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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

settler politicians and academicians, which are all geared, as Alfred avers, only toward justifying the settler's illegal and immoral conquest of Anówarakowa Kawennote, or Great Turtle Island.

What Alfred takes for granted, curiously, is the definition of *colonization*, such that he doesn't bother defining it at all. Given that *Wasáse* is fundamentally about decolonization, such a presumption appears to be a major oversight. After all, shouldn't Onkwehonwe know what it is they're overturning before they do it? One could argue that the definition of *colonization* is implicit in the analyses, strategies, and interviews that comprise the book. In other words, pay attention to what you're reading and you'll know what to fight. One may also point out that *colonization* is one of those terms that demands an inexhaustible amount of explication, entailing that one may never get around to taking action because of the intellectual quagmire into which one has stepped. For Alfred, however, decolonization isn't an academic problem, but rather an urgent matter of survival. This is to say that the situation demands action now. At the same time, decolonization requires thoughtful action, as opposed to being impatient and impetuous. Furthermore, despite my student's worthy ambition, it also doesn't need more conferences and papers. To the contrary, everything begins with decolonizing oneself.

Toward this lofty goal, *Wasáse* is divided into three major sections. First, "Rebellion of the Truth," which seeks to lay the groundwork for the warrior, or *wasáse*, spirit that Alfred wants to invoke in his reader. Alfred locates this spirit somewhere between Ghandi's *Satayagraha* campaign of nonviolent militancy and the Zapotec rebellion. Second, "Colonial Stains on Our Existence" demonstrates the various and entangled ways in which a long history of colonialism and complacency have debilitated indigenous peoples' capacity to see their lives as beholden to settler power and authority. Lastly, "Indigenous Resurgence" makes the passionate case that Onkwehonwe survival and revitalization depend upon the Onkwehonwe wanting and seeking to reconnect with that which makes them truly indigenous, above all, their various languages. "Translating Onkwehonwe teachings into a concrete set of goals for a social and political movement is the vital task for the future" (264).

Unlike Frantz Fanon who declared in *The Wretched of the Earth* that decolonization was an inevitably violent affair, Taiaiake Alfred maintains that the *wasáse* spirit is more about the enactment of principles than it is about the physical act of fighting, though there are circumstances in which striking an enemy is appropriate. An important example of the latter was the "Oka stand-off" of 1990, which "saw a surge of indigenous power in the resistance of the Kanien'kehaka [Mohawk] communities . . . to the Canadian state's attempt to expropriate lands and impose its police authority on them" (46). However, before a warrior is a fighter he or she is foremost a sacred protector. And the first thing that an Onkwehonwe warrior must guard against is the atrophy of modern life. "The way of the new warrior," Alfred states, "is as much a tactical battle against the patterns of our modern existence as a philosophical and political struggle" (87).

Aside from avoiding fast food and television, the new warriors must struggle against—with the intent of defeating—the monstrous stereotypes

and racist myths that modern settler society keeps churning out about itself and the Onkwehonwe. Canada and the United States are not superior places to live. Reserves and reservations need not be known only as dens of violence and alcoholism. The pioneer spirit ought not to be taught to Native children as part of their history. Indigenous role models need not be limited to figures from the distant past. Indigenous young people are not necessarily doomed to failure at school or work.

With respect to indigenous role models, the most interesting and vital elements of Alfred's book are the numerous interviews that Alfred conducts on the pressing issues facing Onkwehonwe nations. Among those interviewed are Sakej (Mi'kmaq), head of the East Coast Warrior Society; David Dennis, one of the founders of the Native Youth Movement (Vancouver); Tahehsomca, a former band chief of the Nuu-Cha-Nulth; Isabel Altamirano (Zapoteca), a doctoral student in political science at the University of Alberta; and Audra Simpson (Kanien'kehaka), a professor of anthropology at Cornell University. Each person interviewed is experienced with tribal community activism, which is something that Alfred relies upon for his own ideas and opinions, thereby making the implicit case that anyone teaching AIS owes it to themselves, their students, and the indigenous communities to maintain these connections. Community connections are paramount if people in AIS expect their teaching and research to be relevant, not to mention if they want their work to be more than simply an account of "how things got to be so bad." Just as important is connecting with indigenous youth, some of whom Alfred interviews and whom he respects as the key to community regeneration. "This is the spirit of regeneration," Alfred proclaims. "The youth are clear-eyed and so, so smart. And they are impatient, not only with white society, but with their own leadership and organizations." What's needed is to combine youthful energy with the knowledge and experience of Onkwehonwe elders.

Having said this, it would be unfair of me to say that Alfred provides clear-cut answers to the problems weighing upon Onkwehonwe. For example, Alfred does this specifically by interviewing both Ray Halbritter and Oren Lyons. Halbritter is the nation representative of the Oneida Nation, as well as the CEO of its business operation, most notably, the Turning Stone Resort and Casino. Halbritter has also been excoriated by many in the Iroquois community for caring more about profit, especially for himself, than about tribal rights and traditions. Yet, in Alfred's interview, Halbritter makes a passionate and cogent argument for economic independence as the key to tribal sovereignty and revitalization. On the other end of the spectrum is Oren Lyons, who has been a longtime and valued leader among the Iroquois in their quest to maintain and strengthen the Iroquois way, particularly in his capacity as a Faithkeeper for the Onondaga Nation. As such, Lyons argues against what Halbritter represents on the basis of Iroquois prophecy, which is clear about the destructive power of gambling and obsessing about money. Surprisingly, to both Alfred and this author, Lyons acknowledges that he's not fluent in Onkwewenna, the original indigenous language. Such a disclosure is not a surprise, given the precarious state in which all indigenous languages currently exist.

Wasáse enables one to understand that all Onkwehonwe are carrying the burden of settler colonialism, from which, Alfred assumes, most of us want to be free. I say *assume*, however, not as a criticism of Alfred, but as a reluctant recognition that more Onkwehonwe than not may simply want to get along and accommodate the cultural imperialism that's crushing their lives. "The overall challenge for all of us is to cause a mental awakening, beginning inside ourselves, to give people knowledge of themselves and of the world, thereby restoring the memory of who we truly are as Onkwehonwe" (282). In the end, *Wasáse* makes you want to do something about the situation.

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