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## REFERENCES

JENNINGS, Eric T. – *Curing the Colonizers : Hydroterapy, Climatology, and French Colonial Spas.* Durham-London, Duke University Press, 2006, 271 p.

- 1 Eric Jennings' book focuses on the birth and development of four French colonial spas and the emergence of the French spa town of Vichy as a cosmopolitan "capital of the colonizers" (p. 201). Analyzing the twinned imperial "sciences" of hydrology and climatology, the book traces the myriad ways in which the colonial spa emerged as a key locus of persistent colonial concerns about "degeneration and *déracinement*" (p. 24) and "fragility and mortality" (p. 2) in the empire. According to Jennings, French colonial spas, and the "sciences" undergirding them, were significant spaces of empire-building because they operated "as potent reminders of home, as interfaces between the metropole and the colony" which "crystallized power and civilization, modernity and knowledge" (p. 213).
- 2 While historians of health and leisure in the British Empire have studied in detail the famously salubrious hill towns of India and other colonial locations of broadly medicalized respite, Jennings' study is among the first to approach these intertwined issues in the French colonial context. Jennings' work also offers a range of useful interventions into histories of empire, medicine, tourism and leisure more generally. Taking a Foucauldian view of the relationship between medicine and power, the book ably asserts "the centrality of European health to colonial medicine" (p. 4). It contrasts evocative versus exotic tourism and poses spas as sites designed to "cultivate difference" while tacitly appropriating local hydrotherapeutic practices (p. 5). Studying spa centers, Jennings argues, illuminates "everyday colonial practices" and highlights the negotiations of identity and power relations which informed them (pp. 5-6).

- 3 Through five case studies of spas in Guadeloupe, Réunion Island, Madagascar, Tunisia, and Vichy, Jennings provides a convincing analysis of how colonial spas offer a lens into the “foundations of empire” (p. 2). Chapter one proposes a complex intellectual history of the commingled “sciences” of climatology, hydrology, and *mésologie* in order to demonstrate “the link between the production and practice of colonial knowledge in the field of tropical hygiene” (p. 8). Chapter two addresses the bureaucratization of spa therapies and visits, detailing the legislation developed to govern different types of cures and the establishment of special commissions to organize “spa breaks” for various categories of French expatriates. Continuing on the theme of bureaucracy, chapter three explains how in the case of Guadeloupe, “a key concept had been coined: the administration could cut costs by creating in Guadeloupe the kind of rest and reinvigoration facilities that were becoming immensely popular in metropolitan France” (pp. 70-71).
- 4 Focusing on the slave and maroon histories of Réunion, chapter four examines the narratives of white “discovery”, and the subsequent rebranding as ineluctably French, of springs long in use by blacks. The chapter further traces how the island’s spa centers were believed to exert a “Frenchifying” effect on expatriates and creoles alike (p. 97). Chapter five on Madagascar likewise focuses on the appropriation of local spa places and practices and on how the island’s central spa town operated as a “laboratory” in which French colonial “social, architectural, and cultural experimentation were the order of the day” (p. 143). Chapter six about Tunisia expands on this theme, delving deeply into the ways in which the colony’s primary spa center “served as a colonial crucible, a site where science, identities, even modernities jostled with and were conditioned by religions, rituals, and millennial legacies” (p. 177).
- 5 Finally, chapter seven investigates how Vichy emerged as an “informal imperial hub” at the same moment that the status of being “colonial” became equated with bearing a pathologized, medicalized, condition (p. 182). Profiling the various categories of colonial *curistes* who flocked to Vichy, Jennings traces how “in sociological and anthropological terms, Vichy ultimately became the metropolitan point of contact—a crucial interface to the motherland for settlers, missionaries, soldiers, and administrators whose years of expatriation in the colonies had uprooted’ them from their original metropolitan networks [...]” (p. 185).
- 6 Jennings’ book is a “historian’s history” in the best sense, organized clearly along geographic and temporal lines, its contentions develops and supported by meticulous archival research culled from numerous French metropolitan and former colonial archives. Further, Jennings shows himself to be particularly adept at reading artifacts of material culture from colonial-era advertisements (p. 66) to caramel tins (pp. 205-206). While the subject of colonial spas might at first glance appear a tad esoteric, the depth and breadth of Jennings’ research together with his effective employ of important interdisciplinary concepts like “space” and “imperial networks” renders this work useful to regional and imperial scholars and to historians of leisure, science, and medicine as well.