

vernacular memory over the imposition of official memory; it is the reverse in Nora's conception. Moreover, this artificial dichotomy would enshrine a canon whose existence Nora will later deny.

Nora is fond of such diadic formulations. In "The Era of Commemoration", he builds another dichotomy between two models for contemporary commemoration. This time, they can be either generation or centennials. Again, the split is between the self-evident and the creative: centennials are obvious commemorations, but generation is an "existential unit that gives shape and meaning to time as it is actually experienced" (p. 613). Their combination, merging the bland, chronological counting of the years and the emotion of people living out their past experiences, has reshaped commemoration. It has subverted the old, national commemoration and its canon, replacing it with one more subject to perpetual revision. (One wonders if that canon was imposed or constructed; if the latter, was it not also subject to revision during its generation?) Somehow this explains the weakness of the national model, which has been overturned by a memorial model that places importance not on the past, but on what we bring to it. Memory has replaced history; our recollections have subverted the imposed, official canon. With this canon gone, the capriciousness of popular politics has replaced the old national unity of France. Thus, Nora can claim that only in memory is France whole. Certainly, this quick overview does not do justice to the complete argument, but it suggests the problem. Nora's dichotomies strike me as artificial. He wants to claim a fundamental rupture, but his collection documents similar patterns in France's past. Michel Pastoureau's story of the Gallic Cock reveals how the French rooster changed its meaning and its allegiances, from a Roman pun, through a Capetian emblem, to the Fifth Republic and the mascot of *Mondial 98*. At each stage, the symbol was generated, imposed, and contested, not according to self-evident meanings, but according to the meanings that people brought to the past. The general thrust of *Realms of Memory* is contradicted by its director.

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Beryl Satter — *Each Mind a Kingdom: American Women, Sexual Purity and the New Thought Movement, 1875–1920*. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1999. Pp. xii, 382.

This is an intellectual history of the "New Thought" movement in turn-of-the-century America. The term "movement" is a bit of a convenience for the historian, for it is an umbrella category that links people who actually would have refused such company in their own time. Beryl Satter groups the most famous of the Christian Scientists — especially Mary Baker Eddy — with those Eddy considered "false lecturers and teachers", a host of former students and others who became her rivals and, after her death, inheritors. Yet Satters sees more similarities than differences here. All of her subjects believed that the "mental or spiritual world was the true reality" while the material world was a "secondary creation of the mind". They also

believed that people had god-like powers: the power to “create their own worlds through their thought” (p. 3). More importantly, the entire movement was dedicated to hashing out one of the main cultural debates of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries: the nature of gendered selfhood. Which qualities constituted ideal manhood and womanhood? Was the nation in need of “male rationality, or female spirituality”? Were the keys to “progress, civilization and race perfection” male desire, or female virtue? Who deserved cultural emancipation, the “desirous, competitive and rational white man, or the desireless, spiritual and altruistic white woman” (pp. 9–10)?

The notion that thought has the power to alter circumstance lives on, of course, in a host of New Age philosophies, in the creed of groups such as Alcoholics Anonymous, and daily on television, from Oprah to the evangelists. Yet, far from seeing the New Thought movement as a movement of quacks, a “crude religion of success”, as historians have tended to view it, Satter insists that, by viewing these philosophies through the lens of gender and race, we can learn much about both the movement itself and American culture in general. As she explains, when the popularity of New Thought was at its height — and Christian Science membership alone jumped from 26 in 1879 to over 200,000 in 1926 — the majority of its adherents were not young businessmen or self-indulgent consumers, but white middle-class women. It was especially popular among middle-class reformers of the day, both male and female. Early progressives such as suffrage activists, journalists, social purity campaigners, and Christian socialists saw New Thought philosophies as compatible with the world they were attempting to build, one which would bring about “a new era in the development of the ‘race’ ” (p. 8).

On the whole, Satter’s goal — to rescue the New Thought movement from the cultural margins and establish its importance to several generations of social reformers — is well met. This is an ambitious book, and, like many works of intellectual history, it cannot meet all of its claims. Satter occasionally tries too hard, introducing too many themes, making too many claims, and seeing too much in the world views of a handful of novelists, social reformers, and theologians. The links Satter sees between New Thought theology and virtually all social concerns of the era are sometimes forced and too schematic, and she has a tendency to cram far too much into her own categories. For example, was a “wish to reform selfhood by moderating desire” really the “heart of the woman movement” of the nineteenth century?

Satter’s main — and double-barrelled — goal is to put women back into New Thought and also to recover New Thought discourses on gender. Yet she has made an equally valuable contribution to the history of race. Satter joins a growing number of historians, including Vron Ware, Antoinette Burton, and Gail Bederman, who are intent on exploring how white women have made their claims for advancement based on definition of racial progress they shared with white men. As Satter argues, white women did not “challenge the idea that civilization was a racial trait of whites”; rather, they argued that “pure, selfless women, rather than aggressive desirous men were the best hope for civilization” (p. 39). The chapters on “The Era of Women and the Problem of Desire” and “New Thought and Early Progressivism”

explain this particularly well. This is a thorough and integrated analysis of the intellectual history of race and gender, free of defensiveness or apology.

Satter ends her tale, as many historians do, with a brief nod to the present. Reflecting on the popularity of self-help and New Age culture, she suggests that, rather than condemning such ideas as narcissist and simplistic, we could “interpret the concerns of New Age and self help authors in the context of the broader cultural forces they seem to invoke”. Future historians, she suggests, might find in today’s self-help authors “the clues to how gendered selfhood was renegotiated in the closing years of the twentieth century” (pp. 253–254). It might seem a bit disconcerting that Deepak Chopra, Oprah Winfrey, or Anthony Robbins might stand as cultural representatives of our day, their words and writings pored over by historians. This book, however, makes a convincing case that the words of popular though long-forgotten spiritual thinkers can offer enormous insight into the social and cultural concerns of past generations.

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