

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

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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

apt quotation and the striking anecdote. In the fourth chapter, for example, Hempton discusses the Pendle Forest riots of 1748 — when local mobs attacked Methodist preachers and people alike — and uses this series of events to analyse the widespread hostility to the early Methodist movement in Britain. In the same chapter, Hempton also describes the hard times that the Methodist circuit riders faced in America during the Revolutionary War — tarring and feathering made an appearance. Such a broadly comparative approach to Methodist history is, in itself, something quite new and yields valuable insights, especially in explaining why, during its heyday in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, Methodism expanded much more rapidly in the United States than it did in Britain. At the same time, Hempton does not ignore that old saw of Methodist historiography: the various internal battles over politics, denominational structure, and religious practice that rocked the British and American churches during the mid-1800s and that helped shape Methodism in both countries. However, more than any previous study, *Methodism: Empire of the Spirit* attempts to understand the Methodist movement as a people's religion. Hempton concentrates on uncovering and explaining the experiences of industrial workers in Britain, Republican townspeople in Jeffersonian America, the women who consistently made up a majority of Methodist congregations, the African Americans who flooded into American Methodism during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and a diverse array of other lay groups. In this respect, the book is a resounding triumph. Whether discussing conversion, the idea of the good death, hymn singing, or those often rowdy outdoor religious services known as camp meetings, Hempton conveys a very clear idea of what it must have been like to be a Methodist in Britain and the United States between 1738 and the early twentieth century.

There are several points, nevertheless, where Hempton could perhaps have pushed his analysis even further. Focusing on the Methodists in Britain and the United States, he effectively compares them, but he does not view the two movements, in any sustained way, from a truly transatlantic perspective. It would be interesting to know how British Methodism was actually influenced by the much more dynamic Methodist denominations in the United States and how the British Methodists, in turn, affected Methodism in America beyond the pre-Revolutionary period. What did it mean, for instance, that a group of Methodist schismatics in Leeds, England, in 1827 eventually took the same name as a breakaway group within American Methodism: the Protestant Methodists? Hempton demonstrates that the Protestant Methodist secessions in the United States and in Leeds were the result of disputes over similar issues: “power, representation, and cultural style” (p. 103). However, he does not explore what seem to have been more direct points of contact between Methodist malcontents on either side of the ocean.

The book could also have benefited from a closer examination of Methodism in Canada. Hempton does touch on the development of Canadian Methodism in several chapters — briefly mentioning its spectacular growth in Upper Canada after the 1790s, its position in British Methodism's larger mission field, its movement towards social respectability from the mid-nineteenth century on, and its continued expansion in the 1920s — but he does not deal with the potentially interesting question of how

Canadian Methodism negotiated its sometimes awkward position as an American Methodist offshoot in a thoroughly British colony. By doing so, Hempton might have found another way to approach the interaction between British and American Methodist experiences. At the very least, *Methodism: Empire of the Spirit* would have thrown an even more penetrating light on the different ways in which society, culture, and politics influenced and were influenced by the Methodist movement across the North Atlantic world.

Ultimately, however, neither of these criticisms can possibly take away from the overwhelming strengths of this book. In less than 300 pages, Hempton manages to summarize and to expand greatly on an increasingly complex body of scholarship exploring the history of Methodism in Britain and the United States. Whether for academics already familiar with the Methodist movement or students encountering the topic for the first time, *Methodism: Empire of the Spirit* will prove an invaluable resource.

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ILIFFE, John — *Honour in African History*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005. Pp. 404.

John Iliffe's distinguished career includes histories of very large topics such as *The African Poor* (1987) and *Africans: The History of a Continent* (1995). *Honour in African History* continues this métier in magisterial form. Its thesis is that African societies traditionally placed a high emphasis on honour ("a right to respect") to guide interpersonal relations and to shape political structures. Colonial regimes and capitalist enterprise then imposed very deep humiliations upon Africans. Yet colonialism failed fully to "tame" or assimilate traditional concepts of honour into a new ethics of modernization. Instead, it gave rise to reactive, bowdlerized forms. The long-term result shows in decision-making by Africans today that often appears dishonourable and is evidently self-destructive — corruption, wars, baby rapes, and denial of AIDS, for example.

Attempting to understand aspects of African culture and history that play a role in frustrating current aspirations for development is an important and timely objective. With new commitments by the G-8 countries to increase aid, it would be a shame if such development efforts were to founder on unexamined assumptions about African society. Iliffe aims to make intellectual connections and to encourage further research that might be helpful in that regard. He weaves together strands of evidence from a wide range of missionary and other early eyewitness accounts, secondary academic literature, and African periodicals, memoirs, court testimony, and fiction. The book is densely packed and copiously footnoted but eloquently written. Whether it works, however, and for whom, is a difficult question.

The first half offers a tour of the major political and cultural regions in pre-colonial