

tion institutions have become a contested terrain between movements which on the one hand seek to shape knowledge and learning in terms of so-called information technology and virtual futures, and on the other see the school as a site where "traditional" values are threatened and in need of defence. Every bit as complicated and potentially dangerous as more explicit sexist, racist, and homophobic conduct and curricula, the moves to wire every classroom and to computerize ever greater aspects of educational work are transforming the territories of education, breaking down borders even as new walls of exclusion and containment are constructed.

This timely collection contributes richly detailed and perceptive analyses of how educational policies and practices have come to be constituted so that questions of effectiveness and efficiency now prevail over "other" concerns, rendering many of the authors and the students to whom they feel accountable are marked as marginal and different. At the same time, many papers offer exemplary illustrations of a range of conceptual strategies and methodologies, useful both for their content and for how their approaches might be modified and applied elsewhere. Most of all, *Dangerous Territories* raises important and troubling questions for anyone who wishes to practice and promote critical education in contemporary schools and universities.

*Kari Debli*

*OISE/University of Toronto*

Mary Kinnear. *A Female Economy: Women's Work in a Prairie Province 1970-1970*. Montréal : McGill-Queen's University Press, 1998. Pp. xiv, 215.

In Mary Kinnear's own words,

I take women who had historical lives and see how they experience the past through their work—the women themselves are at the centre of my analysis. I describe first who the women in Manitoba were and then the cultural, economic expectations they were supposed to meet. I assess women's education and training, their domestic and farm work, their participation in the paid labour force, and their volunteer public service.

Kinnear defines "work" as any activity culminating in a service or product, whether or not that activity is paid. Beyond the orthodox criterion of payment, work thus includes farming, child-rearing, housework and volunteer public service. Kinnear relies on Nancy Cott's definition of feminism—belief in equality with men, a conviction that gender roles are socially constructed, and recognition of gender consciousness—but makes it clear that prairie women in this period were especially affected by ethnicity, class, marriage, geographic location, and immigrant status. Although prairie society was predominantly British, attitudes were coloured by cultural norms from Eastern Europe. Women sometimes kept their marital status a secret, and some women of Jewish extraction hid this part of their identity. Kinnear's use of definitions helps to show links between these various factors.

Kinnear emphasizes one essential difference between rural and urban living. Contrary to the popular assumption that farm wives had a more difficult role than women living in urban areas, she argues that rural women saw themselves as equal partners with their husbands, who well knew that the family could not survive economically without women's work. Although urban areas saw greater mechanization of household tasks coupled with higher standards of cleanliness, women who stayed at home while their husbands went out to waged occupations were *not* considered equal partners.

Education and training were crucial to women who wanted to improve their status and gain access to the paid economy. Kinnear cites a number of milestones: the introduction of compulsory education (with English as the single language of instruction) in 1916; curriculum development during the interwar years to include courses in vocational education, domestic science, and home economics; and post-World War II expanded accessibility and greater standardization of educational opportunity. Most young women did get an elementary education, but few went on to the secondary level. Career opportunities for independent women consisted chiefly of nursing and teaching—both poorly paid and conducted under strict male supervision. As the economy changed, women were able to take up other employments: sales jobs in stores like Eaton's and Simpson Sears, and clerical work, as type-writing became prominent and acceptable.

Kinnear stresses the gendered nature of work. Women were housekeepers and mothers first, even when employed outside the home. Women were considered to be dependent on their fathers and their husbands. That there were single women and single mothers was viewed as simply unfortunate.

By 1968, much had changed. The Royal Commission on the Status of Women treated women as independent agents who deserved improved opportunities to be self-supporting. It argued that women were responsible for dependents and entitled to allowances, pensions, and income from social security programs. But Kinnear argues that despite the Royal Commission of 1970, most women were still viewed as housekeepers with secondary occupations outside the home. They were teachers, working under male principals and boards of trustees, nurses doing what male doctors ordered, salesclerks in stores managed by men, or domestic servants in homes supported by a male breadwinner. As Kinnear notes, it has taken the rest of the century to achieve equal status for women—and even now that status may not be as widely accepted as one might wish.

One flaw in this otherwise comprehensive study of women's work is that the section on professional occupations, particularly medicine and law, is very brief. It may be argued this is appropriate, given the lack of opportunities for women to enter those occupations before the last quarter of the century.

*A Female Economy* is a well-written and well-documented examination of women's work in one Canadian province over a century, but whose insights have far wider application. As the first woman in the University of Manitoba's History Department, Mary Kinnear realized early that women had not been written into history and how their contributions, economic and otherwise, were

neglected. In some ways this book presents her quest to understand the role of women in the paid and unpaid economy. It is a superb effort.

*Nancy M. Sheehan*  
*University of British Columbia*

Brian Titley, *Dark Age: The Political Odyssey of Emperor Bokassa*. Montréal: McGill-Queen's University Press. 1997. Pp. xii, 257.

The story of Emperor Bokassa grips the reader from beginning to end, and I have rarely been so engrossed in a book. This is a story replete with sex, rape, and cannibalism; revolution, deception, and coronation; imprisonment, crocodile ponds, beatings, and murder; saints, sinners, rich, and poor; purity and prostitution; repression and democracy; independence, colonialism, exploitation, and international intrigue. The book's themes are so well interwoven that it beats most novels in intricacies of plot, climax, and characterization, all supported by authentic evidence drawn from personal interviews, archival sources, and on-site visits.

Titley has made people the central theme in history. Places, events, and celebrations are subsidiary to Bokassa, a character about whom much has been said. Was Bokassa a cannibal? Was he a statesman, a venerable leader? Did he sell out his country to France, or rather sustain a delicate balance between overarching colonialism and internal revolution? Titley does what he sets out to do—to give Bokassa a fair hearing.

The book is carefully planned in thirteen illustrated chapters, with preface, epilogue, conclusion, notes, bibliography, and index. Titley lists his sources so that the reader may judge the authenticity of the data and the difficulty of reconstructing this particular past. Titley offers a clear narrative and fine descriptions of the major characters. This is sustaining, entertaining, and critically-minded history. The reader is treated to descriptions culled from thick data but free of tortuous and ambiguous prose. Titley's details show how carefully he collected his data, yet engross his reader in a human story.

Women were particularly captivated by his words, and many came forward to wipe the sweat from his brow with their dresses. (36)

The throne was in the form of an eagle sitting upright with wings outstretched. The gold-plated bronze structure weighed 2 tonnes and was 3.5 metres high and 4.5 metres wide. Brice built a special workshop near his home in Gisors, Normandy, where thirty craftsmen executed his design. A local upholsterer, Michel Cousin, was hired to do the red velvet seat—in effect, a cavity in the bird's belly. The golden eagle cost the equivalent of \$2.5 million. (90)

Where evidence is wanting, Titley writes thus:

A true picture of those twelve hours of terror remains elusive, since eye witness accounts do not agree. (112)

While it is impossible to tell with any accuracy the full extent of the arrests and deaths, we can be reasonably certain that at least eighteen people died on the night of 18–19 April in the confines of Ngaragba. (113)