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Margaret Cook Andersen, *Regeneration through Empire: French Pronatalists and Colonial Settlement in the Third Republic*. Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 2015. Series: France Overseas: Studies in Empire and Decolonization. 368 pages. Illustrations, tables, notes, bibliography, and index. \$55.00 U.S. (cl.) ISBN-13: 978-0-8032-4497-9.

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Gender was one cornerstone of the poet-soldier Guillaume Apollinaire's patriotism. He believed it necessary to repopulate France in the wake of World War I, during which he had fought and been injured in the trenches of the Western Front. He pointed to the prolific German race and argued that the French government had to intervene because one lesson of the war should be for the French to have more children. He sets his 1918 play, *Les Mamelles de Tirésias* in Zanzibar, at the time a British protectorate near the soon-to-be-renamed colony of German East Africa and qualified in the play as having a paucity of children. Thérèse is a feminist who would rather go to war than have babies.[1] Slowly, surrealistically, Thérèse becomes a man after s/he refuses to bear children. In turn her husband (known only as "the husband") finds a way to have children of his own and therefore turns himself into a prolific man-woman. Eventually Apollinaire's provocative plot reestablishes traditional gender roles and equilibrium, thereby ordering the chaos created by Thérèse's initial de-gendering.

In Margaret Cook Andersen's illuminating book *Regeneration through Empire: French Pronatalists and Colonial Settlement in the Third Republic*, World War I marks one of the important turning, if not focal points of her study of intersections between depopulation and imperialism during the Third Republic. Andersen roots her work in intricate archival research, patient excavation of lesser known metropolitan and imperial newspapers and organizations, and very complete notes and bibliography. As a result, she gives works such as Apollinaire's (which she does not directly reference), and many other similar political, social and cultural explorations of how some French men and women reacted to fears of depopulation, a deep historical context from which they can only benefit.

In her compelling comparative analysis, Andersen convincingly argues that "pronatalists' support for settler colonialism, as well as their role as advocates for settler interest groups, demonstrates the impact of imperialism on French political movements" (p. 243). To make her argument, Andersen explores why some people feared depopulation as a sign of France's weakening international status and the solutions they proposed to this perceived problem by linking the pronatalist movement to the empire. She weaves a narrative that spans the entirety of the Third Republic (1870-1940) and moves back and forth between various parts of the French empire, revealing how pronatalist ideas and ideologies adapted to local sociopolitical realities and why pronatalists "by and large supported imperialism" (p. 8). Her book explores French politicians, colonial propagandists, colonial administrators, social scientists who shaped demographic thinking, pronatalists in metropolitan France and, last but certainly not least, the concerns of colonial settlers and local populations in the colony of Madagascar, the protectorates of Tunisia and Morocco, and in the departments of Algeria.

Andersen uses the introduction to explore how the links between historical definitions of race and fears of depopulation shaped contemporary understandings of who was considered French. In chapter one, Andersen defines the pronatalists, whose thinking both shaped and was shaped by this conversation. Here, they come to life, as the author explores the myth of the prolific settler and mostly his, but sometimes also her role in migrating to the colonies and expanding the French presence overseas. She looks at the statistician Louis-Adolphe Bertillon who, in the 1870s, argued that settler colonies would encourage a high birthrate. She also presents the demographer and doctor René Ricoux, who produced a demographic study in 1880 that indicated, among other things, that illegitimate babies were less likely to die in Algeria than in France, that French settlers overseas were filled with vitality and youth, and that women's migration was matrimonially-driven whereas male colonial settlers had better paternal and marital instincts than metropolitan men. Energized by such findings (even if they lacked in accuracy), pronatalists became convinced that the empire (especially Algeria) was an ideal space for the expansion of French families.

In chapter two Andersen explores the difficult task of transforming the myth of a prolific settler into the physical migration of the right French men and women to the colonies. The colonial lobby, and in particular the Union coloniale française (UCF), believed that the French government did not adequately promote, and even hindered migration. So the UCF selected ideal colonies for settlement (including Algeria, Tunisia and parts of Madagascar) and recruited settlers. The settlers they recruited, however, had to be good representatives of France, meaning hard workers and properly bourgeois women who certainly should not "undermine notions of racial superiority simply by looking poor or, worse yet, taking refuge among colonial subjects and living off of their charity" (p. 69). The standards were high and many potential migrants, both male and female, were turned away. By placing her analysis of this recruitment within the context of the scholarship on masculinity, feminism and education in the late nineteenth-century, Andersen reveals how the myth of the prolific colonial settler clashed with the far harsher reality of recruitment. Pronatalists anchored their policies in the wrongheaded beliefs that European men and women overseas produced more children than in the metropole and that settlers in Algeria had created a French demographic boost. Statistics did not bear up these longstanding assumptions, perhaps in part because recruitment was no easy matter.<sup>[2]</sup> Over the course of five years, one society was only able to find sixty suitable female candidates for overseas migration, largely because the formula "excluded single, working women." (p. 103)

These first two chapters are fascinating, but Andersen's book really hits its stride as an important example of comparative imperial history when she contrasts French administrators' implementation of pronatalist ideas in Madagascar with efforts in North Africa. In chapter three, Andersen shows why and how Madagascar's governor-general, Joseph Gallieni, decided to implement pronatalist ideas. She explores why pronatalists in metropolitan France paid such close attention to Gallieni's ideas. The particular irony of this Franco-Malagasy juxtaposition is that, during a time when French pronatalists were consumed with the preservation of the French race, Gallieni used his pronatalist agenda to enlarge the Malagasy (specifically Merina) labor force, arguing that he could attract more French settlers to the colony by creating their future employees. Andersen fully acknowledges that the new policies and laws controlling women's work, medical services (with French overtaking local ones), dress, and personal hygiene meant that, via pronatalist policies ostensibly for the good of the mother or the child, Gallieni invaded women's private lives. Indeed a particular strength of this chapter is that Andersen showcases not only Gallieni's ideas, but also those of a local cadre of *médecins* and *sages-femmes indigènes*. A number of the male Malagasy doctors, for example, wrote medical theses during studies in France, which occasionally put the blame on the French for creating instead of resolving medical issues (including abortion and the chigger flea).

Pronatalists in France were very much aware of Gallieni's work in Madagascar and the president of the pronatalist Alliance nationale, Jacques Bertillon, warmly endorsed such measures. Gallieni ultimately failed to attract French settlers to his colony. The problem was not his alone, however. Administrators

in North Africa wooed settlers using a somewhat different approach: they indirectly affected pronatalist policies via familial suffrage. Andersen is careful to explain in chapter four that pronatalism and familial suffrage were not identical ideologies, but especially in Tunisia and Morocco administrators hoped familial suffrage would encourage the ideal of prolific French settlers by allowing families with more children to cast more votes. In Tunisia, concerns regarding Italian fascism and Tunisian nationalism, among other worries, persuaded the Resident-General Lucien Saint to implement familial suffrage. Morocco's Resident-General, Théodore Steeg, followed suit for less clear reasons in 1926. Steeg was influenced by the local model that Saint had provided in Tunisia but, just as importantly, was personally in touch with members of the pronatalist movement in metropolitan France before leaving for North Africa.

Pronatalists in France reacted to both the Tunisian and Moroccan measures by celebrating the implementation of familial suffrage overseas while bemoaning its absence in the metropole. Yet, as Andersen shows in chapter five, in other ways North African familialists felt that they were on their own, largely abandoned by the French state. Therefore throughout North Africa, including in Algeria, organizations such as the *Ligue française des pères et mères de familles nombreuses* focused upon the value of large families within settler communities, and the rights they should be afforded by the French state. More familialist than pronatalist, such North African groups functioned as mutual aid groups, unofficial vectors of the civilizing mission, and even as assimilationists (Muslims could occasionally join if they showed themselves to be "French" enough). These familialist groups found allies within the other pronatalist movements of the empire and defended the role of the familial settler in French colonialism.

Both directly and indirectly, Andersen engages productively with other works that tackle familial issues in France and the empire.<sup>[3]</sup> Although with a few important exceptions women were not key spokespeople in her narrative (because they were not administrators), Andersen finds a number of creative ways to work them into her story. For example, Andersen demonstrates how the familial vote was defined very differently by a feminist such as Marguerite de Witt-Schlumberger, president of the *Union française pour le suffrage des femmes*. She believed that the familial vote should not be a father's vote, but rather that men and women should each receive equal shares for family votes (in the case of a family with an uneven number of children, the woman, who had actually given birth, would receive the extra vote). Indeed, throughout Andersen engages with the historiography of feminism along with that of pronatalism and empire.<sup>[4]</sup> She also incorporates references to other colonies, not only French (New Caledonia, Indochina) but also British (Australia).

All in all, Andersen's text is a model of how to write a nuanced and highly readable study of an empire in its multiple facets—local and global, metropolitan and overseas, social and political, ideological and gendered.<sup>[5]</sup> Apollinaire's *Les Mamelles de Tirésias* is only one example of the many works, literary and scholarly, that gain in both depth and meaning as a result of Andersen's *Regeneration through Empire*. Andersen's study not only convincingly demonstrates that pronatalists were profoundly engaged in settler colonialism, but also suggests multiple avenues for future research on both different regions (West Africa, the Antilles) and more contemporary periods (after the Second World War, for instance). After all, in her conclusion Andersen reminds us of the durability of the ideas she explores. France's current birthrate is the "highest cumulative birthrate in Europe" (p. 248) and pronatalist measures are one reason for such statistics. Moreover, following decolonization, both European settlers and former colonial subjects who migrated to metropolitan France have added to France's recent population growth, bringing yet another dimension to the interplay between the colonial and metropolitan demographic exchanges that Andersen so convincingly analyzes.<sup>[6]</sup>

#### NOTES

[1] Guillaume Apollinaire, *Les Mamelles de Tirésias, Drame surréaliste* (Paris: Editions SIC, 1918).

[2] See among many others: Gail Bederman, *Manliness & Civilization: A Cultural History of Gender and Race in the United States, 1880-1917* (Chicago, Ill.: University of Chicago Press, 1995); Elisa Camiscioli, *Reproducing the 'French Race': Immigration, Intimacy, and Embodiment in the Early Twentieth Century* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 2009); Christopher E. Forth, *Masculinity in the Modern West: Gender, Civilization, and the Body* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008); Robert A. Nye, *Masculinity and Male Codes of Honor in Modern France* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993); Rebecca Rogers, *A Frenchwoman's Imperial Story: Madame Luce in Nineteenth-Century Algeria* (Stanford, Cal.: Stanford University Press, 2013).

[3] For example: Amelia Lyons, *The Civilizing Mission in the Metropole: Algerian Families and the French Welfare State during Decolonization* (Stanford, Cal.: Stanford University Press, 2013); Elizabeth Thompson, *Colonial Citizens: Republican Rights, Paternal Privilege and Gender in French Lebanon and Syria* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000).

[4] In addition to many others, Andersen references: Rachel Fuchs, *Contested Paternity: Constructing Families in Modern France* (Baltimore, Md.: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2008); Mary Louise Roberts, *Civilization Without Sexes: Reconstructing Gender in Postwar France, 1917-1927* (Chicago, Ill.: University of Chicago Press, 1994); Ann Laura Stoler, *Carnal Knowledge and Imperial Power: Race and the Intimate in Colonial Rule* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997).

[5] Other examples of comparative works with a focus on empire include: J. P. Daughton, *An Empire Divided: Religion, Republicanism, and the Making of French Colonialism, 1880-1914* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006); Eric Thomas Jennings, *Vichy in the Tropics: Pétain's National Revolution in Madagascar, Guadeloupe, and Indochina, 1940-1944* (Stanford, Cal.: Stanford University Press, 2001); Patricia M. E. Lorcin, *Historicizing Colonial Nostalgia: European Women's Narratives of Algeria and Kenya, 1900-Present* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012).

[6] For another example of a very recent study of colonial and metropolitan dynamics, see Félix F. Germain, *Decolonizing the Republic: African and Caribbean Migrants in Postwar Paris, 1946-1974* (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 2016).

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