1909 to 1938 and discusses some important alterations that illustrate the changes in the industry. The new *Fête* of 1909 was organized by mill-owners, not workers, and cast women workers in central symbolic roles. These changes conveyed both the feminization of the knitting trade as well as the power of the mill-owners and their interest in creating an industrial trademark for the town.

There is less on the image of workers in national popular culture. The book has a short section on film that only addresses one example, and the discussion of books and theatre is similarly limited. Chenut does capture the different consumer roles of men and women, particularly the divergent ways that male and female workers chose to proclaim (or not) their membership in the working class. Men seemed to be more political in their fashion choices—wearing the cap (*casquette*) as a symbol of their class and masculinity—whereas the women's fashions of the interwar years afforded working-class women the opportunity to dress more like the bourgeois consumers of the knitted goods they produced (298-303).

The interwar years, particularly the 1930s, would test the workers of Troyes. As owners cut wages and created part-time work the knitters of Troyes suffered unemployment and wage decline within the larger context of declining union membership and power. While Chenut sees the victory of the Popular Front and the strikes of 1936 as a triumph of worker mobilizations as well as a victory against fascism on both the local and national level, she emphasizes that these successes were ephemeral.

Chenut clearly cares deeply about the place and people she has researched and that interest in their political, consumer, and work lives is infectious. She has written a book that can be read as a local history as well as a larger story of the social, political, and cultural transformations of the French working class.

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Raymond Jonas, *The Tragic Tale of Claire Ferchaud and the Great War* (Berkeley and London: University of California Press, 2005).

At the core of Raymond Jonas's succinct and engrossing book is the story of a young peasant woman from the Vendée who, from the age of three, claimed to have visions of Jesus in which he spoke to her, showing her his wounded heart. In late 1916, at the age of 21, Claire decided she would try to convince the President of the Third Republic to consecrate France to the Sacred Heart, thereby ensuring the nation's spiritual regeneration and its victory over Germany. Claire's mission would end in failure, meeting with rejection from the republican authorities and disapproval from the Vatican. As Jonas demonstrates, however, it provides an excellent vantage point from which to explore the evolution of French Catholicism and the political culture of France during the First World

War.

However distinctive Claire's visions may have been to her—by her own account Jesus first appeared to her during a brief confinement in the family wine cellar after she refused to greet a young cousin with a kiss—under the guidance of local clergy they became identified with the Cult of the Sacred Heart. As Jonas demonstrated in his previous, impressive book, *France and the Cult of the Sacred Heart* (2000), this Catholic tradition had by the late nineteenth century become firmly associated with counter-revolutionary politics. In the period leading up to her meeting with President Raymond Poincaré in March 1917, this dimension of Claire's outlook had been relatively muted; she had instead emphasized the need to restore France's Catholic faith and have the government include the image of the Sacred Heart on the national flag. But as it became obvious that Poincaré would do no such thing, and after Claire returned home from Paris, her message became more ominous; "[i]t amounted to a charge of treason on the part of France's highest officials" (126).

Claire was hardly alone in her desire to have France consecrated to the Sacred Heart. Individual cities and towns had been consecrated in the 1890s; such activities had eventually been banned by the government, but as the war got underway new initiatives were launched at the parish and diocesan level to organize a call for a national consecration. There were also extensive efforts to reach out to French soldiers; volunteer chaplains proselytized among them, petitioning campaigns for consecration were directed at front-line troops, and millions of Sacred Heart insignia, including tens of thousands of national flags adorned with the symbol, were sent to them.

While these campaigns can be regarded as an intensive effort to re-Christianize public life in France, one of the key themes of Jonas's book is that the Church hosted diverse opinions on these matters. Claire certainly had supporters, but some elements of the church were more cautious in their attitude, or even downright sceptical. The commission which first questioned Claire about her visions—in Poitiers, the city where Joan of Arc had been interrogated in 1429—did not reject her but would not fully endorse her either. The bishop of Périgueux objected to the idea of adding the Sacred Heart to the national flag because it challenged religious pluralism in France. A French cardinal stationed in Rome openly questioned the Sacred Heart-oriented campaigns in the influential daily *Le Figaro* in May 1918, wondering how a symbol of peace and love—capable of being utilized by German Catholics just as easily as their French counterparts—could be appropriated to achieve victory in war. That same month the Vatican publicly discouraged Catholic activism centered upon the Sacred Heart flag. Two years later Rome made clear that it disapproved of Claire's mission as well.

The fate of Claire Ferchaud also sheds light on wartime politics. In 1914, President Poincaré had proclaimed a *union sacrée*, whereby France's varying

and often sharply opposed political cultures, ranging from the Catholic right to the Socialist left, were asked to set aside their differences for the sake of patriotic unity. The President's agreement to meet with Claire can be regarded as part of his ongoing efforts to preserve that union. But the secular republican state's tolerance soon reached its limits, and it began to crack down on the campaigns. In 1917, for example, the Archbishop of Tours was charged for displaying a tricolour flag carrying the Sacred Heart.

But while Jonas's study displays the limits of the wartime reconciliation between Catholics and the Third Republic, he also makes clear that there were points of contact between the secularist republican elite and elements of the church hierarchy. Certainly that proved to be the case with Claire herself. After the war both anticlerical medical doctors and clergymen concerned about the church's being discredited by a fraud, dismissed Claire's troublesome visions as the likely product of hysteria. This diagnosis facilitated her sequestration in a religious community after the condemnation from the Vatican, which was not lifted until 1964. Claire died in 1972 in relative obscurity.

The Tragic Tale of Claire Ferchaud complicates and thus enriches our understanding of France during the First World War. There are points in the book where Claire herself disappears from view, and Jonas could develop comparisons between her and other Catholic visionaries in a bit more detail than he does. But he has located fascinating material and mined it to great effect; in addition to the themes highlighted in this review he makes perceptive remarks about religious imagery and spectacles, and writes in an engaging, accessible style. This thought-provoking book deserves a wide readership; it could be used with profit in courses dealing with modern France or the cultural history of the Great War.

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Miriam G. Reumann, *American Sexual Character: Sex, Gender, and National Identity in the Kinsey Reports* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2005).

Back in November 2004, the *New York Times* published an article by Benedict Carey entitled "Long After Kinsey, Only the Brave Study Sex." In it Carey noted that in George W. Bush's America, scientists who want to ask questions about human sexuality risk losing their funding if they ask those questions too openly. The parallels with Cold War America when zoologist Alfred Kinsey and his team were conducting their research are obvious. Thankfully historians of American sexuality are subjected to less scrutiny than researchers of sexuality itself (perhaps due to the relative lack of funding), and the field continues to flourish even when the subject itself is the controversial Kinsey Reports.