of Emerson’s definition of consistency with this quote, which is unfortunate, since it threatens to undermine the whole thing.

Whereas a few quotes have been tarnished, in one case it is the interpretation of a quote which suffers. In chapter one Magee treats Dewey as a philosophy of democracy: he quotes a passage in which Dewey considers how a philosophy would look like as a function of democracy, then interprets him as if he were speaking of philosophy in general (18). The article is crucial: philosophy is not a philosophy. Given the care and effort towards fleshing out a project, especially one which aims at revising our perception of the history of ideas, errors of this kind have no place.

The goal of clarification takes on several forms in the book. In the first chapter Magee takes pains to clarify the field he is working in, doing so by juxtaposing Ralph Ellison against William Carlos Williams. Ellison keyed in to the collaborative spirit of African American language, whereas Williams held a romantic vision of black speakers as improvising their being sui generis, generating their authenticity from their individual souls (37). Here is a case where subtle but profound differences call for explanation.

In the case of pragmatism, a similar treatment would be welcome. Magee is interested in the pragmatism of John Dewey, a different strain from that of the founder. The rationale is that Dewey is a sort of middle term between pragmatism and Ellison’s contribution (17). This, along with the fact that Burke refers to Dewey frequently, points to Magee’s choice. Regardless of the more widespread fame of his thought, pragmatism cannot be summarized in Dewey’s thought, which is different from that of the founder and black sheep of pragmatism, C.S. Peirce. On the social and contextual nature of truth, Peirce agrees with his followers; on issues relevant to Magee’s concerns, such as the relation of thought and action, he parts company. If Peirce sees the need to distinguish his own thought from theirs by renaming it (CP 5.414, 8.205), it would be well to discuss the matter in any treatment of pragmatism.

All things considered, the pluses far outweigh the minuses: Magee’s insights throw light on American history and its intellectual development, making *Emancipating Pragmatism* worthwhile reading for a wide audience. Which, given its content, is only right.

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In 2003 America’s great theologian and philosopher, Jonathan Edwards, turned 300. The occasion for writing is significant, of course, and the constellation of scholars that wrote the book befits the growing importance of Edwards’ legacy. *Jonathan Edwards at 300* is a collection of papers given by Edwards scholars at the Library of Congress. Contributors include Robert E. Brown, Ava Chamberlain, Philip F. Gura, Sang H. Lee, George M. Marsden, Gerald R. McDermott, Mark A. Noll, Amy Plantinga

The writing in this book is uniformly good. It’s likely to be as helpful to undergraduates as are John Smith’s excellent (and, lamentably, out-of-print) volume on Edwards and Sang H. Lee’s *Princeton Companion to Edwards*. The relevant themes around which the essays are collected—history, scripture, culture, society, and race—make them even more inviting. What a pleasant surprise to find a book that is at once so easy to read and so informative.

Though the areas of expertise of the contributors range across the humanities, the book seems at times to bill itself as a book on Edwards’ theology. In the Introduction, the editors describe the tercentenary conference attendees as interested in “Edwards, theology, and American religious and cultural life.” Similarly, in their synopsis of the book they focus on the theological themes of the essays. Don’t be misled. Anyone who has read Edwards knows that he wrote quite a lot that was not theological; and that when he did write theoretically, there was always a philosophical interest involved as well. At no point do the essays focus exclusively on theology, and, since they are written for a general scholarly audience, they do not lean heavily on theological jargon.

Sang Lee offers a good example of this with the opening essay, which is ostensibly about Edwards’ theology of history. His essay, entitled “Does History Matter to God? Jonathan Edwards’s Dynamic Re-conception of God’s Relation to the World,” argues that for Edwards’s God, “the world matters and is important to God.” Lee argues that Edwards’s “dispositional ontology” shows that Edwards was not an occasionalist, or at least not a simple one. Rather, God made a world that forms “resistances,” i.e. one that is habit-taking (an interesting precursor to Peirce’s later metaphysics). This creative act illustrates an Edwardsean novelty in theology, wherein God’s being is not primarily a substance but a disposition to communicate himself. In this light, history is neither irrelevant to God nor the mere outpouring of God’s determining will. History becomes rather the way in which God exercises this disposition, and human beings may actively participate in what God does. Lee deals directly with Edwards’s Plotinian heritage (and Edwards’s creative re-working of Plotinus’s doctrine of emanation by situating God in history) and indirectly with the Euthyphro problem and Augustine’s questions about time.

If this is just about theology of history, then Lee’s essay (and several others in the volume) ought to provoke the question of whether theology and philosophy are as distant from one another as common wisdom seems to indicate. Lee’s essay lends support to John Caputo’s thesis that philosophy and theology, at least in the context of American thought, are only different modes of thinking about the same questions.

In the essays that follow, the same pattern holds true: some theological concern of Edwards’s ultimately turns out to have relevance for wide-ranging elements of modern life.
The second essay, "Edwards as American Theologian: Grand Narratives and Pastoral Narratives," is good, provocative stuff for thinking about the relationship of theology to politics. Amy Plantinga Pauw argues that while Edwards was "a theologian of the Grand Narrative," in which the world is ultimately a story told from God's perspective, there is another important narrative strain in Edwards' theology: the pastoral narrative. The pastoral narrative sees the world locally and particularly, rather than eschatologically. In the pastoral narrative, the pastor is immersed in the actual and often intractable problems of political life. Plantinga Pauw offers Lincoln and M. L. King, Jr. as examples of Americans who have offered us such Edwardsean pastoral narratives. The pastoral narrative acts as a check against national hubris, self-righteousness, and religious sectarianism. In one of her footnotes she alludes to an article wherein Merold Westphal argues that the Bible is not (in Lyotard's terms) a meta-narrative but a mega-narrative and a de-legitimation narrative. The upshot of her whole article, then, is that aspects of Edwards's theology may be useful for keeping our big national religious dialogues civil.

Marsden, in the final essay, winds up making a similar point. He begins with a reflection on the writing of his Edwards biography a few years ago. All along, he asked himself, "What can we learn from Edwards today?" His first conclusion was, of course, that the answer to that question depends on who is doing the asking. As Douglas Sweeney reminds us in another essay in this volume, Reinhold Niebuhr called Edwards our "American Augustine." This "Augustine" has become a saint and polestar for many American Evangelicals. Marsden asks, what can Evangelicals, on the one hand, and, on the other hand, the rest of America, learn from Edwards? Marsden sees in Edwards's innovative theology and willingness to learn broadly a corrective for the "superficiality" of Evangelicalism. We can all learn from Edwards's love of beauty, "that is not just a temporary escape but which is the basis for a way of life that is both practical and exhilarating.

Robert Brown's article, "The Sacred and the Profane Connected: Edwards, the Bible, and Intellectual Culture," is a witty and enjoyable read. The title of the original paper had a question mark where the colon is now, to signal Brown's ambiguity concerning this connection. Whoever made the program for the original conference left out the question mark, and Brown let it stand as an example of the fact that texts often change in ways we cannot control. This becomes a segue to Brown's claim that "American culture has been in an almost perennial conversation about the nature of its sacred texts." Edwards is well known for his apparent fondness for hellfire and brimstone, which, of course, has its roots in one of our sacred texts. Brown's essay shows how Edwards's incessant treatments of Hell have at least as much to do with his attempts to reconcile the doctrine of Hell with the latest advancements in physics and astronomy as with divine punishment of sinners. Ultimately, physics led Edwards to assume that the Biblical descriptions of Hell were metaphorical. Brown points to Edwards's erudition as exemplary: his broad learning kept his theology in check through attention to scientific advances.
The volume is not merely an appreciation of Edwards written by his fans. If Edwards’s theology and philosophy have some relevance for modern life it is also true that Edwards’s thought presents cautionary tales of ways in which systematic thought can go awry. Edwards’s determination to make his theology consistent and rational is often admirable (for example in the ways he argues for personal responsibility, creativity, and freedom) occasionally quaint (like in this “physics of hell” bit) but also sometimes pernicious. Stephen Stein’s essay, “Jonathan Edwards and the Cultures of Biblical Violence,” illustrates how Edwards’s systematic thought led him to justify anti-Semitism as the natural consequence of Jews not embracing Jesus as the Messiah, and how Edwards labeled the Roman Catholic church as the Antichrist.

The other essays in the book round out the picture of how Edwards’s thought has retained its relevance throughout three centuries. Noll’s essay shows how broadly Edwards’ theology was received in Europe in Edwards’s time. The two essays on race are interesting and evenhanded: on the one hand, Edwards was a slave-owner. On the other hand, Edwards’s doctrine of depravity led to cross-racial egalitarianism, and abolitionists found his writings helpful for attacking the slave trade. Wheeler raises the especially interesting question (one which she has not yet answered) of how the Native Americans indigenized Edwards’ theology.

The strongest criticisms I can muster are these:

First, it’s a little light on what we might strictly identify as Edwards’s *philosophy*. No article focuses on Edwards’ interest in natural science or logic, on his philosophical heritage in the Platonists and the Ramists, his studies of Locke’s psychology or Newton’s physics, or his influence on the Transcendentalists and the Pragmatists. On the other hand, nearly all of these things are touched on in the essays in this volume, and usually in a way that makes important and interesting connections. This is a book that constantly talks about Edwards’ philosophy, but always situated in the circumstances of contemporary American culture.

Second, I wish it had a better name. It’s not just a festschrift or the proceedings of some conference. It’s a valuable reexamination of Edwards that belongs in every college library. I wonder why it wasn’t called something like *Essays on Edwards’ Enduring Importance for American Thought and Culture*, since that is really what this book is about.

David L. O’Hara


Brian Henning has produced a veritable *vade mecum* of reflections upon the intertwining and implications of metaphysical, aesthetic, and ethical issues in the work of Whitehead. But his book is not so much *about* Whitehead as about what conceptual tools