

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

represent those of all Indigenous women, as has happened with Maria Campbell's *Halfbreed*. Even today, in the University of Manitoba bookstore, *Halfbreed* is on the shelves in the Social Work section; the book is considered a text for social workers rather than a piece of literature in its own right, as if Campbell's experiences are those of all Indigenous women.

Acoose discusses some work of two white Canadian authors who perpetuate racist stereotypes of Indigenous women in their works, Margaret Laurence, and William Patrick Kinsella. She makes links between the degrading portrayals of Indigenous women in literature, and the "cultural attitudes that encourage sexual, physical, verbal, or psychological violence against Indigenous women," such as the violence perpetrated against Helen Betty Osborne and countless others.

When a member of the colonizing group writes about the oppressed group, the perpetuation of stereotypes is nearly inevitable. The lived reality of an oppressed people differs vastly from what the colonizers *perceive* to be their reality. The imagination is not free, as Marlene Nourbese Philip has noted, but rather serves the prevailing interests of the WECCP. Laurence and Kinsella both write about Indigenous women from a colonizer's perspective.

"Kinsella exhibits no social consciousness when he exploits Indigenous peoples' misery, nor does he provide a social, political, or economic context for the miserable conditions he constructs around his Indigenous characters." This effectively implies that the conditions in which Indigenous people live are of their own choosing, thus relieving the WECCP of any responsibility for its violent attempts at cultural and literal genocide of Indigenous peoples. Acoose focuses on Kinsella's short story "Linda Star" in which the title character is an Indigenous woman who is a prostitute and is in an abusive relationship. By failing to provide a context for Linda Star's life,

and by superimposing WECCP values on her actions, Kinsella both implicitly judges and condemns her behaviour, while implying that the conditions of her life are self-determined.

"Laurence, on the other hand, writes with compassion and an understanding (albeit restricted by the period in which she was writing) of the complex issues of racism and classism." While her portrayal is sympathetic, Laurence nonetheless continues the white literary tradition of portraying Indigenous women characters as "creatures of nature, temptresses, or femme fatales, Indian princesses, easy squaws, or suffering, helpless victims." Acoose examines Laurence's story "The Loons" in which the Indigenous character, Piquette Tonnerre, is viewed through the WECCP lens of the protagonist, a young, white, christian, woman. Throughout the story, the white protagonist acts, thinks, reflects, lives—while Piquette is the object of action and reflection, and is constructed as a victim. The story is saturated with WECCP attitudes, both those of Laurence (despite her attempts at understanding) and those of the protagonist and her mother. As with Kinsella's work, there is no context of colonial history which would put Piquette's life and suffering into perspective. Rather, the tone of the story condemns Piquette for the "choices" she has made, and the "vices" which finally killed her.

In spite of the WECCP's past and current attempts to stifle and destroy them, "Indigenous peoples' multiple and distinct cultures have been transmitted from one generation to another" through various means. As the colonized people of this continent, Indigenous peoples have different ways of resistance, one of them being through writing. Maria Campbell's *Halfbreed* was a pivotal work in terms of breaking the silence which obscured the lived realities of Indigenous women's lives. While Campbell's autobiographical work does not represent all Indigenous women's lives, it provided encouragement and inspiration to many Indigenous wo-

men writers, such as Jeanette Armstrong, Beth Cuthand, Lee Maracle, and Beatrice Culleton.

*Halfbreed* was the first work by an Indigenous woman to name the oppressor and the tools of oppression, using the oppressor's language. As such, it paved the way for more Indigenous women to continue the work of decolonization. Acoose concludes her book with a discussion of the many Indigenous women and men who have reclaimed the power of naming and self-definition, and who are actively engaged in resisting colonial stereotypes and violence through their writing. In this way, they are reclaiming the humanity which the WECCP denies them. It is vital for Indigenous peoples to be rooted in their cultural traditions as they name the pain of colonization and ascribe responsibility for that pain.

## AFTER PARADISE

Janis Rapoport. Toronto: Simon and Pierre, 1996.

## THIS IMAGINED PERMANENCE

nathalie stephens. Toronto: Gutter Press, 1996.

*by Eva C. Karpinski*

Despite all their stylistic, tonal, and thematic differences, Janis Rapoport and Nathalie Stephens, the authors of these two volumes of poetry, seem to have one thing in common: they are both fascinated by boundary crossing. For Rapoport, a disciplined and seasoned poet, the territory that beckons her imagination lies in the shadowy areas between life and death, the material and the spiritual, the metaphysical limits of prehistory and afterlife. On the other hand, Stephens, who appears to be the more iconoclastic of the two, boldly assaults the borders between self and other, sanity and madness, lesbian desire and creativity.

Rapoport's fifth collection, *After*