research community and suggested that they needed to develop more effective ways of communicating research findings (p. 161). Communication is a problem, to be sure, but so, too, is the narrow academic focus that blunts the policy potential of

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research networks, wherever they were located, to include not only the policy-makers who might mobilize research findings to practical ends, but also the people being researched, who could benefit directly by reflecting on their condition. In Canada the success of the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council's Community-University Research Alliances (CURA) programme suggests that there are ways of conducting research that might help the SSHA to regain some of its earlier missionary zeal.

Policy-driven research must also be delivered in a timely fashion. One of the strengths of this volume is the inclusion of essay-length pieces — Daniel Segal's deconstruction of world history texts to expose their inherent Western bias; James Z. Lee's (with Richard Steckel) exploration of demography and family history; Michael K. Brown's reflection on changing conceptions of race and racial inequality; and Richard Biernacki's analysis of space and place — but they were written in 2000 and therefore lack references to relevant sources published in the following five years. These essays should have been in our hands much sooner. Ultimately, of course, this book, like the association that generated it, is a reflection of a particular moment in history and, as such, is a splendid record of "the way we were" at beginning of a new millennium.

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HARVEY, Karen — *Reading Sex in the Eighteenth Century: Bodies and Gender in English Erotic Culture*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004. Pp. 261.

In a carefully researched and wide-ranging study of erotic culture in eighteenth-century England, Karen Harvey reveals the links and the tensions between prurience and politeness. Erotica, she argues, absorbed and reflected upon contemporary developments as diverse as the expansion of empire, the popularity of botany, and the growth of a new reading public; it was "firmly embedded in eighteenth-century culture" (p. 222). As a genre, it was distinctly male. Written by men for men and concerned with issues of male power and sexual satisfaction, it valorized certain models of masculinity, particularly that of the man of wit, "the man of the world ... the *bon vivant*, the friend of the fair sex, the bottle and song" (William Hewardine, quoted p. 52).

Harvey is careful in differentiating erotica from pornography. For her, erotica neither refers to all publications dealing with sex, nor is it deemed a better, lighter, less explicit, or less violent precursor to, or variant of, pornography. She also separates it from the often openly erotic amatory fiction of female authors, such as Aphra Behn, Mary Delarivier Manley, and Eliza Haywood. While both amatory fiction and erotica

allude to, defer, or conceal sex, they differ in tone and purpose. The former is earnest, turning sexual encounters to serious, moral ends; the latter, playful, laden with allusions, puns, and *double entendre*. Most importantly, the primary purpose of erotica is sexual: it is about sexual pleasure and the sexual act. It privileges heterosexual desire, male dominance (even violence), and female submission. Unlike early-modern pornography, with its emphasis on "*explicit* depiction of sexual *action*" (p. 21), Harvey defines erotica as "*material about sexual pleasure which depicted sex, bodies and desire through illusions of concealment and distance: bodies were represented through metaphor and suggestion, and depictions of sexual activity were characterized by deferral and silence* [italics in original]" (p. 20).

Through the study of an impressive array of erotic texts, images, and cultural practices, Harvey makes a strong case for situating erotica in "a continuum of male homosociality and good fellowship" (p. 73) and for locating erotic culture in the masculine society of conviviality, conversation, and connoisseurship of the eighteenth-century club and coffeehouse. Not all of these were leading exponents of polite society. While the farcical phallicism of the Beggar's Benison of Anstruther, Scotland, with its penis-shaped pottery and its group masturbatory practices, may have been the extreme, even more mainstream clubs such as the Kit-Kat also served as sites of erotic culture. Indeed, one of the strengths of Harvey's work derives from her exploration of the uneasy relationship between erotica and politeness. While she is perhaps too quick to limit the impact of politeness, with its emphasis on masculine refinement and moderation, to a relatively brief eighteenth-century dominance, its impact on erotica and erotic culture is emphasized. From at least the 1730s, English erotic culture both mocked and aspired to politeness. The result was "a refined and learned bawdiness that catered to both politeness and prurience, refinement and ribaldry" (p. 76). In teasing out the tensions between these oppositions, she calls attention to the way in which erotica was consumed by men of middling, gentry, and aristocratic origins in social situations, in much the same way as other elite texts. In so doing, she suggests that erotic culture provided a link between polite and "traditional" masculinity (p. 74), linking the witty man of the world to "the rough homosociality increasingly regarded as central to English masculinity" (p. 75). For historians of gender, the staying power and adaptability of long-established ideals of masculinity are striking, a theme later echoed in her examination of erotica's engagement with women and the construction and meaning of sex-gender differences.

Although a supremely masculine genre, eighteenth-century erotica did not de-sex women or deny the existence of female sexual desire or pleasure. Neither can it be neatly mapped onto Thomas Laqueur's assumptions about the emergence of a "two-sex" model of sexual difference with its accompanying assumptions about female passionlessness (and the implications thereof). Erotica presented instead a "gendered economy of pleasure" (p. 201). As in the case of masculinity, erotica reveals the co-existence of contending understandings of female bodies and female nature. Female sexual difference was viewed through a prism of gender. Pervasive eighteenth-century beliefs about women's "natural" modesty and reticence were maintained alongside older, seemingly opposing, understandings of women as sexually ever-responsive. The lustful and lascivious early-modern woman was not replaced by a

desexed, domestic, Georgian daughter. Contrary to common assumptions about the trajectory of female sexuality, women in erotica were portrayed as thoroughly sexualized, rather than desexualized. Even female modesty became an important part of women's allure; once modesty was overcome, female sexual desire was unleashed. Female sexual pleasure, however, depended upon men and became a testimony to male sexual ability.

If women were sexualized in erotic texts, Harvey argues that sex itself was feminized. Replete with images of softness, seclusion, darkness, and enclosure, erotica depicted sex as a place men visited, "a thoroughly feminine space" (p. 173). In the final densely packed chapters on space, movement, and pleasure, Harvey provides fascinating insights into the ways in which eighteenth-century erotica envisaged sexual encounters. Ultimately, she argues, erotica takes us back to men and men's bodies: "women's sensual experiences served to convey information about men, and their pleasure conveyed vigorous heterosexuality upon male bodies" (p. 221).

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HEMPTON, David — *Methodism: Empire of the Spirit*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2005. Pp. 278.

No historian writing today knows more about Methodism than David Hempton. This book is the culmination of decades of research and two earlier studies of the interface between Methodism and British politics and society. *Methodism: Empire of the Spirit* is a concise, often masterful, and consistently thought-provoking analysis of the Methodist churches in Britain and the United States from that moment in May 1738 when John Wesley felt his heart strangely warmed to the relatively recent rise of Pentecostalism, which Hempton identifies as the denominational descendant of Wesley's movement.

Instead of structuring his study along either geographic or strictly chronological lines, Hempton investigates eight themes that, taken together, help explain the rise, progress, and eventual decline of Methodism on both sides of the Atlantic. By framing each thematic chapter around two parallel — and sometimes competing — concepts, Hempton effectively pinpoints many of the contradictions that gave Methodism such adaptability and forward drive in its first century and a half of existence. In the second chapter, for instance, he points out that the Methodist movement was not just about enthusiasm; it was also a product of Enlightenment thinking, though, to be sure, a very unlikely product. In chapter eight, Hempton explores the complex relationship between denominational consolidation in Britain and the United States and Methodism's gradual loss of membership. As an intervention in the long-running debate over secularization, the latter chapter has much to recommend it: not least its careful weighing of the various theories on offer.

Indeed, the strengths of *Methodism: Empire of the Spirit* are manifold. Like Hempton's previous books, it is beautifully written and makes excellent use of the