the literature of several Aboriginal Canadians including Lee Maracle, Ruby Slipperjack, Thomas King, Marilyn Dumont, Louise Halfe, Maurice Kenny, Jeannette Armstrong, Emma Lee Warrior, Basil Johnston, Emma LaRocque, and others. Revealing years of research and thought, she borrows heavily from critics and cultural theorists such as Homi Bhabha, Mikhail Bakhtin, Ian Chambers, James Clifford, Arnold Krupat, David Moore, and Craig Womack. A postmodern study demands a multiplicity of voices, and in this Eigenbrod demonstrates great skill in orchestrating a polyphonic chorus of truths. She deftly acknowledges the significance of oral literature as an important challenge to the precedence of the written word: "Never again were books quite good enough" (5).

Even though Eigenbrod includes only a few of the stories she heard from her Aboriginal students, many of the texts she chooses address the issue of

orality in Aboriginal literature. While books are suspect, especially those texts composed *about* Aboriginal people *by* non-Aboriginal scholars, she trusts the stories of Danny Lynx (Ruby Slipperjack's *Silent Words*), Raven (Lee Maracle's *Ravensong*), and Josh Kane (Richard Wagamese's *A Quality of Light*, "Becoming Indians"). Eigenbrod chooses these and other characters for their ability to convey their particular Aboriginal reality and for their role in educating a culturally illiterate society.

Cultural literacy and scholarly integrity require the "realization of one's positionality" on the part of readers, critics, and teachers (44). She opts, therefore, to conduct her study through the monocle of western theory and to admit her subjectivity. For example, she reads Ruby Slipperjack's novel, *Silent Words*, as a "*Bildungsroman*." Eigenbrod justifies this strategy because this genre is a part of her "cultural inventory," and because it allows her to introduce her "Germanness" (45). She locates herself both as an immigrant reader of Aboriginal Canadian literature and as a migrant critic venturing for tenuous harmony in the discord between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal culture. The self-reflexivity expressed in this approach serves both to reinforce an earlier self-conscious statement about her reading of Emma Lee Warrior's story "Compatriots" and to elucidate the irony of her role as an "expert outsider": "I started to understand that my own research and teaching were more closely linked with the fictional character Helmut Walking Eagle than I had cared to admit at first" (10).

Ironies abound in *Travelling Knowledges: Positioning the Im/migrant Reader of Aboriginal Literatures in Canada*, as Eigenbrod seems caught in the contradiction of having to theorize because of her postmodern agenda, and yet this theorizing relegates the nonacademic to the margins. Her preface, "Coming to Theory," only hints at the lexicon she will use in later chapters: essentialism, hybridity, heteroglossia, postcolonialism, teleology, chronotope, epistemology, and even German terms such as *ausbildung* (48) and *aufgehoben* (55). In many cases, relying on other theorists to define these terms for her, she presents her views in a halting and unsure voice. While the resulting cacophony occasionally muffles Eigenbrod's argument, postmodernism demands this dissonance in its mission to knock down truth. Eigenbrod relies on this indeterminacy to theorize a "nomadic subjectivity" in subverting her position as an expert of Aboriginal Canadian literature (9).

She projects her own voice most clearly, however, in her conclusion, despite suggesting that her conclusions will be "inconclusive" (202). Remembering 1982, her students at Blue Quills Native Education Centre in Alberta, and the stories they shared with her, Eigenbrod acknowledges the importance of these lived experiences and reiterates the position that "Books alone cannot be trusted" (202). If postmodernism is a treatise on the politics of representation (Hutcheon 3), then Eigenbrod advocates self-representation for Aboriginal people: "As we do not live in post-colonial society, Indigenous writers articulate how colonization is still imprisoning them" (202). She condemns the academy by including the story of Alanis Obomsawin, an Abenaki film producer, who did not present the talk she had planned for a conference, choosing instead to tell the tragic story of "yet another suicide in

her community, an incident she had learned about shortly before the beginning of the panel” (63). Obomsawin left the audience reflecting silently on this question: “how can one explain the discrepancy between the increasing support for Native arts in academic institutions and major conferences, and the desperate situation in Native communities?” (63).

While Eigenbrod offers a thorough and unassuming proposal on how to read and critique Aboriginal literature with both integrity and cultural literacy, perhaps her next book will more definitively and assertively define the university as a privileged space, take the conversation on the politics of representing Aboriginal peoples beyond the confines of the academy, and truly make room for a counterpoint to colonial dominance.

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Wasáse: Indigenous Pathways of Action and Freedom. By Taiaiake Alfred. Toronto: Broadview Press, 2005. 313 pages. \$22.95 paper.

Not long before I began writing this review a student of mine, an eighteen-year-old Ojibwa woman from Milwaukee, came by to see me about an important development. She told me that she wanted to coordinate a conference on decolonization, which she was planning for the spring semester and was hoping for support from the American Indian Studies Department (AIS). I was impressed that someone so young was so motivated about pursuing such a major endeavor. I asked her what inspired her to take up such a time-consuming cause. “Well,” she explained, “I’ve noticed that Indian Studies has a lot of courses about how things got to be so bad, but I haven’t noticed any classes that focus on solving problems.” This wasn’t what I was expecting to hear, of course. My student’s perception of AIS was, to put it mildly, a bit shortsighted; nevertheless, I understood her frustration. Although, it’s certainly not true that the AIS curriculum is bereft of ideas and suggestions for taking a more activist role in the Indian communities, still it can feel like positive change, let alone revolutionary change, is on a distant horizon, especially when one is a freshman facing four years of course work before entering the “real” world. But at the end of those four years, degree in hand, what does AIS have to offer in terms of solutions? What should we be offering?

One very interesting set of answers is articulated in Taiaiake Alfred’s most recent book-length polemic *Wasáse: Indigenous Pathways of Action and Freedom*. Alfred, who is a professor and chair of the Indigenous Governance Programs at the University of Victoria, outlines an array of ideas and strategies for overturning the “settlers’” domination of Onkwehonwe lives and lands. *Onkwehonwe* (pronounced oon-gway-hoon-way) is a Mohawk word meaning “the First Peoples of North America,” and is used consistently throughout Alfred’s book as a way of circumventing the more problematic terms of *Indian*, *Native*, *Indigenous*, and *Aboriginal*. It is also a way of compelling the reader to think outside the delimiting terms set for Onkwehonwe people by