hoarding up against the future. He emerges as the unlikely hero in this story of eternal life: “lacking his lifelong obsession with documenting himself and others as a prophylactic against annihilation and loss, Boswell would have had no reason to write the Life of Johnson.” If Boswell brings his subject to living, talking life, however, Johnson’s silences speak all the louder. Mr. Sider Jost argues that, like the Spectator, “the Rambler sees the human desire for fame as evidence for the immortality of the soul.” Yet fame is also ephemeral; even names that once aspired “to range over kingdoms and continents shrink at last into cloisters or colleges” (Rambler 146). Writing, for Johnson, is not about fame but emptiness. He lived life as a battle against the utter vacuity of time. Through writing, waste and emptiness—exemplified in his failure to hold to his resolution to keep a diary—became his roads to redemption. If much of daily life is composed of empty obligations—social life, eating, resting, pretty much everything in fact—for Johnson, “The proper use of writing time redeems, that is retrieves (in Proust’s sense of ‘retrouver’), the time that was lost.” The proof here is in the pudding: Boswell’s magnificent monument to Johnson redeems all that empty waste of table talk; it has come for us to exemplify the very idea of the eternal. Mr. Sider Jost has made a lasting contribution to our understanding of the period, earning, I expect, his place in eternity.

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The dilemma faced by eighteenth-century English Nonconformists was multifaceted and daunting. Barred from England’s two universities by religious tests designed to ensure that only those conforming to the national church gained admission, Nonconformists had to erect their own educational foundations, that is, the “academies.” These existed to prepare leaders for both ecclesiastical and community leadership. The target of lingering prejudice regarding a supposed collective responsibility for the regicide of the preceding century, Nonconformists struggled to alter perceptions of their movement as both rustic and seditious in tendency. Nonconformity—whether of the Quaker, Baptist, Independent, or Presbyterian variety—was also thoroughly decentralized such that all concerted action was made highly difficult.

In her Textual Culture of English Protestant Dissent, Tessa Whitehouse explores the ways in which eighteenth-century Nonconformists (or Dissenters), by their cultivation of literary networks, sought to demonstrate that they were productive members of polite society. These networks bound together their leaders by both epistolary correspondence and the publication and careful reissuing of important books. The networks extended into central Europe (involving correspondence with Pietist leaders) and across the Atlantic, where they engaged Christian leaders in New England. Not only leading Nonconformist figures such as Isaac Watts (1678–1748) and Philip Doddridge (1702–1751) benefited through these exchanges but so did their communities, inasmuch as all labored to overcome the effects of the social marginalization that was the consequence of Nonconformity. Ms. Whitehouse traces these literary networks to the year 1800, by which time Nonconformity was battling the additional risk of association with a radicalism engen-
dered by some in its ranks. These saw in the cross-channel French Revolution a possible way forward for the obviating of their political disabilities.

It is apparent that in Textual Culture Ms. Whitehouse has given us her doctoral dissertation in revised form. In places, the text suffers from excessive documentation such that the reader will struggle to follow any clear sense of narrative. As well, numerous chapters begin with programmatic indications of what the following pages will aim to accomplish. The transition from dissertation to a more general work is therefore not fully complete, although this liability does not compromise the value of the work taken as a whole.

As readers press on, they will find an illuminating discussion of the wide literary and pedagogical influence of Dissenting minister Isaac Watts, some of whose works such as Logic (1725) were written for use in the Dissenting Academies. Ms. Whitehouse also shows that the relationship and correspondence between Watts and Academy tutor Philip Doddridge epitomize the operation of the epistolary culture that was widespread among Dissenting leaders in this period. Though living a good distance apart, their relationship had begun through letters exchanged when Doddridge, the younger man, solicited advice about future improvement of education in the Academies.

On the basis of so cultivated an epistolary correspondence between them, it was perhaps natural that the prolific Watts would include Doddridge among his literary executors. Those executors understood that sustaining the circulation of the writings of Watts after his decease was one means of continuing the gains that Nonconformists had achieved through his impressive literary profile. The consolidating of Watts’s reputation for these ends was manifested in the publication of his complete Works in six leather-bound volumes in 1754.

Doddridge, who barely outlived Watts (a generation his senior), was himself a major participant in this textual culture. The circulation of his Northampton academy lectures, first in multiple authorized handwritten copies and—after his death—in three print editions, went far to achieve a measure of uniformity of instruction and conviction within the various Nonconformist academies across England. Once in print, his Course of Lectures in Pneumatology, Ethics and Divinity (1764)—just like the various writings of Watts—served to draw the admiration of Christian readers well beyond Nonconformity, both in England and abroad, in Europe and America. As the whole Works of Watts had been gathered together with a view to enhancing the collective reputation of Nonconformity, so also with the Works of Doddridge, published in ten volumes in 1802–1805. An extensive devotional aid, The Family and Closet Expositor, left only half-published at Doddridge’s death in 1751, was brought to completion by trusted associates in six volumes based on his surviving notes. They sought to advance their movement’s profile as “learned, polite and pious” while preserving the memory of this favored author. In this case also, one Nonconformist’s literary legacy proved itself invaluable to a range of Christian readers far beyond the author’s Dissenting circle.

In sum, Ms. Whitehouse has amply demonstrated the importance of literary networks for the internal sustaining of the Nonconformist cause while its supporters awaited the removal of liabilities in the era of the Reform Bill of 1832. She has shown how crucial these networks were in support of Nonconformity’s determination to demonstrate its positive contribution to wider Christian society. Though standing outside the Nonconformist
tradition, Ms. Whitehouse has approached it with a high degree of empathy. It needs to be said, at the same time, that her illuminating treatment presupposes considerable prior familiarity with eighteenth-century Nonconformity. Nonconformist education through the academies is outlined in such works as Irene Parker’s *Dissenting Academies in England* (1914, reprinted 2009) and Herbert McLachlan’s *English Education under the Test Acts* (1931). One may gain additional benefit from her treatment of the careers of Watts and Doddridge by a familiarity with the biographies of the former by Arthur Paul Davis (1948) and the latter by Malcolm Deacon (1980) and Robert Strivens (2016).

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In his *Treatise of the Hypochondriack and Hysterick Passions* (1711), Mandeville acknowledged that both men and women possess souls but because of the fundamental difference of their bodies have different mental capacities: “This delicacy as well as imbecility of the Spirits in Women is Conspicuous in all their actions, those of the Brain not excepted: They are unfit both for abstruse and elaborate Thoughts, all studies of Depth, Coherence, and Solidity that fatigue the Spirits, and require a steadiness and assiduity of thinking.” Nevertheless, he goes on to observe that “where the Advantages of Education and Knowledge are equal, they exceed the Men in Sprightliness of Fancy, quickness of Thought and off-hand Wit.” Two years earlier his first English pamphlet, *The Virgin Unmask’d* (1709), had rendered the ironic dialogue of a spinster advising her niece against ever marrying because of the male’s legal power to deny her any personal freedom under that contract and instead urging her to pursue an education to find independence and happiness. If Mandeville was not impressed by Mary Astell’s prowess as an original thinker, he may have admired her vigorous attack on the oppressive marriage system when writing this dialogue. In her philosophical writings, Astell, however, demonstrates the “steadiness and assiduity of thinking” that women’s natural disposition supposedly lacks.

Some thirty years since Ruth Perry’s pioneering investigation of this writer’s unique feminist role, Ms. Broad’s scrupulously researched monograph presents a holistic account of Astell’s oeuvre, one that engages fundamental questions in theology, metaphysics, epistemology, and morality as well as her Tory and High Church politics. As the subtitle implies, the unifying focus is on Astell’s concern with guiding women through a male-dominated world to reach a fulfilling moral judgment and “lasting happiness.” Although mainly allowing Astell’s ideas to come forth within their historical context, Ms. Broad also reminds her readers of their present-day significance and eventually connects them to such recent feminists as Marilyn Friedman (2000), ending her book with a brief postulate about Astell’s theory of freedom.

The seven chapters with a thematic title are as follows: “Knowledge,” “God,” “Soul and Body,” “Virtue and the Passions,” “Love,” “Marriage,” and “Moderation.” While patiently recounting her epistemology, Ms. Broad explains that Astell was not an empiricist but fundamentally a rationalist, omitting the senses as a basis of knowing, and ad-