

My Natural Methodism

Richard E. Brantley

To extend the life of a work—a novel, a poem, a play—we feed it our own.
—Parul Sehgal



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Wordsworth's "Natural Methodism"

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The Late Romanticism of Tennyson and Emerson*

*Experience and Faith: The Late-Romantic
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*Emily Dickinson's Rich Conversation:
Poetry, Philosophy, Science*

*Transatlantic Trio: Empiricism, Evangelicalism, Romanticism:
Essays and Reviews 1974-2017*

My Natural Methodism

Experience Becomes Words

Richard E. Brantley

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A note about the cover: the German architect, professor, and theorist Gottfried Semper (1803-1879) wrote in his magnum opus *Der Stil [The Style]* about knots as building blocks for architecture's origin in the act of weaving or the joining of various threads to make nets and eventually surfaces that enclose architectural spaces. Semper describes the knot (Semper V.1, 1860: 170) depicted on the recto of the cover as a weaver's knot, which is used to join two threads together.

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To

**FE ANAM AVIS, DIANA BRANTLEY,
MICHAEL CASS, AND MELVYN NEW**

*Trying to use words, and every attempt
Is a wholly new start, and a different kind of failure
Because one has only learnt to get the better of words
For the thing one no longer has to say, or the way in which
One is no longer disposed to say it. And so each venture
Is a new beginning, a raid on the inarticulate,
With shabby equipment always deteriorating
In the general mess of imprecision of feeling,
Undisciplined squads of emotion. And what there is to conquer
By strength and submission, has already been discovered
Once or twice, or several times, by men whom one cannot hope
To emulate—but there is no competition—
There is only the fight to recover what has been lost
And found and lost again and again; and now, under conditions
That seem unpropitious. But perhaps neither gain nor loss.
For us, there is only the trying. The rest is not our business.*

—T. S. Eliot, *Four Quartets* “East Coker” Part V (1943)

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Acknowledgments

General

Objectivity begins in subjectivity.

Ask how previous life-experience advances your pursuit of truth.

You may use memoir in your interpretation so long as you include learned commentary and highlight close reading.

The intellectual and spiritual autobiography of who you have become will help you find whatever course content builds on and alters what you know and believe and how you imagine.

The truth that makes you free is the freedom to search for truth. For subjective freedom, think Wordsworth's Prelude and Dickinson's Columnar Self.

I can scarcely believe I ever said such things to undergraduates. Did *they* require *encouragement* to be subjective? Nonetheless, having grown weary of reading what they had not wished to write, I did formulate the above assignment, and lo and behold, the hybrid genre worked, joining memoir to literary criticism. From 1985, indeed, when I introduced the project sixteen years into my English Department professorship, until 2011, when I retired, I reveled in the result of this pedagogical experiment. I enjoyed watching these unfledged, yet not *so* inexperienced, minds meld their autobiographies with their scholarly critical analyses.

Until 2013, two years after stepping down from teaching at the University of Florida, I had never made the trial myself. Among beans counted by deans, after all, the dividend paid by subjectivity to objectivity did not figure as a criterion for publishing. Having aged out of all that, however, it was time for me to wonder whether my own autobiographical imagination might enhance my own professional authority. Can identity formation deepen thought? And does it?

My previous monographs, themselves the fruits of writing term papers for professors who had wanted to increase my research capacities (see Brantley 1975, 1984, 1993, 1994, 2004, 2013, 2017), did not exactly reflect the spirit of my somewhat whimsical, though undeniably innovative, professorial delegation of unusual homework. Perhaps precisely because of

that assignment, however, which I enjoyed reading for twenty-six years, my last five books (whether for better or worse is not for me to say) gradually turned discernibly more personal. Had my pre-1985 scholarly persona become too much like some imaginary Jungian analyst without the chops of self-discovery to which a certificate from Zurich would have attested? Had I frozen into much too much of a detached ichthyologist rather than a properly swimming fish?

I am now *daring* to do, in any case, what my students had all along been showing me *how* to do. If that raw but intrepid cohort of seekers could venture forth from their comfort zones of institutionally imposed objectivity and overcome their suspicions that nothing worth writing about had ever happened to them, then could not I, too, take the plunge of my own assignment? It is not as though my tenure were at stake. With a view to humanizing my career-long quest for aesthetic understanding, I hereby present a personal as well as professional, a subjective as well as objective, and perhaps even a mellow as well as relentless construal of literary history—as my very own brand of pursuing the truth.

Whether this book can serve as an exemplar or a cautionary tale, I cannot say. At minimum, though, I endorse lively but meaningful writing from students and professors alike. The papers gracing my honors file have modeled this book. In these acknowledgments, thanks go first, accordingly, to those junior “colleagues” who responded with such infectious enthusiasm to such quirky examples of their professor’s eccentric exhortations as the five epigraphs to this opening segment of *My Natural Methodism*.

My students’ discovery of their personal authority, take it from me, furthered their interpretive sophistication. The imposter syndrome from which everyone suffers, to some extent and from time to time, lessened among them. Professors, too, know the feeling, perhaps *especially* when they have no reason to have it. For the pioneering gift of my students’ collective hybrid enterprise, I am grateful. The early life-experiences of these game Gator English majors at the pre-STEM University of Florida not only accessed, but also contributed to, the wisdom of the ages.

Other teachers can take notice. Their own such assignment, I warrant them, will produce papers pleasurable for them to grade. As for me, I never looked back. And students will have no need for ChatGPT. They will know themselves to know much else. I wish I had asked my imagineers for their permission to share their cheeky forays from days gone by, for if I had, I could then show my readers that work upon request.

Particular

At discrete intervals throughout this book, I acknowledge specific good turns; at the outset, however, I express gratitude, most of all, to seven individuals for their unflagging favor. To take the first three, their geographical distance from me did not prevent Mikesch Muecke, Chris Gair, and Matthew Scott from encouraging me, for many years, to chart the scientific and religious backgrounds to a central bi-national poetic of the English-speaking world. The stylistic wisdom Muecke brought to our three-year conversation got Rondo off the ground. And I thank Gair and Scott for their permission to recast those scattered parts of *Presto* which appeared as a long-form essay in *Symbiosis: A Journal of Transatlantic Literary & Cultural Studies* 24: 1 and 2 (Autumn 2020): 91-114 and 26: 1 (Spring 2022): 1-27. The twenty-seven-year leadership of Gair and Scott at *Symbiosis* has almost alone assured that Anglo-American studies is now indeed a well-established area of scholarly concentration.

At the outset as well, moreover, I hasten to show appreciation to my wife, Diana Rozier Brantley, for the extended scholarly colloquies in which she has always been at least as much of a presence as in our more recent conversations concerning this autobiographical and critical experiment of mine. Anne Fadiman, in *her* acknowledgments for her *own* such combination of memoir and critique, *The Wine Lover's Daughter* (2017), recognizes her husband, George Howe Colt, as follows: “When I gave you impenetrable first—and second and third—drafts to read and mark up, you marched fearlessly through the swamp. Writers who marry writers are supposed to fight like cats and dogs, but we just channeled our energies into editing each other. What could be better than to be able to talk about writing every single day, with the man I love?” (Fadiman 2017: 206-07). Fadiman’s sentiment parallels my debt to Diana. I have typically failed to return adequate thanks to her—but I try, now, to fail better. Her help has proved decisive this time, perhaps even more so than for any previous installment of the series.

And at the outset, finally, I highlight how Diana and three other friends marched fearlessly through the swamp, channeling their energies into editing endless versions, whether oral or written (and I am sure they could “have at” the present incarnation, but the process must at some point be abandoned). *My Natural Methodism* would not exist without dialogue, information, and commentary from Diana, yes, but equally, for this book, from Fe Anam Avis, Michael Cass, and Melvyn New. To all four of these daily companions, I dedicate the book in solemn as well as in light-hearted toast to all five of our

lives of writing. Thanks to these four who found themselves in the position of always-telling near-influences on me, this *last roundup* is also, whatever else it may or may not be, a *new hybrid*. That mixed metaphor, cowboys plus biological science, is not as effective as, say, Shakespeare's "take arms against a sea of troubles" (though Pope had the audacity to change the Bard's "sea" to "siege"). But it is the best I can manage as, once more into the breach, I try here, as elsewhere, to say the unsayable. Whether in the same geographical place or on Zoom, Diana, Fe, Mike, and Mel lived with me and this project in person. And they did so by the kindness of their unflinching constancy.

Stakes

I want to express gratitude, finally, for the endorsement of my work from two scholars known to me only through their consequential publications. First, in *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain: A History from the 1730s to the 1980s* (1989; reprinted 1993, 1995, 1999, 2002), D. W. Bebbington extended my argument for the father of Methodism, John Wesley (1703-1791), as (in Bebbington's words) "an Enlightenment thinker in his own right" (Bebbington 1989: 49-52, 292-93). Acting on his inferences from my *Locke, Wesley, and the Method of English Romanticism* (1984), which won the Conference on Christianity and Literature Award, Bebbington adds, "The sceptical Enlightenment of the continent [Wesley] certainly rejected, but the whole cast of his mind was moulded by the new intellectual currents of his time. Supremely he was an empiricist. He drew out the implications of his position in many fields alongside the area of epistemology that has already been examined. His beliefs in religious tolerance, free will, and anti-slavery have rightly been identified as Enlightenment affinities. So was his antipathy to enthusiasm." Bebbington's documentation includes such forerunners of my scholarly menu of Methodism's milieu as those of Bernard Semmel (1973) and Frederick Dreyer (1983).

The second scholar, Brett Malcolm Grainger, calls my studies "the evangelical framework for interpreting Romanticism" (Grainger 2021: 95-96; see also: Barbeau, ed., 2021: 3-4n9, 47-48). Whereas Bebbington frequently references Romanticism's influence on nineteenth- and twentieth-century evangelicalism, my own emphasis, as Grainger recognizes, shows that the religious spirit entered Romanticism itself. Beginning with my *Locke, Wesley*, however, and even hinted at in my first book, *Wordsworth's "Natural Methodism"*

(1975), my more dualized than unified, science- as well as religion-informed theory of English-language Romanticism accords an honored co-presence to *empiricism*, alongside “the *evangelical* framework for interpreting Romanticism” (see also: Brantley 1993, 1994, 2004, 2013, 2017).

Now that I am adding English-language Modernism to the mix, I seek a dualized theory of Anglo-American literature in general. While I do not consider sparks of creativity struck between science and religion as necessarily leading to reconciliation or synthesis, I nonetheless see their interaction in literary history as cooperative, as if the baton of their relay race were to symbolize punctuated, simultaneous innovation. My Romantic to Modern emphasis relaxes the distinction I have always made between Romanticism and Victorianism. I continue to regard the latter as a version of the former, and while stipulating that Romanticism-*cum*-Victorianism makes its joint way to the attenuation, literalism, and apocalypticism of the Modern era (Pietsch 2015), I nonetheless remain alert to the afterlife of even High Romanticism in twentieth- and twenty-first-century literary expression.

In Appendix A of *My Natural Methodism*, I engage Grainger’s 2019 book, *Church in the Wild: Evangelicalism in Antebellum America*. Grainger keeps England as well as America in sight. He, too, aligns empiricism with evangelicalism. He signals, however, no apparent inclination to interrelate Romanticism and Modernism, not even in the bi-national, scientific, religious, historical, and interdisciplinary terms of textual analysis that he, too, employs.

Grainger’s “Close Encounters of the Victorian Kind: The Sci-Fi Fundamentalism of Philip Henry Gosse [1810-1888]” (2021) breaks ground. I now realize that, by my early breathing in of the empirical atmosphere encompassing Neoclassic to Modern, North Atlantic Evangelicalism, where “analogical and symbolic levels of meanings were merging with the literal” (Grainger 2021: 89), I was destined to become—like Philip’s son, Edmund—a literary critic! Besides his nine books of poetry, Edmund Gosse (1849-1928) wrote fifteen volumes of critical commentary, not to mention several other categories of writing (see the listing in Edmund Goss 1907: iv). I can testify that the birthright of empirical evangelicalism is good training for constructive skepticism, and for the Anglo-American Enlightenment, that might color whatever lore one comes to doubt. Youthful rebellion, as distinct from filial disaffection, often shades one’s “sophisticated” education. Such upbringing can produce

near-Talmudic close-readers of sundry canonical proof-texts. Witness how many New Critics were offspring of chapter-and-verse, every-jot-and-tittle, Protestant People of the Book (Bradbury 1958: 4-13).

I can see, accordingly, the contours of my own early milieu in such a double-barreled study as *Evangelicalism and Science in Historical Perspective* (Livingston, Hart, and Noll, eds. 1999; see also: Hovenkamp 1978). And by the same token, I identify with the not so much incongruous as requisite pairing—the fitting two-handedness—to be found in Philip Henry Gosse’s distinctively binary creativity. On the one hand, in his capacity as a Fellow of the Royal Society, he produced an astounding corpus of natural history, notably *The Romance of Natural History* (1860-61). On the other hand, in his capacity as an *ur*-Victorian-evangelical, he wrote reams of biblical exegesis, e.g., *The Mysteries of God: A Series of Expositions of Holy Scripture* (1884).

As *Romance* indicates, as a word from his *scientific* title, Gosse *père* wrote a Late-Romantic work called *Omphalos* (1857; see also: King 2029; Merrill 1989). Notwithstanding mixed results, *Omphalos* attempted, like William Wordsworth’s High Romanticism (Brantley 1984: 137-59), to raise sparks of similarity at the intersection of science and religion, and Jorge Luis Borges, as one Modern-era writer (neither British nor American), designated the science-*cum*-religion in *Omphalos* as its “monstrous elegance,” its audacious imagination (Borges 1975: 22-25). As to the evangelicalism/Romanticism connection alone (without science in the mix), I personify one reader of Edmund Gosse’s justly famous *Father and Son* (1907) for whom Edmund’s highlighting of a little girl reciting Wordsworth’s “We Are Seven” (1798) is indelible (Edmund Gosse 1907: 177-79). Her performance at a Baptist family’s party for Plymouth Brethren, the vital sect led by Philip Henry Gosse (for this interesting group, see Introvigne 2018) is an evangelicalism/Romanticism juxtaposition *par excellence*.

What was to me a gift outright—from others, and hence from otherness—should be acknowledged as a paradigmatic essence of my personal identity, of my maturing outlook, and of my driving purpose. In this memoir/lit-crit hybrid, I can begin to make the argument. The first half of the book, using intellectual and spiritual autobiography, stages childhood and young adult dramas of faith in experience (think: empiricism) *versus* the experience of faith (think: evangelicalism) playing out against the nurturing backdrop of parents steeped in literature. The terms of my memoir ultimately derive from, as well as gloss in turn,

the inveterate cultural back-and-forth between (objective) science and (subjective) religion that, as I argue, meets at the main intersection of classic transatlantic ingenuity. So emerges, for present purposes of the six larger divisions of *My Natural Methodism*, my signature of takes on Anglo-American *belles-lettres*.

The second half of this eighth installment in a career-long series of arguments presents explanatory heft of an individual-plus-professional kind. Large, three-movement, “musical” dimensions of my memoir (Prelude, Allegro, Adagio), together with parallel “musical” representations of my literary criticism in Rondo, Presto, and Postlude, aspire to intermingle pressing appeal with dispassionate contention. Through the integration of life-writing with a historical and interdisciplinary method of closely reading Anglophone works of prose and poetry, *My Natural Methodism* morphs a self-portrait of the critic—from childhood to young manhood—into my latest/liveliest grasp of *natural methodism* writ large. Those last four words are meant to advertise the plausibility of something cheeky, and perhaps even of something a bit preposterous: my individualism, whatever such resonance might be worth to the tone of the book, reverberates through the empirical/evangelical crossroads of the Anglo-American imagination, and vice versa.

What could be the payoff for a WASPY, retired English professor’s reflections on his formative years as a hiding-place of interpretive power? One answer lies in the quixotic endeavor of this model to preserve English and other Humanities from excess objectivity. Scholarly voices from other personal histories might conduct their own intimate, as well as formalized, contextualizing of Locke, Wesley, Edwards, Wordsworth, Dickinson, George Eliot, Frederick Douglass, T. S. Eliot, Marianne Moore, et al. The example of personal investment in professional commitment can surely invite subjective/objective variations on the universal human theme of interpretive inquiry.

More like-minded readers, with backgrounds paralleling mine, might investigate, for starters, their ground of interpretive resourcefulness, too. They, too, might credit, as well as simply help delineate, Romantic to Modern Anglo-America’s evangelical as well as empirical sensorium. Collective—religious as well as scientific—image-ination could abide further embodiment of such readers as well as further deliberation by them. This culmination of a life’s work may presage enlivened study of the liberal arts and sciences. The explainer, on the one hand, and the thing

explained, on the other, need scarcely be at odds, and can be in mutually enriching communion: one can know as much as one's favorite authors, after all, about how both/and possibility beats either/or reductionism.

The conclusion to my series about Anglo-American literature nails down what I wish I had known fully all along. *My Natural Methodism*, perhaps because I have aged-out of scholarly prudence, can illustrate how to infuse the contemporary norm of objectivity with the subjective position of the interpreter. I have long secretly believed what I can now publicly affirm, that a professorial stance is more honest for the presence of the personal life. Bringing life to the play of understanding brings understanding to the play of life.

Prelude

From Center to Circumference: Hypothesis Becomes Thesis

1 Hybrid

What is new in my eighth monograph, ten years in the making? Memoir comes tardily to my life of writing. I now realize how my version of regional nonfiction can expand my skill set. My Southern backstory, beginning in Bristol, Virginia in 1944, when my father was hired there (stay tuned), continues to inform my scholarly work and, for the first time figuring in it explicitly, makes me and my readers participants in the transatlantic scene my previous books have merely observed. One's formative years can thus bear on one's formal record—decisively.

The time is ripe for this late harvest. Consider the recent emergence of “Eng Lit Memoir” (Larrington 2022: 12). It relates literary interpretation to the interpreter's immediate experiences. It has so far offered a more

Allegro

From Theme to Variations: Thesis Becomes Argument

6 Convenient Truth

An autobiography in league with an academic discipline can eventuate in *convenient* truth. Subject and object can *come together* in the promise made by paradox. *Paradox* does not so much overcome as entertain self-contradiction, inconsistency, incongruity, anomaly, conflict, absurdity, oddity, and enigma. And, as a prime instance of *literary paradox*, I would list, as well, the kind of discrepancy highlighted by the Higher Criticism of the Bible. Laying David as a king after God's own heart alongside David as a *realpolitik* Bismarck, no, a mafia don, is not so much an intellectual or theological problem to be solved as an aesthetic atmosphere in which to live and move and have one's being in the richness of ambiguity (see the Books of Samuel and Kings).

Adagio

From Persons to Persona: Influence Becomes Life's Work

*The Child is Father of the Man;
And I could wish my days to be
Bound each to each by natural piety.*

—William Wordsworth, “Ode: Intimations
of Immortality” (1802-04, 1807)

We are associated in adolescent and adult life with some friends, who, like skies and waters, are coextensive with our idea; who, answering each to a certain affection of the soul, satisfy our desire on that side; whom we lack power to put at such focal distance from us, that we can mend or even analyze them. We cannot choose but love them. . . . [M]uch intercourse with a friend has supplied us with a standard of excellence, and has increased our respect for the resources of God, who thus sends a real person to outgo our ideal.

—Ralph Waldo Emerson, “Nature” (1837)

*Retrospection is Prospect's half,
Sometimes, almost more—*

—Emily Dickinson, “This Was in the White of the Year—” (1865)

Rondo

From Wordsworth to Dickinson: Context Becomes Text

*May God us keep
From Single vision and Newtons sleep*
—William Blake to Thomas Butts, November 22, 1802¹

This is what I call living by ideas; when one side of a question has long had your current support, when all your feelings are engaged, when you have all around you no language but one, when your party talks this language like a steam engine and can imagine no other—still to be able to think, still to be irresistibly carried, if so it be, by the current of thought to the opposite side of the question, and, like Balaam, to be unable to speak anything but what the Lord has put into your mouth.

—Matthew Arnold, “The Function of Criticism at the Present Time” (1864)

Creativity arises as a result of the intersection of two quite different frames of reference.

—Arthur Koestler, *The Act of Creation* (1964)²

Presto

From Aubade to Evensong: Romanticism Becomes Modernism

*There is a singer everyone has heard,
Loud, a midsummer and a mid-wood bird,
Who makes the solid tree trunks sound again.
He says that leaves are old and that for flowers
Mid-summer is to spring as one to ten.
He says the early petal-fall is past
When pear and cherry bloom went down in showers
On sunny days a moment overcast;
And comes that other fall we name the fall.
He says the highway dust is over all.
The bird would cease and be as other birds
But that he knows in singing not to sing.
The question that he frames in all but words
Is what to make of a diminished thing.*

—Robert Frost, “The Oven Bird” (1916)

*Reality allows us to perceive the world with crystalline clarity with
one eye at a time, but never with both [Werner Heisenberg] . . .
Only a vision of the whole, like that of a saint, a madman or a mystic,
will permit us to decipher the true organizing principle of the universe.*

—Karl Schwartzchild, as quoted in Corinna da Fonseca-Wolheim,
book review of *When We Cease to Understand the World* (2021) by Benjamin
Labatut, trans. Adrian Nathan West (*New York Times*, September 24, 2021)

*Authorship itself has always seemed to me to be a witness to and an
expression of ambivalence, of here and there, of yes and no, of two souls
in one breast, of an annoying richness in inner conflicts, antithesis and
contradictions.*

—Thomas Mann, *Reflections of a Non-Political Man* (1916)

Postlude

From Here to There: Conclusion Becomes Consequence

*Early we receive a call, yet it remains incomprehensible,
and only late do we discover how obedient we were.*

—Czeslaw Milosz, *Facing the River* (1995)

*. . . the highest criticism is that which reveals in the work of Art what
the artist had not put there*

—Oscar Wilde, “The Critic as Artist” (1891)

38 Review

My natural methodism has arisen in stages. Ever since my late twenties, I have interpreted Charles Lamb’s phrase as renaming my native outlook, which had been a combination of natural piety and Baptist Arminianism. My untutored appreciation for nature grew alongside the naïve orthodoxy that defined my childhood. My adolescent to young adult exposure to empirical and evangelical ideas prepared me, in turn, to hear that language whenever I came across it in my survey from High to Late Romanticism. And these various early discernments have also led to my late-career understanding of experience *versus* faith in Modern Anglo-America.

Appendix A: Recent Book Reviews by Richard E. Brantley

The first, third, and fourth of these reviews are reprinted, respectively, from *Christianity & Literature* 68.3 (June 2019): 520-23; *The Scriblerian* 52.2 (Spring 2020): 200-04; and *Religion & Literature* 52.2 (Summer 2020): 152-54. Grateful acknowledgment is made to the publishers. The second review appears here for the first time.

1 *Romanticism and Methodism: The Problem of Religious Enthusiasm*, by Helen Boyles. London and New York: Routledge, 2017. Pp. vii + 206.

In his book *The Romantic Movement and Methodism: A Study of English Romanticism and the Evangelical Revival* (1937), Frederick C. Gill pioneered an early form of historical criticism linking British Romanticism to Methodism. My own books *Wordsworth's "Natural Methodism"* (1975) and *Locke, Wesley, and the Method of English Romanticism* (1984) contributed to such interdisciplinary criticism by further examining the relationship between Methodism and Romanticism. Recent scholarship in this vein has only deepened our understanding of how Romantic poets such as William Blake, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, William Wordsworth, and others engaged with evangelicalism more broadly, and Methodism in particular. Jennifer G. Jesse's *William Blake's Religious Vision: There's a Methodism in His Madness* (2013) and Michael Farrell's *Blake and the Methodists* (2014), for example, identify John Wesley's radical early Methodism as a defining trait of Blake's most authentic madness, his "Poetic Genius." Similarly, in her book *William Wordsworth and the Theology of Poverty* (2013), Heidi J. Snow examines Wesley's influence on Wordsworth's themes of conversion, covenant, and striving toward spiritual perfection. Jasper Cragwall, in his book *Lake Methodism: Polite Literature and Popular Religion, 1780-1830* (2013), places Robert Southey, Wordsworth, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, Joanna Southcott, and, surprisingly, Mary Shelley at the intersection of Romanticism and Methodism.

Appendix B: Reviews of Richard

E. Brantley's Transatlantic Trio:

Empiricism, Evangelicalism, Romanticism: Essays and Reviews 1974-2017. Ames, Iowa: Culicidae Press, 2017. Pp. 740.

These chronologically ordered replies to *Transatlantic Trio* might appeal not just to researchers but, as well, to lovers of discussion. In my series to date, the eight reviews have the last word. Readers might want a further say. Appraisal is reprinted with permission. Grateful acknowledgment is made to the publishers.

1.

Natural Methodism and Varieties of Romanticism

Like the English language, the Atlantic Ocean at once bonds and divides the United States and England. In the same way, the language and the Border Country unite and separate Scotland and England. The classes and regions in each kingdom have also used language, as well as forms of social and geographical positioning, to segregate and ally themselves. Did this hold true in addition for the cultural movement of the long nineteenth century that the British started calling Romanticism by the mid-1820s? Or did Romanticism transcend the geographies and peoples it evoked and elevated?

Increasingly scholars speak of Romanticism as a transatlantic phenomenon (Gravil). While Americans may have lagged initially in following trends that first took hold in England, in time they became co-creators of an Anglo-American Romanticism, as it continued to change character and expression.

Endnotes

¹ Donald Ault's study of William Blake's "visionary physics" recognizes the role of the imagination not just in Blake's scientific thought but, as well, in Isaac Newton's (Ault 1974). Blake to the contrary, Newton was scarcely as afflicted with "Single vision" as readers of Blake might think. Blake's ten words, quoted above, come from lines 86-87 of "With Happiness Stretch'd Across the Hills," a poem included in his letter to Thomas Butts (see the first epigraph of Rondo). Parts of Chapters 22 and 23 recast parts of "Wielding Natural Methodism: Prospect's Retrospection" (Brantley 2016). Parts of Rondo and of Presto were presented as "Dickinson and Wesley: A Comparison of Poems and Sermons" at the Emily Dickinson International Society Conference—"Experimental Dickinson"—June 24-26, 2016, Cité Internationale Universitaire de Paris, Paris, France. Gratitude is due to Jane Donahue Eberwein for organizing Panel 20: "Rewording the Word: Dickinson and the Language of Faith."

² Arthur Koestler's epitome of both/and aesthetics is used by Mikesch Muecke and Miriam Zach, eds. (2007): 6 to introduce the concept of creative intersections or "resonance" between music and architecture. Robert Venturi had re-introduced architectural history into the academy and had begun the Postmodern phase of architectural studies. Annemieke Pronker-Coron (2015) pioneers a musical version of both/and (fiddle/violin) aesthetics.

³ Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *Biographia Literaria*, 1817, Chapter XIV.

⁴ Respectively: Abrams, ed., 1973-98: 2:60; Emily Dickinson, "I Dwell in Possibility—," 1862. M. H. Abrams seeks to understand what Blake meant by the "marriage" of heaven and hell.

⁵ Lamb 1903 11: 351.

⁶ Shelley's phrases, indicative of an "imageless" (his word) ghost in the machine of metaphor-laden picture-language during the Romantic period (Shelley could be concrete, too, from time to time), are highlighted in Pulos 1954 and in Wasserman 1965. Image-laden language, however, perhaps even as part of Romantic religion, is acknowledged by Colin Jager, who demonstrates a self-critical tradition of natural theology, "substantially continuous" from Hume to Blake, in which "practice" is preferred to "argument" (Jager 2007: 36-37). Describing an arc from the Enlightenment to Romanticism, Jager concludes, against legions of secularizing critics, that the "intentionality" embraced by British Romantics commits them to "divine intentionality" (ibid 224).

⁷ For the step-forward character of Coleridge's influence on literary history, see Brantley 1994: 64, 123, 136-38; see also: Harvey 2013.

⁸ Classic studies of the Britain/Germany branch of nineteenth-century comparative literature are Garber, ed. 1988; Mellor 1980; Ryals 1990; Simpson 1979. Although binary oppositions yield irony generally, Friedrich Schlegel activates double-ness in German idealism: ethics *versus* complete individual freedom in *Transcendentalphilosophie* (1801); and sensual *versus* spiritual love in *Lucinde* (1799). Schlegel shows that irony and unsystematic dialogues go together; that irony arises from chaos; and that this is a good thing. For an early German example of science-religion intersection, Ulinka Rublack, *The Astronomer and the*

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