

# Jonathan Edwards as Contemporary

Essays in Honor of  
Sang Hyun Lee

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## One

### Edwards' Occasionalism

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This essay focuses on the thorny issue of how God's sovereignty is compatible with human freedom. It could have taken as its key the way in which Edwards' doctrines draw on, and are thus clarified by a comparison with, Malebranche's distinction between assent to truth (as an intellectual act) and consent to goodness (as an act of will). Both thinkers treat forms of consent as expressions of will and freedom; both distinguish the general good (i.e., God) and particular goods; and both characterize sin as allowing natural objects to dominate our lives rather than recognizing God as the unifying principle of all existence.

Instead of emphasizing the Malebranche-Edwards connection, however, I focus on how Edwards' version of occasionalism identifies finite minds and their acts as particular expressions of God's will. In this account, finite minds do not have an existence apart from God's will that there be coordinated (though limited) perceptions and acts of will. That is, God's moment to moment differentiation and association of bodies occurs simultaneously with the determination of the minds that perceive them. In this sense, Edwards' occasionalism entails idealism, in that God can create no determinate object without also creating the infinite network of distinctions and relations in terms of which that object is cognized. Likewise, no particular mind can be abstracted from the activity by which its objects are identified. By acknowledging the essentially idealist character of his occasionalism, Edwards proposes that God's communication of ideas *to* created minds is more properly understood as the com-unification of ideas *as* created minds. Our having ideas in determinate patterns thus identifies us as well as the things we perceive. And if we perceive the connections of things as God intends—or for Malebranche, if we see all things in God—then we know how we express God (“in whom we live, and move, and have our being”).

### God's Constant Re-creation

The issue of whether Edwards is an occasionalist turns on what it means for God to create a mind or, even more fundamentally, what it means for God to be a mind. Unfortunately, the typical debate regarding occasionalism focuses either on how bodies affect (or fail to affect) other bodies or on how minds and bodies affect one another.<sup>1</sup> I say this is unfortunate because this (Malebranchean) way of setting up the problem addresses only obliquely the more pertinent question of how individual bodies or minds are initially differentiated. To assume from the start that God simply creates minds and then “communicates” perceptions (e.g., as resistance or solidity) to them is already to undermine any chance of making sense of Edwards’ interest in occasionalism, because the issue of whether bodies or minds exert any real causal effects on one another depends on exactly what is meant by a body or mind.

In his metaphysics, Malebranche does not recognize how the identification of bodies depends on mind for their being specified as *this* or *that* existence. And by not explaining what makes an individual mind or body this or that thing, he does not provide a means for explaining how “it” is involved in causal interactions. For if it turns out—as Edwards claims—that bodies are identified and related to one another in virtue of their being cognized, then the central insight of occasionalism (viz., that only God is a true cause) cannot be dissociated from idealism.

Edwards’ linking of occasionalism and idealism allows him to shift the discussion of what it means to be a substance away from a framework in which the autonomy of finite spiritual substances is a problem. For if the essence of a spiritual substance is defined by its acts of will, and if the perception of objects by a mind expresses its particular “assent” to thinking of those things in determinate relations, then the freedom of that mind consists in its being able to perceive things in nature as consistent with its own interests (i.e., to do as it wills).

To readers of Edwards’ *Freedom of the Will*, this compatibilist view is hardly news. But introducing the question of the ontological status of finite spiritual substances into the debate about how or whether he is an occasionalist re-focuses our attention on two issues that have concerned Edwards scholars—namely, the extent to which he agrees with Malebranche, and the extent to which Edwards’ version of occasionalism allows the world to have (in Sang Hyun Lee’s phrase) “an abiding reality” distinguishable from God.<sup>2</sup> For Malebranche, the fact that material substances have passive

powers (e.g., impenetrability) gives them some metaphysical independence from God.<sup>3</sup> Edwards’ immaterialism, however, blocks that option, for in his view what it means for a substance to exist with such powers depends on its being willed by God to be perceived as that object by some mind. So to explain his position, we need either a more thoroughgoing occasionalism than Malebranche’s or a strategy that grants God’s immanent causal efficacy but still permits the world to have some permanence apart from God’s activity.

By emphasizing how Edwards extends Malebranchean insights regarding the intrinsic connection between human and divine ideas, Norman Fiering indicates how to pursue the first alternative.<sup>4</sup> By emphasizing how God’s creation is organized in terms of patterns or laws that give nature a “virtual” reality, Sang Lee spells out the second (LPT 7, 107, 251, 256).<sup>5</sup> Both approaches are intended to distance Edwards from a Lockean legacy that relegates God to the periphery of discussions about knowledge and existence. But where Lee attempts to carve out a place for natural autonomy by discerning in Edwards an ontology in which the existence of creatures consists in tendencies or dispositions to behave in determinate ways, Fiering describes those patterns of behavior as the direct expressions of divine activity.

For some, this contrast between thinking of God as a cause whose actions are mediated by laws of nature versus being an immediate cause might seem insignificant. But it is at the core of the debate about how Edwards reconciles divine sovereignty with the possibility of human freedom. The question of whether Edwards can be understood as an occasionalist—that is, someone who believes not only that God is the only true cause but also that the decisions and actions of creatures are only occasions for God’s activity—highlights the importance of understanding how Edwards appropriates themes that can be considered Malebranchean.<sup>6</sup> At issue, of course, is the difficulty of explaining how God can re-create human beings from moment-to-moment and still not be charged with bringing into existence all of the world’s moral evil. As Oliver Crisp puts it, “It is difficult to see how [Edwards’ occasionalism] does not destroy moral responsibility for created beings, since God is the sole cause of all that takes place, creatures being merely the ‘occasions’ of divine actions.”<sup>7</sup> But as both Lee and Fiering indicate, how we interpret Edwards on this point is affected by how we interpret Malebranche. So to say that Edwards is or is not an occasionalist or a Malebranchean hardly resolves the matter.

Nonetheless, using Malebranche as the foil for such a discussion provides a good start for understanding Edwards' position. In Fiering's view, for example, Edwards clearly endorses Malebranche's occasionalism when he describes an effect as "the consequence of another thing, which is perhaps rather an occasion than a cause, most properly speaking" (1: 181):

In natural things, means of effects, in metaphysical strictness, are not the proper causes of the effects, but only occasions. God produces all effects; but yet he ties natural events to the operation of such means, or causes them to be consequent on such means according to fixed, determinate and unchangeable rules, which are called the laws of nature. ("Misc." 629, 18: 157; FMT 90, 283-85, 308; CSL 10-13, 18)

This indicates that God's immediate causal involvement in the existence of everything in the world is expressed in the regular patterns of the laws of nature. But unlike Lee—who claims that the laws of nature constitute a "virtual reality" (LPT 65, 251)—Fiering maintains that natural events have no substantial causal efficacy apart from the sole regularity of God's activity (FRF 77-86). Even when understood as momentary embodiments of those laws, natural things are never more than antecedents arbitrarily connected to consequents (1: 181, 397-98), because nothing persists from one moment to the next, so no prior event can affect or effect another. As Edwards insists, "Tis certain with me that the world exists anew every moment, that the existence of things every moment ceases and every moment is renewed" ("Misc." 125a, 13: 288). In this sense, "the universe is created out of nothing every moment" (6: 241), because there is nothing that has an identity apart from its being given one by God's specification of it in relation to all else. The existence of all natural things thus depends on that which gives them their "substance"; and that, Edwards maintains, is the arbitrary will of God.

In Crisp's view, this strong way to understand Edwards' occasionalism removes all real secondary causes (CSL 11-15), because the very identification of objects or the worlds they inhabit depends on God's continuous *re-creation*. Instead of emphasizing how things or worlds depend on God's discrete re-creative acts, though, Lee notes that the *continuity* of God's activity establishes the permanence and regularity of the natural laws in terms of which the world and its objects have their abiding (albeit virtual) reality (LPT 63, 107). This, Lee argues, amounts to a "modified" form of occasionalism, one in which God does not create *ex nihilo* in a simple sense, because "the divinely established general laws are given a permanence, and are in a sense not created *ex nihilo*" (LPT 63). In short, God does not create natural things oblivious to how they have been related to one another in *their*

pasts, even though such temporal predication does not apply to God's activity. In terms of one another, objects and their worlds exhibit enough regularities in the patterns of their relations to reveal how God's continuous re-creation of things in nature is far from completely arbitrary.

This way of reading Edwards assumes, however, that we can (as it were) compare objects or worlds to one another without acknowledging that their very identification as *those* objects or worlds cannot be thought apart from the timeless acts by which they are differentiated and associated temporally in terms of patterns or habits. By arguing that Edwards adopts a dispositional ontology, Lee reads the tendencies or regularities found in nature back into the divine activity by which they are initially established. In doing so, he extends the dispositional explanation of Edwards' account of God's nature *ad intra* (LPT 183-201).

But why should there be the differentiation of the Trinity, and why should that result in the creation of the world? To respond that, for Edwards, excellence requires the plurality of consent, or that God creates as a result of his "fullness," is to indicate *how* Edwards answers these questions but not *why*. What we need is not a dispositional description of how things exist but rather an ontology that explains why they exist as they do.<sup>8</sup>

To model God's nature on the dispositions or habits of created things and then explain those dispositions in terms of God's nature is thus obviously circular. Edwards avoids this circularity by distinguishing between nature understood as the creative activity by which the order of things is established and the course of things thus created. "It should be remembered," he remarks, "what nature is, in created things: and what the established course of nature is; that, as has been observed already, it is nothing separate from the agency of God" (1: 400). This does not mean that the laws of nature provide a "sort of exteriority and independence" needed to allow for unperceived objects. Nor does it mean that unperceived objects exist in God's consciousness (à la Malebranche), for that blasphemously collapses the objects of divine and human minds into one another (LPT 57-60). Rather, it simply means that no created thing exists apart from God's pattern of differentiating and associating created things in terms of one another.

The way to avoid both the Malebranchian and dispositional strategies consists, then, simply in noting how the *things* unperceived by created minds have no existence apart from God's willing the pattern or course of relations by which their *identities* are established. To ask what kind of existence "they" have—in God's mind or as dispositions enacted in natural laws—is

pointless, for only by differentiating and relating them in a network of objects of created consciousness can they be identified.

Like Malebranche, Edwards believes that the existence of objects of knowledge depends on God's immanent, immediate creativity and is not distinct from God's will that there be a determinate object perceived in a particular set of relations (FRF 73-79). Unlike Malebranche, Edwards insists that the very possibility of identifying an object depends on God's creation of it as an object *for* a spiritual substance that perceives it, for "corporeal things exist not otherwise than mentally" (6: 342). In created consciousness, a corporeal substance is thus nothing other than the recognition of its differentiation from, and association with, other corporeal substances.

Accordingly, the role of created consciousness is not to bestow a temporal existence on objects already differentiated and associated in the divine mind, for that would mean that our perceptions are identical to God's. It is rather to be the identification of this or that thing in a set of relations. In this sense, "we" have a hand in bringing about the existence of specific objects of perception to the extent that "they" are *our* objects. But that in no way means that we contribute as efficient causes to the *existence* of those objects. Furthermore, because we are nothing other than the consciousness of those objects in those relations, we cannot claim to be the substances on which objects depend for their existence, for that would mean that we would be the principles of our own differentiation (and thus the causes our own specific existence).

That is why Edwards insists that only God can properly be called a substance, in that only God can will that bodies become objects for minds that themselves do not exist prior to that divine volition (6: 215, 341, 344-45, 398; DEP 166-67). By restricting the proper meaning of "substance" to God alone, Edwards reinforces his doctrines that God's constant will underlies all existence and that we should not be misled into thinking that talk of corporeal or spiritual substances implies that they have any sort of autonomy or existence apart from God's activity:

if [philosophers] must needs apply that word [substance] to something else that does really and properly subsist by itself and supports all properties, they must apply it to the divine Being or power itself. . . . the substance at last becomes either nothing, or nothing but the Deity acting in that particular manner in those parts of space where he thinks fit (6: 215; LPT 53-54, 251).

Just as the properties of a substance (e.g., solidity, resistance) are nothing other than the "immediate exercise of God's power" (6: 215), so also created substances are nothing other than particular expressions of God's activity.

As Lee reads this, God's constancy in acting makes the Aristotelian or Lockean distinction between substances and their properties unnecessary, because we now can replace substance talk with an ontology of law-governed sets of dispositions (LPT 245-46). But Crisp counters that properties cannot exist apart from the substances of which they are properties, for without being able to assume a distinction between a substance and its properties, we could not identify anything as the same from moment to moment due to God's constant re-creation of the world. So instead of dispensing with the concept of substance, for Crisp, Edwards reinforces it by locating it in God's will.

In coming to this conclusion, though, Crisp overlooks how such a view parallels Lee's. Regardless of whether we locate the identity of a created substance in the regularity of its divinely ordained behaviors or in the regularity of God's creation of it, the effect is the same: the substance of a thing becomes precisely that which defines its distinctive existence. It would follow, then, that there is no distinction between the essence and the existence of a thing, or between a substance and its attributes or properties, because its identity cannot be distinguished (other than in a purely derivative way) from the activity whereby "it" is conceived.

Crisp fails to recognize this, for he sees no problem with the "commonplace" belief that substances can have "accidental qualities" (i.e., non-constitutive attributes). Otherwise, he says, we are led to think of substances simply as Humean bundles of attributes that lack a unifying substratum (CSL 2-5). And if that is the case, then we will not be able to think of substances as the subjects about which dispositions are predicated. His worry about Lee's account boils down, then, to Lee's failure to adopt a subject-attribute way of thinking:

Lee speaks of habits and tendencies without recourse to subjects that have these tendencies, which is rather odd. One would think an active tendency is an active tendency of something, and perhaps this is what Lee means, although he does not always say so (CSL 17).

Of course, this is exactly what Lee does not mean, because for him Edwards' insight consists in replacing the traditional view that substances *have* dispositions with a new view that substances *are* dispositions—or at least are what they are precisely because of their constitutive dispositions (LPT 53-54,

245; LGR 59). For Lee (as opposed to Crisp), a disposition is not a property or attribute that a substance exemplifies (cf. CSL 17). Rather, it is that in terms of which a substance is intelligible as that substance. To know what a substance is, we have to know what it does and how that differentiates it from and relates it to the activities of other substances. Without appealing to such knowledge, no discussion of substances or dispositions is possible.

### The Inherently Idealist Character of Edwards' Occasionalism

As I have indicated, the key to understanding Edwards' doctrine of substance (which is at the heart of the debate between Lee and Crisp) lies in seeing how his idealism informs his occasionalism. This means recognizing how God's exercise of power in creating bodies is always simultaneously an exercise of God's creation of a mind by which resistance or solidity is perceived. By focusing on the laws of nature as patterns of divine activity in the world, Lee claims that things can be said to exist even when they are not perceived by any created mind as long as they are "supposed" by God in his other actions (LPT 57-58). According to Lee, this indicates that the laws of nature have an "ontological priority" to actual events of perception, and that minds *would* perceive unperceived objects in the appropriate circumstances because God has ordered all things in a harmonious way (LPT 64-65, 252).

However, the fact that events of perception exhibit a determinate pattern does not entail that the pattern is prior (even ontologically) to the existence of those things. No doubt, the existence of any particular thing requires that it be differentiated from and related to all other things in the specific ways that laws of nature summarize. But this indicates that in creating any one thing, God creates all things, for a thing's identity—including its place in space and time and its effects on everything else—is determined by God's will to differentiate things harmoniously. In this sense, "there is not one leaf of a tree, nor spire of grass, but what has effects all over the universe, and will have to the end of eternity" (6: 204). The perceived temporal and spatial properties of a thing, along with all of its other characteristics, identify it specifically as that thing. They also specify the characteristics by means of which all else is known and in terms of which all else exists.

To think with Lee that the pattern of such relations embodies a virtual reality composed of habits or dispositions ontologically prior to human perception (LPT 251-52) would be to assume that those habits or dispositions exist prior to their being perceived by created minds—for example, in God's consciousness or (as Lee prefers) laws of nature ("Misc." pp. 13; 188; 6: 204;

LPT 58). But Edwards insists that even unperceived things are intelligible only as if they "had actually existed in such a series in some created mind, and as if created minds had comprehended all things perfectly" (6: 354). God does not first have an idea of a thing and then will that it be perceived by a created mind, for that would assume that minds have identities (even if only conceptually) apart from the ideas they differentiate. Nor does God rely on a pattern on which the "communication" of ideas to minds is based, for apart from the specific perceptions of things that created minds actually differentiate or would have had to differentiate to complete the "course and succession of existences" by which all individuals are made determinate "as if they were in actual idea," no particular thing is intelligible (6: 355-57, 385).

Like Lee, Crisp misses this point, and assumes that immaterial created substances are conceivable apart from the objects of their consciousness. Unlike Lee, he thinks that created minds are different from the bundle of activities or attributes that define them. "There are," he says, "immaterial substances in addition to such attribute bundles, which are somehow more fundamental than these attribute bundles" (CSL 6, 13). Remarking (as Crisp does) that this position is like Berkeley's hardly clarifies what is meant by saying that the mind is "somehow" more fundamental than its attributes. Nonetheless, Crisp's comments focus attention on how Edwards' occasionalism seems to preclude any continuity of created substances or the existence of dispositions from one moment to the next, for only God's will to act in a fixed way can guarantee truth claims about unperceived objects (CSL 12, 19). If God's will is ultimately arbitrary, nothing guarantees such continuity. If we say (with Lee) that God has embedded those guarantees in the harmonious regularity of natural laws, then we ignore God's immediacy in creation. But emphasizing that immediacy threatens the intelligibility of unperceived objects—which is exactly what Lee's account tries to protect by allowing nature a sort of reality "distinguishable from humanity and God" (LPT 250).

Seen from another perspective, God's activity *ad extra* (i.e., in space and time) does not fluctuate from moment to moment because his own existence *ad intra* (i.e., in the Persons of the Trinity) can be described in the same dispositional terms as natural things (LPT 196-204).<sup>9</sup> However, this strategy superimposes a doctrine meant to explain the continuity of discrete entities onto the principle by which those entities are initially differentiated. Its effect is to invite us to think of God (as a disposition) as if we were thinking of a created substance, the only difference being that God's essence is an

eternally actual disposition (LPT 246). An eternally actualized disposition, though, is no “disposition” at all, for God (unlike natural things) has no tendency or inclination to be or do anything other than what he is or does. God’s actions *ad extra* might seem to be different from his eternal existence *ad intra*, but that is only because we think of them as already differentiated from one another. Since God is the principle of differentiation itself, he has no “other.” To ask, then, why God creates—as if one is asking a question like why natural things act as they do—is to assume mistakenly that God’s activity is distinguishable from his essence.

We can avoid the problem of divine arbitrariness, however, without having to minimize Edwards’ occasionalism simply by recognizing how his idealism requires us to interpret God’s “communication of ideas” to created minds as the creation of those minds.<sup>10</sup> Both Lee and Crisp note in passing the importance of Edwards’ idealism (LPT 57-58, 250; CSL 2, 13-14); and both acknowledge that, for Edwards, the constancy of God’s activity applies equally to both corporeal and spiritual things (6: 391). In Lee’s view, though, Edwards’ claim that a soul’s essence “consists in powers and habits” (“Misc.” 241, 13: 358; LGR 60) reveals how a mind is not a substance (LPT 246) but rather the continuity discernable in mental activities. As Edwards remarks, “In memory, in mental principles, habits and inclinations, there is something really abiding in the mind when there are no acts or exercises of them, much in the same manner as there is a chair in this room when no mortal perceives it” (13: 385; LPT 245). To this Crisp replies that what really abides in the mind, like what really abides in the chair, is (as Edwards puts it) nothing other than “the sovereign will and agency of God” (3: 399; CEC 69-75). And if created substances do not exist over time, then neither do their dispositions (CSL 12).

Such a characterization of disposition misconstrues Lee’s point, because it fails to recognize how a created mind is defined by inherently temporal patterns of behavior. Crisp recognizes this possibility but dismisses it because, he argues, if occasionalism is true, then the dispositions in terms of which natural things are intelligible cannot exist across time (CSL 5, 19). But according to Lee, that is precisely the point: because “dispositions” always point beyond themselves, they are not (as Crisp thinks) bundles of timeless properties arbitrarily united by God. No doubt, a reader like Crisp might get the impression that Edwards endorses a bundle theory of mind when he describes spirit as “nothing but a composition and series of perceptions, or a universe of coexisting and successive perceptions connected by such wonderful methods and laws” (6: 398). But from Lee’s perspective, that

would ignore how perceptions always occur in a specific divinely determined sequence that expresses an internally coordinated totality. To the extent that our perceptions express such a coordination, we are said to “consent” to God’s will.

Note, however, that this consent is less something we do than something we are. That is, in consenting to God’s will, we literally sense the objects of our experience as constituting a unity (i.e., a “universe”). The temporal “consent” to, or “con-science” of, such a unity varies from moment to moment, so from our perspective it seems that God wills from moment to moment that there be a new specific consciousness of how all things are to be related. As Malebranche notes, in the momentary creation of each mind, not only does God will that there be a specific representation or *consensus* of the relations of all things, but he also reveals how that consent to particular goods points beyond them to the good in general (SAT 1.2.2, pp. 8-9; ESAT 547-49, 554-55; FMT 75-76, 114, 135). On this point, Edwards follows Malebranche, pointing out that the mere recognition of (or “assent” to) the order of things is not identical to “excellence,” the consent of being to being (6: 336). This latter consent requires thinking of natural things as objects of *moral* beauty because they express God’s will that all things be understood in terms other than themselves (DPE 175-87). Conscience—that is, “a sense of the general beauty and harmony of things” (6: 356)—is the recognition of how all created things are always conceivable for the better. In this sense Edwards’ occasionalism is an accommodation to the idealist requirements of temporal differentiation.

### Concluding Remarks

Lee’s insight is that Edwards adopts an ontology in which the identities of things are inherently relational. That is, it does not assume that relations depend on the prior existence of things that are related, or that the characteristics or activities of things depend on the ontologically prior existence of the substances of which those characteristics or activities are predicated. In this way, Lee shows how Edwards offers an alternative to the traditional substance–attribute model, parts of which Crisp still wants to retain. But Lee provides only a description of how Edwards frames his ontology, not an explanation for why his ontology has that structure. To say that all things (even God) are defined dispositionally is not to explain why that has to be the case (though it is, no doubt, a start in the right direction).

A more fundamental reconfiguration of how we understand Edwards requires that we focus on how things come to exist as *those* things, and that means describing those things and their dispositions always as the suppositions of God. However, just as created things are defined by dispositions that they do not merely *have* but rather *are*, so God is defined as the supposition of all else. That is why God's existence is supposed by the existence of everything else. But this is not simply to restate the cosmological argument for God's existence; for as Hume and others have shown, that argument can easily be undermined by highlighting *our* role in making such a supposition. Instead, Edwards' important (even new) argument shifts away from thinking of supposition as something we *do* to what we are. Just as our existence supposes God's existence as an other in terms of which our existence is intelligible, so also God's own existence *ad intra* is intelligible only in terms of an internally-related other: that is why a Trinitarian account of God is essential for Edwards.

To say, then, that creation results from God's fullness or goodness does not *explain* why God creates, for it begs the question of why fullness or goodness would necessarily result in the production of an other. The same can be said of Lee's account of Edwards' ontology, because that account describes existence in terms of dispositions without explaining why, for Edwards, no other account could capture what it means for something (even God) to exist. Like Lee, I have indicated how the dispositions of created beings consist in the patterned suppositions of God. Unlike Lee, though, my account of Edwards does not assume that those suppositions are things that God does; they are rather expressions of what God is.

In saying that we are expressions of God, I do not mean to suggest that Edwards is a pantheist or a Spinozist; for that would treat the expressions of substance as features of yet another determinate substance but would ignore how the substance of everything is not itself determinate. For Edwards, God is not just another existent, but the principle of all determination, the supposition of the intelligibility of all else.

For the unregenerate, the dispositions of created beings appear as patterns of regularity expressed in the laws of nature. As Lee recognizes, those patterns can be used to provide the continuity missing in unperceived objects and consistency among different perceivers. But thinking of dispositions from the perspective of the unregenerate does not offer much insight into why they should be central in the explanation of existence itself. For that, we have to combine Edwards' idealism (i.e., that all things depend on mind) with his claim that God creates the world (including finite minds)

anew moment to moment. The saint does just this in "seeing all things in God." But unlike Malebranche—who retains the unregenerate belief that material substances and minds somehow exist apart from God's communication of ideas—Edwards shows how the saint's recognition of God's simultaneous creation of minds and their ideas opens up the way to achieve immediate access to God.

## Notes

1. Cf. Alfred J. Freddosa, "Medieval Aristotelianism and the Case against Secondary Causation in Nature," in *Divine and Human Action*, ed. Thomas V. Morris (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1988), 74-118, especially 97-111 [hereafter: FMA].
2. See Sang Hyun Lee, *The Philosophical Theology of Jonathan Edwards*, expanded edition (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000), 54, 63 [hereafter: LPT].
3. See Nicholas Malebranche, *The Search After Truth* 3.2.8, and *Elucidations of the Search After Truth*, trans. and ed. Thomas M. Lennon and Paul J. Olscamp (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1980), 243-45 [hereafter: SAT and ESAT]. Cf. FMA 80, 110-111.
4. See Norman Fiering, *Jonathan Edward's Moral Thought and Its British Context* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1981) [hereafter: FMT]; idem, "The Rationalist Foundations of Jonathan Edwards' Metaphysics," in *Jonathan Edwards and the American Experience*, ed. Nathan O. Hatch and Harry S. Stout (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), 73-101 [hereafter: FRF].
5. See also Sang Hyun Lee, "God's Relation to the World," in *The Princeton Companion to Jonathan Edwards*, ed. Sang Hyun Lee (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005), 59-71 [hereafter: LGR].
6. See also Allen C. Guelzo, "Learning Is the Handmaid of the Lord: Jonathan Edwards, Reason, and the Life of the Mind," *Midwest Studies in Philosophy* 28 (2004), 3-10; and Charles J. McCracken, *Malebranche and British Philosophy* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1983), 211, 335-36.
7. Oliver D. Crisp, "Jonathan Edwards' Ontology: A Critique of Sang Hyun Lee's Dispositional Account of Edwardsian Metaphysics," *Religious Studies* 46 (2010), 11. [Hereafter: CSL]. See also idem, *Jonathan Edwards and the Metaphysics of Sin* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005), 131-32.
8. See my *Philosophy of Jonathan Edwards* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994), 102-29 [hereafter: DPE]. There I indicate how traditional strategies for interpreting Edwards fail when they simply assume the propriety of speaking about God, the Persons of the Trinity, minds, or bodies as things without first recognizing the ontology whereby they are differentiated and related. Lee's dispositional account correctly describes God and created things relationally, but it does not provide the logic underlying such an account. My book was intended to correct the tendency in Edwards scholarship to ignore the Ramist insights on which Edwards relies that challenge the fundamental assumptions of his modern contemporaries. To clear a space for those insights, I invoked some contemporary theorists in my introductory comments and first chapter. That, I now see, was a strategic mistake. I should have invited students of Edwards to skip those historiographic inquiries and go straight to my discussions of his doctrines of creation, the

Trinity, Original Sin, freedom, morality, and beauty. Regrettably, Lee misunderstood the purpose of my preliminary discussions and sees my book as a “postmodern reading” of Edwards (LPT 3n). He is not alone: see reviews of the book by Gerald McDermott [*William and Mary Quarterly* 53 (1996): 658-60] and Michael McClymond [*Journal of Religion* 76 (1996): 121-22]; McClymond’s *Encounters with God* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 115-16, 125; and Crisp (CSL 1, 16). For a treatment that (I hope) will not be misconstrued, see my “Edwards as Philosopher,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Jonathan Edwards*, ed. Stephen J. Stein (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 162-80 [hereafter: DEP].

9. Cf. Stephen R. Holmes, “Does Jonathan Edwards Use a Dispositional Ontology? A Response to Sang Hyun Lee,” in *Jonathan Edwards: Philosophical Theologian*, ed. Paul Helm and Oliver Crisp (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2003), 105-109. Holmes’ invitation to understand the Trinity in a “traditional” way fails to explain how God’s existence is *necessarily* trinitarian. That is what I have done in my chapter “The Trinity and Creation,” DPE 102-129.
10. Edwards’ idealist version of occasionalism is not, therefore, simply an early view he subsequently rejected. Cf. Anri Morimoto, *Jonathan Edwards and the Catholic Vision of Salvation* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1995), 56-59.