

book manage to situate itself within the lives of Third World women, but it also places great emphasis on the necessity to evade the essentialisms often found in feminist writing. Afshar has joined contemporary Third World feminist theorists, such as Shirin Rai, Jenny Pearce, Rohini Hensman, and Ziba Mir-Hosseini, to create a work rich in theory and practice. Whether discussing a country-specific issue, such as the growing concern with women's issues in contemporary China, or arguing for the necessity to bring the state back into Third World feminist discussions, each contribution establishes the in-depth, yet wide-ranging, character that makes this book such a success. As Afshar states, the variety of issues addressed by the contributors reflects the intention to "bring Third World women to the centre of the political analysis and highlight the different forms of feminine political activism that has been ignored and undervalued by orthodox academicians."

The most interesting aspect of this book is its capacity to combine sophisticated theoretical analysis with comprehensive explanations of the major practical issues surrounding women in the Third World. Not only are these theoretical debates insightful and illuminating, but they also avoid the self-destructive claim of being the final authority on their subject. For instance, in chapter one, Georgina Waylen offers some very useful guidelines for the study of women's lives within Third World political structures. Subsequently, the larger work roughly seems to follow these guidelines by dealing with the lack of acknowledgement of women in political processes of all kinds. While this lends some continuity to the text, it is important to note that the various authors also modify these guidelines to better explain their area of concern—thus offering a collection which is both comprehensive and respectful of difference. A significant trend to be found throughout the volume is its emphasis on the differences between western women and women of the Third World with

respect to their circumstances, struggles, resistances, and relationships to the state and other organizations. Moreover, the work underlines the point that "Third World women" is a category composed of various identities and should not be mistaken as homogenous.

As the collection is laid out, the contributions by Waylen, Rai, Pankhurst, Pearce, and Hensman examine the role of women in debates about the state, including discussions concerning both contemporary political change and resistance to authoritarianism. The other contributions discuss more specific realities of women's everyday lives, drawing on case studies such as Nicaragua, Iran, China, and Palestine. Despite this theoretical/empirical division, each of the authors tackles her subject without the exclusion of either. That is, although the bulk of the book deals with specific geographical areas, theoretical debates are neither dismissed nor omitted. Instead, the work strikes a unique balance between theory and practice, which makes it a valuable contribution to discussions of women and Third World politics as well as political studies generally.

THE ELUSIVE AGENDA: MAINSTREAMING WOMEN IN DEVELOPMENT

Rounaq Jahan. London: Zed Books, 1995.

by Marnie K. Lucas Zerbe

The primary focus of Rounaq Jahan's book *The Elusive Agenda: Mainstreaming Women in Development* is to highlight and bring under scrutiny the obvious lack of progress for Women In Development (WID) initiatives in improving the lives of Third World women. She seeks to explain "the contradictory trends of WID-heightened advocacy and awareness of gender issues on the one hand, and the growing poverty of the world's

women on the other." In order to answer this question, Jahan traces the history of the women's movement by examining the experiences of four donor agencies and two of their partner countries, placing particular emphasis on how they implemented and reacted to a gender-prescribed agenda. She does this by using a clear analytical framework to assess how WID policies and measures, undertaken by the donors and the partner countries, have worked to bring about the objectives outlined in the original agenda.

Chapter one outlines Jahan's methodology, and chapters two through five then highlight the strengths and weaknesses of different approaches taken by four donor agencies (Canadian International Development Agency, Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation, United Nations Development Program, and the World Bank) and two partner countries (Tanzania and Bangladesh) to implement WID policies and objectives. Chapter two reviews the policy goals through a comparative analysis of common approaches taken by both the donor agencies and the partner countries to address the concerns of southern women. Jahan concludes that policy objectives have moved steadily from "women's advancement" to "gender equality" and finally to "women's empowerment." Furthermore, Jahan argues that the mainstreaming of women and women's issues directly into development theory and policy is emerging as a positive alternative to previous practices of simple physical integration of women.

Actual WID strategies adopted by donors and their partners to improve the success of their policies and programs, while adequately addressing feminist concerns, are outlined in chapters three and four. While chapter three describes the institutional strategies implemented, specifically focusing on issues of responsibility, accountability, coordination, monitoring, evaluation, and personnel policy, chapter four examines the operational strategies undertaken,

particularly aiming at concerns of guidelines, training, research, special projects, analytical tools, country programming, macro policies, and policy dialogue. This is accomplished through personal interviews and supporting statistical data.

Chapter five attempts to assess the success of donor agencies and their partners in achieving three major goals outlined by Jahan (mainstreaming, gender equity, and women's empowerment) through the construction of several qualitative and quantitative "indicators" as a ruler by which "successful development" can be measured. Jahan concludes that although donor agencies have slowly begun to include women in their dialogue on macro economic policies and social programming, little has been done to change policies in favour of attaining feminist goals. Further, while the partner countries did, for a time, achieve small successes in the areas of health care and education for women, the failure to translate this into employment and increased social status only served to widen existing disparities between men and women in income and, ultimately, in health and education as well.

Finally, chapters six and seven are used to highlight the achievements made in the realization of goals which Jahan advocates, and to recommend future development priorities that should be undertaken by donors and partner countries in order to more completely meet feminist demands. Jahan proceeds to make traditional suggestions for increased success in applying WID strategies. Although she recognizes that past development policies are directly related to the further underdevelopment of the South, she is hesitant to reject such strategies. Jahan seeks instead to improve existing liberal modernization theory by using its language and methodology in such a way as to bring about equity through strategies of empowerment and mainstreaming. Despite this, Jahan's work makes a valuable contribution to the development field by bringing to light—through both historical and current

qualitative and quantitative data—the question of why the feminist agenda for development remains elusive not only to donors and their partner countries, but to women ourselves.

**ISKWEWAK—KAH' KI
YAW NI
WAHKOMAKANAK:
NEITHER INDIAN
PRINCESSES NOR
EASY SQUAWS**

Janice Acoose/Misko-Kisikawihkwe (Red Sky Woman). Toronto: Women's Press, 1995.

by Denise Osted

This is Janice Acoose's first book, and hopefully not her last. It grew out of her MA thesis, which in turn sprang from her experiences of sexist and racist discrimination within the post-secondary educational system. The book focuses on the racist and sexist stereotypes of Indigenous women in Canadian literature, particularly those of the Indian Princess and the Easy Squaw.

Acoose begins the book by locating herself in her culture and family. This introduction sets the tone for the book, which is at once compellingly personal, and critically acute. Through her awareness of the ways in which the white-eurocanadian-christian-patriarchy, or WECCP, has impacted on her life and the lives of "all her relations," Acoose begins to find the ways in which that WECCP can be countered and even dismantled.

The first step in the countering of destructive stereotypes is to reclaim the power of naming and self-definition. The term "Indian" collapses all the different Indigenous cultures into a homogenous whole, which renders invisible their differences. Acoose's many encounters with the WECCP, including her birth in a hospital where the nuns exercised their right to name her Mary (like all of her sisters), her transformation into a registered treaty Indian when the "Registration of the

live birth of an Indian" was filed, her baptism, and her stay in a residential school in an atmosphere of emotional, physical, and sexual abuse—all conspired to erase her "Nehiowe-Metis and Ninahkawe cultures, ultimately situating [her] at the bottom end of the hierarchy, a place which [she] unconsciously accepted until [she] began to come into consciousness, or become politically aware."

Coming into consciousness about her place in the WECCP hierarchy made Acoose aware of the prevailing stereotypes of Indigenous women in Canadian literature: the Indian Princess and the Easy Squaw; these powerful stereotypes "foster dangerous cultural attitudes that affect human relations and inform institutional ideology." They go back to the first Europeans who came to North America, who saw Indigenous peoples through their narrow WECCP lens, projecting their ideology onto them, and have been perpetuated in great measure through the power of literature, which until recently has been dominated by white euro-canadian men. Literature is a form of propaganda which is particularly effective because it is not seen as such. Its images pass unchallenged into the reader's subconsciousness, and from there influence the attitudes and actions of that person; this makes literature an invaluable tool of colonization.

Acoose argues that for the white invaders to fully subdue Indigenous nations, it was necessary to create negative stereotypes of Indigenous women. Indigenous cultures were woman-centred, and colonial powers "attempted to usurp women's power, although it may not always have been consciously or in visibly apparent ways." Under the WECCP, Indigenous women must struggle to regain their autonomy and power over themselves and within their cultures.

By encouraging white writers to write for and about Indigenous women, the WECCP consolidates its power to name and define Indigenous women's experiences. Alternatively, the experiences of a single Indigenous woman may be conflated to