Authoritative maternal discourse perpetuates itself but does not tolerate physicality, variable performance, or even interpretation of its codes, the readings indicate that those empowered by its strictures are writers or governesses, not individual mothers.

The reading of *Pamela*, part II is especially insightful in its focus on the heroine’s performance of ideal maternity by means of her authorship of an educational tract, a commentary on Locke’s *Some Thoughts Concerning Education*. Ms. Davies emphasizes the “contradictions” and “formal tensions” faced by Richardson in his attempts to fashion a maternal paragon from conduct-book models, and to depict an ideal of early education mediated by the surveillance of Mr. B. To position Richardson as the point of departure for this study of women writers is bold. Given the epistolary novelist’s advocacy of the purity and deliberation fostered by written communication, and also given the ambivalent nature of female paragons in his narratives, Richardson is a highly appropriate figure to introduce the contradictions that trouble the discourse of exemplary maternal education.

Sarah Fielding’s *The Governess*, a children’s novel that depicts a “femitopian” community of girls at a boarding school under the tutelage of a privileged “non-biological mother substitute,” is, for Ms. Davies, a flawed solution to idealized maternity. In the absence of direct patriarchal influence, the female intellectual authority of the governess is dignified and idealized. In preparation for their subordinate marital lives, the authoritative mechanisms of the text are a kind of “governess” that prompts self-surveillance in the female readers.

Ms. Davies’s strength—the development of a flexible tradition of maternal educative writing that accommodates a range of genres, political orientations, and religious purposes—is also her limitation. In pursuing an overarching “voice” of maternal guidance that combines various texts into a single discourse, Ms. Davies fails to distinguish meaningfully between the voices of the treatise-writer and the novelist (or, for that matter, between those of author and narrator). She acknowledges that “mimetic novels” introduce additional complexities to her paradigm, but she does not sort through the complexities of narration or reception in ways that might allow for a less restrictive picture of reading itself. Her interests in topics related to the novel as genre (such as realism, the history of paragon-figures, and disciplinary reading) could have been even more productive components of her suggestive and wide-ranging model. Even so, Ms. Davies’s book is a significant contribution to studies of maternity and education during the Enlightenment.

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Citing examples from letters, diaries, poems, and works of fiction to present an array of perspectives, this valuable book is a much-needed study of the eighteenth-century garden from the point of view of those women who had first-hand experience of the gardens at their country estates. *Green Retreats* offers memorable quotations about gardens, many never highlighted before.

Mr. Bending’s long introduction demonstrates how much the garden figured in the lives of many elite and literary women and also how it functioned both imaginatively and realistically in their personal
lives. His book views the garden as having two sides like Janus, both as a place of pleasing retirement and as a place rife with erotic meanings. He traces the literature of the English garden back to poems on Horatian themes as well as to practical handbooks. In Chapter 1 he cites Maren-Sofie Røstvig’s essential The Happy Man: Studies in the Metamorphoses of a Classical Idea (Oxford 1954). Reviewing the development of the idea of rural retirement in British thought and literature, he points to popular texts that include Pomfret’s “The Choice,” Addison’s essays on the garden, Nicholas Rowe’s The Fair Penitent, and Elizabeth Rowe’s cautionary tales. He incorporates seduction narratives and didactic stories along with broader notions of the virtues of country life in a valuable survey.

“Next Sunday I quit the peaceful groves and hospitable roof of Bullstrode, for the noisy, turbulent city; my books and serious reflections are to be laid aside for the looking-glass and curling irons.” Elizabeth Montagu’s comment exemplifies what makes this book so readable, for not only does she incisively contrast life in the country and in the town, but she includes her curling iron, an object of enduring cultural significance in women’s lives. Women in Montagu’s social circle debated the value of retirement—how much was too much—with Elizabeth Carter reminding her wealthy friend that she should shun a country life that made her neglect her social responsibilities in the town. Carter enjoyed her visits to Montagu’s country house, remarking wistfully on the difference between the size of the garden at her father’s home and Montagu’s estate. Though packed with roses, vegetables, and a few fruit trees, Carter’s backyard was only about the size of Montagu’s dressing room.

The chapter on Elizabeth Montagu is especially good, as it shows another side to the woman known as London’s Queen of the Blues. Most commentators focus on her exciting literary life in London, but she spent at least half of the year in the country. At Sandleford, she liked nothing more than to sit on a garden bench, contemplatively appreciating nature. Not everyone has a green thumb, and sometimes it is by simply abiding in a garden tended by others that one can feel a sense of harmony. Montagu was aware, too, that taking care of the garden meant other people would have jobs; the development and upkeep of the property kept people in the neighborhood gainfully employed. In another letter to a friend, Montagu commented on the thirty-three women and girls who had been hired to weed the grounds one season. Montagu appreciates their appearance, their laughter, their song. Her heart was touched by hearing their cheerful voices. Despite differences in social class, Montagu feels a bond with them.

Lady Caroline Holland, escaping from her husband’s political world to the suburban gardens of Holland House, enjoyed peace in the gardens that she helped to design. But the main focus of Chapters 4 and 5 is on two women who lived in forced retirement due to marital scandals: Lady Coke at Nottingham House, and Lady Luxborough at Barrells, Warwickshire. It ends rather drearily, with the two trapped in their gardens. Yet Mr. Bending rightly points out the benefits of “the physicality of gardening” as a means of “holding melancholy at bay.” Lady Mary Coke, to whom Horace Walpole dedicated The Castle of Otranto (1764), often spent hours in her garden, planting and pruning, the work taking her mind off her other troubles. Mr. Bending also discusses a woman of a different social class, the governess Ellen...
Weeton, now known for her published journals, who enjoyed gardening on her employer’s estate even if it was not her own property. She took a break from her labors by dancing in the garden. Most people were not landowners, but the time and energy that people invested in their rented yards or allotments yielded much beauty and vitality. With his keen eye for the well-chosen example, Mr. Bending demonstrates how the garden was a living and a lived-in space for women of the eighteenth century.

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One of the casualties of the Civil Wars and Republic, the wisdom goes, was the widespread acceptability of an enthusiastic mingling of religion and politics. From Hudibras to the History of the Royal Society, Restoration society turned on the zealots, deeming what they saw as religious bad faith to be the cause of the political turmoil and disorder of the middle years of the century. In its place, people espoused a political and religious moderation and came increasingly to value a more detached, ironic, and irenic stance. Ms. Zook’s engaging, smooth, and very readable study both confirms and complicates this picture, nowhere more compellingly or tellingly than in the intriguing vignette with which she concludes. In 1694, Bridget Bendish—granddaughter of Oliver Cromwell, daughter of the regicide Henry Ireton, and herself a Dissenter, worshipping with the Independents and given to episodes of rapturous enthusiasm—had a meeting with Queen Mary II. Not only did their religion and political allegiances differ, but the Queen’s grandfather, Charles I, had been brought to execution by the regicides in Bendish’s immediate family, to whom she remained intensely loyal. One might therefore expect the encounter between the two women to have been adversarial and hostile. Instead, the Queen, known for her espousal and advocacy of religious moderation, took the enthusiast Bendish in her stride, the two women exchanged pleasantries, and Bendish was promised a pension. In the study of Restoration and late Stuart political sympathies and activities, one needs to be prepared for the counterintuitive.

This anecdote is not only evocative but also indicative of the book, which argues that the equilibrium and affiliations between religion and politics, dissent and religious orthodoxy, High Church and Low Church, Whig and Tory, were complex, nuanced, and unstable. The anatomization and elaboration of these intricate and evolving positions and identifications are the strength of Ms. Zook’s book.

Her thesis is that women continued to play an active part in politics, both radical and conservative, after the Restoration and that the impulse behind their interventions was religious devotion. Indeed, the categories of religion and politics continue to be inseparable even after—and in reaction against—the perceived excesses of the revolutionary period. It was just that now the driving religious affiliation was as likely to be liberal and moderate as it was radical and separatist. The book’s straightforward aim is “to illustrate the religio-political actions and utterances of women” between 1660 and 1714. The focus on political actions, from petitioning and joining mass gatherings to dispensing patronage and philanthropy, presents methodological hur-

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