This book is relevant, non-technical, and well written. It would be of interest to a wide variety of readers from ecophilosophs to artists. The chapters are connected, yet different enough to appeal to a variety of interests. For example, the narratives of descriptive aesthetics are wonderful. A later chapter thoughtfully provokes the reader's imagination in a discussion of outer space and aesthetics. "How do moral and aesthetic factors figure in the design of any community, in particular, one that is extraterrestrial" (p. 100)? Beyond the designs required for survival needs, space offers a great imaginative potential for design possibility since it is unbounded by gravity, orientation or culture. If shape and design form community, then a space station's designs potentially offer a great platform for playing with and understanding the interactivity of humanity and environment. What kind of environment is possible?

Berleant persuasively argues that changes in habits of thought and valuing about ourselves in the environment offer us more. His insights regarding the specialness of place and meaning hit the mark in an era of stripmalls and cookie cutter houses, arguing that aesthetically uninspiring or depressive living conditions are mutually reinforcing. This book offers a framework and places to begin to change that. His critical voice offers avenues for contemplating long term consequences in the construction of environments that foster community and meaningfulness for all the beings that dwell there.

Southern Illinois University Bob Zellman


The standard account regarding the history of American philosophy that our students take from their philosophy classes runs something like this: Before the nineteenth century, there were a few philosophical insights recorded by Colonial writers, among them Benjamin Franklin and Thomas Jefferson. But these, though important figures in American letters, were not philosophers proper—they stumbled upon philosophy more than created it. In the nineteenth century a few notable thinkers appeared, especially Emerson. Even so, they favored poetic expression a bit too much and were too engaged in something like cultural criticism to be as systematic as their European contemporaries. But things really got moving when Peirce arrived. American philosophy truly matured, and now we can compete in the international, philosophical market.

But for those willing to strain their ears, there has always been a low murmur of challenge to the standard account. What about Jonathan Edwards? Why doesn't he count? There are quite a number of factors contributing to why he has not counted. First, most of us read Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God as undergraduates. No philosopher, we all thought, could write such a foul piece intending only to scare us. Second, Sinners was
a sermon. Can a preacher be a philosopher? Third, what little we read of Edwards was not in philosophy class but in a survey course of early American literature, right alongside Cotton Mather. Fourth, the dark Calvinism so associated with Edwards doesn't seem to fit in with the individualist spirit that we like to think as characteristic of American thought. Indeed, it was his defense of Calvinist views that caused him to suffer disfavor during the Great Awakening. Fifth, his son-in-law was Aaron Burr, Sr., father of one of the most famous shady characters in American history, and we tend to have a merciless distrust for those without foresight. Finally, there has not been an anthology of Edwards' works short enough and comprehensive enough for class use until now.

The editors have carefully selected pieces to represent the several facets of this prolific writer. Some of Edwards' better known works are here (such as Sinners and Freedom of the Will), but special care has been given to include treatises, letters, and diary entries that show us something of Edwards the brilliant philosopher, Edwards the revivalist minister, and Edwards the flesh and bone man who was devoted to his family of eleven children. The editors had no shortage of material to weed through. Edwards published a great deal of work, but he also left an enormous number of unpublished sermons (more than 1,200), letters, and personal notes that will soon be included in an all-inclusive The Works of Jonathan Edwards from Yale University Press, a project that has been in the works since 1953.

The "Editors' Introduction" presents a fine model. It gives relevant biographical information and keys to understanding Edwards' thought. Every piece in the first section of the book (selections from Edwards' published work and his sermons) is mentioned in the Introduction. The editors have managed to characterize the nature of each piece, sometimes placing the piece within the wider context of the works of Edwards' contemporaries; yet, they have skillfully avoided the danger of commenting too much and prejudicing the reader.

Those unfamiliar with Edwards' thought will be surprised to find how many philosophical topics he penetrated. He was deeply affected by Locke and at times seems to be responding directly to Berkeley, for many of Edwards' works (like Of Being are grappling with problems concerning primary and secondary qualities, substance, and idealism. His attack on Arminianism in Freedom of the Will is remarkably technical in his analyses of necessity/contingency, liberty, moral agency, and propositions about such concepts, all leading him to his own distinctive form of compatibilism. In addition to the breadth of topics Edwards wrote upon and the rigor of his argument, perhaps another side to his genius lay in his ability to turn all these issues, ultimately, into theological ones. All that is real and true is so because existence is sustained in God's consciousness. The manner by which Edwards works again and again back to this conclusion is the masterly and subtle result of a highly systematic thinker who never abandoned a world-view based on a few fundamental principles held throughout his life.

It would be a mistake, though, to think that Edwards' deliberate arguments are all that is of interest here to the philosopher. The careful reader will find Edwards' intellect at work in short, personal notes, and in the letters to his family and friends. He never loses sight of the big picture: that all is due to God, and that the intellectual talents given to
Edwards places upon him the duty of religious service. But Edwards was also human, with the concerns of any eighteenth century man in his social status. (An interesting selection included here is "Receipt for Slave Venus.") He was, however, no mere product of his age—he was an extraordinarily gifted thinker and engaged community leader, and this is exemplified nowhere as well as in this collection.

Among other things, Edwards is American philosophy's early champion. The editors of this fine volume have given us enough evidence to convince any reader

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Ron L. Cooper


One can (more or less) recommend this book, at least to those interested in Emerson and Slavery. How important these largely occasional writings are for an understanding of the real (Classic) Emerson of the more polished works remains an open question. Emerson was doubtless more of an "activist" on slavery than the image of him as an Olympian philosopher would suggest, but 'more' is a bit vague. How much more? The publication of these writings does add to our understanding of Emerson; but exactly what, and how much, must be left to other volumes to decide. Joel Meyerson is, of course, the better known of the editors. This volume (like old Gaul) is divided into three parts. I- The "Historical Background" is mainly by Professor Gougeon. It is, on the whole, well written; but, the author's use of trendy jargon is not helpful (at least in my reckoning). We are given many names, such as Theodore Parker or Thomas Wentworth Higginson, with no explanation of who they were; but most events are explained. For example, William Ellery Channing, William Henry Channing and Ellery Channing are mentioned, with no explanation of how they are related. On p. 9, William Ellery Channing is described as a "teacher", but was he not more a "preacher?" On p. 13, we are told that the abolitionists "threatened the economic status quo", or on p. 14 that they "espoused extreme anti-institutional positions." Is this not more 20th Century jargon?

On p. xv, we are told that Emerson had "eschewed single issue reforms." (On p. 15, Gougeon also speaks of "Pres. Andrew Jackson" (sic).) On p. 16, Gougeon speaks of "moralistic social reformers like Emerson and Channing". Is the term 'moralistic' really helpful? (Is it not sociologism?) On p. 19, he speaks of "Emerson's aversion to such public reform activity." Was it indeed mere "aversion?" On p. 20, he speaks of Emerson's "highly controversial 'Divinity School Address'". Was it merely "controversial"? On p. 45 he speaks of an "established elite." One could cite other examples of such mere jargon. This may be "generational", but I did not find such verbage helpful. Also, on p. 31, Gougeon states that Elizabeth Hoar was a "fiancée of Emerson's deceased brother". (Gender-bender?) Gougeon does show that Emerson was more of an anti-slavery activist than commonly supposed, but does not really help decide: