

Praise for *Transatlantic Trio*

*In this treasure trove of literary commentary, Richard Brantley distills his decades of inquiry into the dynamic religious, scientific, and poetic forces that sustained an amazingly fruitful strain of Anglo-American Romanticism. Wordsworth, Coleridge, Blake, Keats, Tennyson, Emerson, and Dickinson play key roles in his argument, along with Locke, Wesley, Edwards, Darwin, and Brantleys of multiple generations. In their creative blendings of empiricism with evangelicalism, the writers featured here experimented with subtleties of both/and logic that challenge today's either/or reductionism. These articles, book chapters, personal writings, and reviews document energetic, sustained grappling with thinkers from the Enlightenment to the current literary scene, all treated with Brantley's characteristic insight, intensity, congeniality, and verve. As the humorous cover drawing of thirteen writer-thinkers aboard a railroading handcar suggests, *Transatlantic Trio* engages its readers on Brantley's adventurous scholarly excursion, "a back-and-forth that gets somewhere."*

—Jane Donahue Eberwein, Distinguished Professor
Emerita of English, Oakland University

Spanning almost half a century, Richard Brantley's 'ongoing project in bi-national cultural poetics' is both an erudite analysis of the history of transatlantic literary engagement and, in itself, an emblematic example of the flowering of transatlanticism as a subject of literary study. Brantley has an Emersonian talent for identifying previously unnoticed connections across space and time, tracing correspondences between empirical philosophy and evangelical faith, with coordinates ranging from Locke, Edwards and Wesley, to Blake, Dickinson and Tennyson, in a narrative that explores the complex, ambiguous subtleties of the relationships between history and literature. Brantley's scholarship does not merely tell us about the past: the forms of 'healthy skepticism' that he traces through the 17th to the 19th centuries – and which he adopts in his own readings – remain as vital as ever as antidotes to a tendency in our own times towards a 'certainty' that [. . .] 'is the enemy of decency and humanity in people who are sure they are right.'

—Chris Gair, Senior Lecturer in English Literature and American Studies,
School of Critical Studies, University of Glasgow

This collection of essays and reviews provides representative examples of Richard Brantley's pioneering work in highlighting interconnections between empiricism, evangelicalism and Romanticism, and in showing the importance of positioning and connecting British and American writers, and cultural and literary movements and ideas, within a transatlantic field. Brantley's work foregrounds a productive antagonism between the experience-based epistemology of John Locke and the revivalist theology of John Wesley and Jonathan Edwards, and traces this dialectic's influence on canonical works of Anglo-American Romanticism, early and late. Moving beyond a nation-based model, Brantley offers a nuanced consideration of the ways in which British and American writers such as Wordsworth, Keats, Tennyson, and Dickinson used a comparable empirical method to authenticate and authorize the sensory experience of a physical world, while employing a similar procedure to interrogate the idea of faith in a metaphysical or supernatural realm.

—Páraic Finnerty, Reader in English and American Literature,
University of Portsmouth

Richard E. Brantley has provided, in *Transatlantic Trio*, a capstone to one of the central preoccupations of his extremely distinguished scholarly career. This is the analysis of commonalities in two central but apparently divergent traditions of thought: philosophical empiricism and evangelical non-conformism. He traces the growth of British Romanticism out of the relationship between the two, attending to ways in which both traditions place emphasis on knowledge of the self through the experience of the immanent, and goes on to show how, through complex transatlantic conversations, these ideas come to form the bedrock of American intellectual and spiritual thought. As such, it gives readers both an accessibly defined account of Romanticism from a transatlantic perspective, and also offers a series of scholarly expositions of the central literary figures in the long century under view. The book does more than this, however. It also provides a fascinating overview of the subject as it has developed during the past four decades and ends with a reflection, after decades of experience, on how the consolations of pedagogy bring an enhancement of faith.

—Matthew Scott, Lecturer in the Department of English Literature,
University of Reading

Brantley's trio, made up of empiricism, evangelicalism, and Romanticism—as spelled out in his complete title—may be thought of as a productively unresolved dialectic whereby Romanticism draws energy from the conflicting imperatives of faith and experience. In a revealing epigraph to his prologue, Brantley quotes Arthur Koestler on the generative power of opposing points of view: “Creativity arises as the result of the intersection of two quite different frames of reference.” For Brantley, the “different frames of reference” are experience/empiricism/science, on the one hand, and faith/evangelicalism/religion on the other. He unites these clashing polarities at the very beginning of his prologue through the incisive chiasmus, “faith in experience and experiential Faith,” that crystalizes the mutually beneficial cross-pollination that he views as the driving force of Romanticism. “British empiricism and transatlantic revivalism,” he writes, “strike sparks off the literary imagination of a bi-national Romantic Movement”. The poem, then, that Brantley reads across two centuries is his metaphorical celebration of these conflicting voices: “just as an antiphony is ‘an opposition of sound’—‘the answer made by one voice to another’—so empirical philosophy and evangelical faith alternate, or converse, in Romantic Anglo-America (OED).” Brantley goes so far as to argue that “‘the harmony produced’ by that ‘opposition of sound,’ . . . can appear on the same page of, and perhaps even as the single voice of, Anglo-American Romanticism (OED).” Such language clearly reflects Brantley's interest in presenting the great central poem of Romanticism as forward looking, and not merely a record of artistic triumph consigned to the past. He is at his most ambitious when he proposes that Romanticism is not content “just to make poetry new, but to pass it on, and perhaps even prepare the ear of readers, however unwittingly on all fronts, for the taught pleasures of the Modern-era dissonance to come.” At the heart of Brantley's life's work lies his conviction that Romanticism has a crucial role to play in our present moment.

To insure that his own work meets the standard he most admires in the thinkers and artists who have long been his subject, Brantley departs from what he describes as his own tendency toward “relentless self-consistency, accentuating the positive, eliminating the negative, and reaffirming the whole” to interject an entirely “different and maybe refreshing line of auto-subversion.” The key question he directs to himself in his epilogue is whether or not “human minds [his own included] rest in the mystery and doubt perhaps too glibly—or even somewhat disingenuously. . .” This willing contemplation of his own potential for superficiality ultimately leads to the most devastating of his admissions: “Who,” Brantley wonders, “can deny his or her yearning for unity on some days? To see empirical vs. evangelical emerging into harmony (poetry) looks a lot like synthesis just now.” Having confronted his own

fears and thereby shown respect for what Jorge Luis Borges has described as the “counter-book” that each complete book must contain (qtd. by Brantley 615), Brantley dedicates the remainder of his epilogue to rebuilding the foundations for his argument.

The steps Brantley elaborates as most central to his method now concentrate on the emotional, affective dimension of the more narrowly intellectual approach he sketched in the prologue. His first move is to affirm the importance of ambiguity as an antidote to the allure of complacency that threatens his own scholarship as much as it does the visionary aspirations of the Romantic writers he studies. Working from the Latin roots of the term—that he translates as “to wander uncertainly”—Brantley gives particular emphasis to uncertainty as an essential byproduct of Romantic writers’ determination to “search for something, they know not what.” “Both/and logic,” he argues, “carries the implication not just of tentativeness or open-mindedness,” but the “understanding” that “those who come down hard on one side or the other can be wrong or dangerous.” Brantley’s next move is to present active and unceasing vigilance as the best defense against the inclination to seek final answers and succumb to single-mindedness. “The writers who have attracted the attention of the series refuse to sleep, until Jerusalem is built,” but, of course, he notes, “they never sleep, for they never finish building.” Here again Brantley directs attention to the forward-looking, future-oriented component of Romanticism. “Dialectical strategy,” he reminds us, “proves ultimately inimical to aesthetic versatility.” Continuous resistance to dialectical closure as brought about by the vigilant pursuit of an uncertain future yields the creative dynamism Brantley finds most admirable in Romantic writers, and it provides the standard he applies equally to his own published works. Brantley concludes his epilogue by asking the one question guaranteed to provoke resistance and intensify vigilance: “What next?” He concludes with a summary of his primary aims expressed in admirably plain language: “The prologue and epilogue have not just offered a master key to all these reprints and to the books, but opened the door to more investigation.” We leave the epilogue with the sure sense that Brantley is already moving into the future.

—Paul Crumbley, Professor of English and
Director of the Undergraduate Studies Program,
Utah State University

In mulling nineteenth-century poetic thought in the English-speaking world, Brantley shows how empiricism and evangelicalism swept into each other and produced Romanticism. Reading the great nineteenth-century poets moves us because their poetry like the vision of John Wesley is

rich with good black earth but not earthbound. Faith arises out of sense experience.

*Brantley is a fine, readable critic. His good sensible language explains Wordsworth's language of sense. Reading *Transatlantic Trio* almost enables a person to understand the blending of the spiritual and the natural that so often make us imagine that our common observations of nature are moving and uplifting.*

—Sam Pickering, Professor of English, Emeritus,
University of Connecticut

These essays speak to the way Enlightenment, Romantic, and Victorian thinkers created a Venn diagram out of an opposition that still nibbles at the soul (to paraphrase Dickinson) of today's postmodern world: science vs. religion. Of the many strategies the Romantics offer us to overcome the Manichean duality that runs rampant today are the flexibility of method over the rigidity of system as well as the multiple perspectives of "both/and logic" over the singular vision of "either/or logic." In terms of literary criticism and history, these methods show us the benefits and necessity of moving beyond the single-nation formulations of Romanticism towards a comparative approach. By examining transatlantic influence and literatures as hierarchical, scholars of Transatlantic Romanticism have unwittingly embraced the very duality they are trying to deconstruct. Brantley's methodology levels these fields to remove the competitive poetics and politics that emerged in the wake of the American Revolution and still maintains a foothold. His application of these strategies to present-day Western thought expands this book beyond a work of criticism to a philosophy that overrides the binary coding of a digital age. He ties "the transatlantic trio of empiricism, evangelicalism, and Romanticism together" in new and compelling ways: the collected essays and book reviews are tesserae that together form a mosaic, a more complete scholarly picture of Anglo-American Romanticism than previously existed. The book ends with a powerful autobiographical epilogue that testifies to the transcendent methods of Anglo-American Romanticism to help us make sense of not only the 18th-to-21st centuries, but also of our own lives, the antiphony of internal and external worlds that composes our thoughts and the "music of humanity."

—Joel Pace, Professor of English,
University of Wisconsin, Eau Claire

Books by Richard E. Brantley:

Wordsworth's "Natural Methodism"

Locke, Wesley, and the Method of English Romanticism

Coordinates of Anglo-American Romanticism:

Wesley, Edwards, Carlyle, and Emerson

Anglo-American Antiphony:

The Late Romanticism of Tennyson and Emerson

Experience and Faith: The Late-Romantic

Imagination of Emily Dickinson

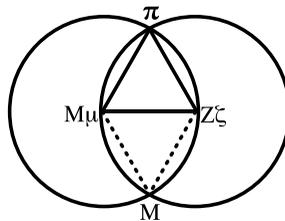
Emily Dickinson's Rich Conversation:

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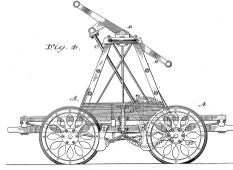
Transatlantic Trio: Empiricism, Evangelicalism, Romanticism

Essays and Reviews, 1974-2017

Richard E. Brantley



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- UNIVERSITY OF NOTRE DAME: "The Interrogative Mood of Emily Dickinson's Quarrel with God."

To Jessica, Thomas, Justine, Chris,
Gabriel, David, Rabun, and Leif

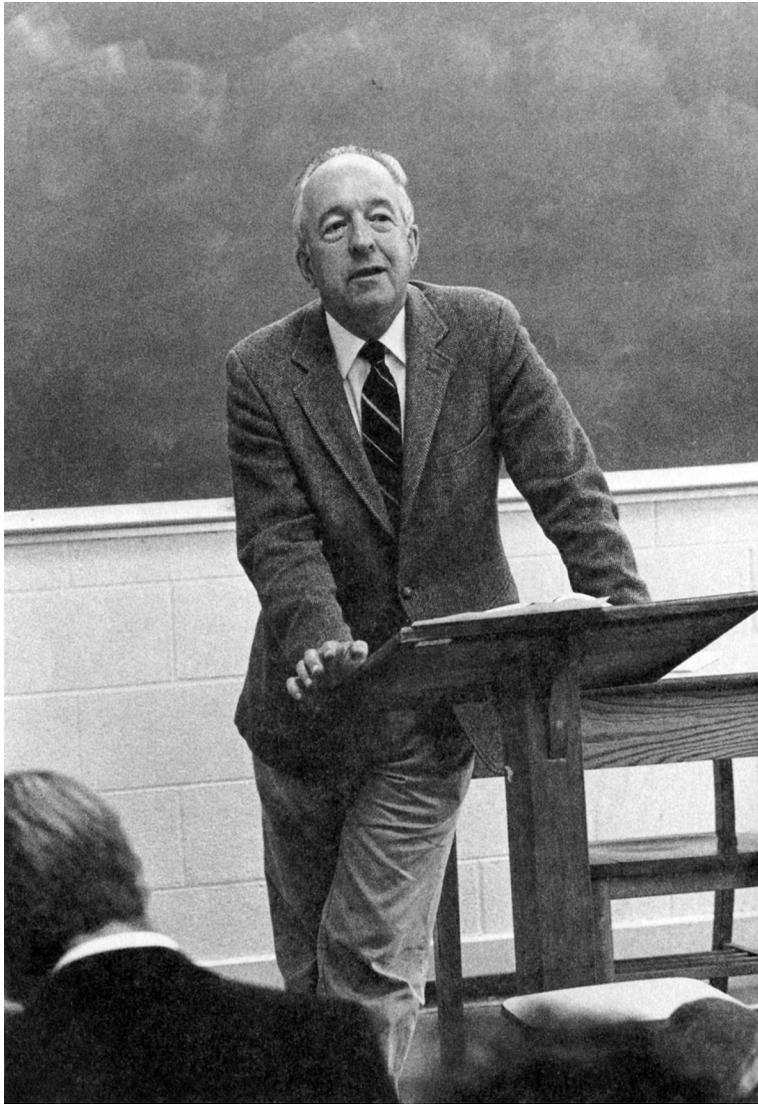


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Edwin Graves Wilson

Prologue: From Context to Text

*Clasp with thy panting soul the pendulous Earth;
As from a centre, dart thy spirit's light
Beyond all worlds, until its spacious might
Satiates the void circumference: then shrink
Even to a point within our day and night;
And keep thy heart light lest it make thee sink
When hope has kindled hope, and lured thee to the brink.*

—Percy Bysshe Shelley, “Adonais” (1821), lines 417-23¹

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

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

. . . life is incremental, and though a worthwhile life is a gathering together of all that one is, good and bad, successful and not, the paradox is that we can never really see this one thing that all of our increments (and decrements, I suppose) add up to. “Early we receive a call,” writes Czeslaw Milosz, “yet it remains incomprehensible, / and only late do we discover how obedient we were.”

—Christian Wiman, *My Bright Abyss: Meditation of a Modern Believer* (2013) 174

Francis Jeffrey's indictment of William Wordsworth's *The Excursion* (1814) as "mystical verbiage of the Methodist pulpit"—"This will never do!"—will itself never do (Jeffrey 463, 465). Charles Lamb's praise of *The Excursion* as "natural methodism" provides a fuller, more positive clue to the historical, interdisciplinary resonance of Romanticism (Lamb 2:149). Lamb's two-word mouthful offers versatile insight, bears interpretive weight. This phrase signals how the rival traditions of empiricism and evangelicalism come together to embroider not just Wordsworth's art, but Romantic literature throughout the English-speaking world. A lower-case but not entirely secularized swerve to evangelicalism spins volumes about how 19th-century poetic faith willingly suspends disbelief: the free-wheeling swing of Romantic-era creativity proclaims interconnection.

*

The combination of "natural" and "methodism" opens a critic's pathway. British empiricism and transatlantic revivalism strike sparks off the literary imagination of a bi-national Romantic Movement. On United Kingdom/United States shores, faith in experience and experiential Faith rise inexorably to converge at the crossroads of an inspired transatlantic artistry, a prime location—and locator—of creative authority. Lamb's label pinpoints a cache of Anglo-American Romantic power. This natural methodism counts as a bi-nationally indigenous, religious as well as philosophical equivalent to M. H. Abrams's magisterially philosophical emphasis on how Continental European Natural Supernaturalism applies to British

¹ Quotations of British and American writers, unless otherwise indicated, are from Damrosch et al., eds., and Baym et al., eds. A shorter version of this essay appears as "Wielding Natural Methodism: Prospect's Retrospection," *The Wordsworth Circle* 47.1 (Winter 2016): 3-16. Thanks go to Marilyn Gaull for her editing—and for her encouragement. Parts of the prologue and epilogue 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., 6, to introduce the concept of creative intersection—or "resonance"—between music and architecture. Muecke and Zach build on Robert Venturi's *Complexity and Contradiction in Architecture* (1966), which re-introduced architectural history into the academy and began the post-Modern phase of architectural studies. In another, more recent publication, Annemieke Pronker-Coron pioneers a broad, yet focused, musical version of both/and aesthetics, in her book *The Bridge: Connecting Violin and Fiddle Worlds* (2015).

Romanticism (Abrams, 1971). This arc from the late 17th to the middle 19th century encompasses John Locke (1632-1704), John Wesley (1703-91), Jonathan Edwards (1703-58), and the method of Anglo-American Romanticism. This one curve of that great timeline gives meaning perhaps even to such a spontaneous overflow recollected in tranquility as the signature middle-century question asked by Emily Dickinson (1830-86) as late as 1862: “Dare you see a Soul at the White Heat?” (Poem 365, 1). For the remainder of this segment to draw out the implication of Jeffrey’s negative assessment and Lamb’s favorable judgment of Wordsworth’s poetry is to announce that wielding natural methodism along that arc from high-to-late Romanticism of the Anglo-American world is the procedure and the concept of this essay.

Jeffrey’s already-quoted words of withering condescension come from a Whig to the formerly radical but in 1814 Tory-leaning poet of middle age. Yet these terms of abuse may be conservative in that they reflect Jeffrey’s neoclassical premises of literary taste. Jeffrey may disclose a way or three in which *The Excursion* does not live up to readers’ expectations. Without looking for sublime thrills, sincere expression, and inventive swagger, Jeffrey nonetheless detects hot air, disingenuous formula, and crowd-pleasing convention. He assumes disconnection between religion and literature. He believes that Wordsworth could not possibly allude to Methodism, however subtly, and with however paradoxical an understanding of this simultaneously edgy and mainstream evangelical form, for any poetically proper reason. And throughout all his hostility Jeffrey makes at least one good point. Wordsworth’s preachiness—his Methodist language “is repeated, till the speaker entertains no doubt that he is the chosen organ of divine truth and persuasion”—scarcely comports with the idea of art as pleasure (Jeffrey 463).

That said, Jeffrey’s scathing review grinds an ax or four and makes this strangely haughty Whig British Exhibit A among those “cultured despisers” of religion whom German Romantic theologian Friedrich Schleiermacher skewers. Whether Methodism in *The Excursion* enchants the poem or merely drugs it, Jeffrey gets Methodism wrong. The savvy, sense-based reason of *ur*-Methodist Wesley, like his equally experience-oriented practice of charity, fights shy of mysticism, which, whether interior or otherworldly in its search for “union with the divine by means of ecstatic contemplation or direct reception” (*OED*), elides embodiment, circumstance, the sensate. Each month from January, 1782, through April, 1784, in twenty-eight free-stand-

ing issues of *The Arminian Magazine*, his widely read *omnium gatherum* of free will-loving Methodist lore, Wesley abridged, annotated and popularized the truth-from-where-I-stand angle of vision celebrated throughout the perceptual epistemology of Locke's *An Essay concerning Human Understanding* (1690). The empirically evangelical, here-and-now idiom of British Romanticism in general, and the eleemosynary distinct from altruistic accent of Wordsworth in particular, ensued. Wordsworth's readers may dislike mysticism (dreamy, self-deluded, confused) and at the same time like his Romantic vernacular for its transposition of Wesley-brand non-mysticism (concrete, acute, clear-sighted) into the still, sad music of an anything but entirely anti-religious Romantic-era humanism. Just as the evangelical "spiritual sense" scarcely resembles amorphously inward, space-cadet mystery, as Jeffrey appears to scoff, but trends outer-directed instead, so Wordsworth's influential resourcefulness reinforces not just imagination of a world elsewhere or of a paradise within, but mental images of this wondrous, numinous, material world. The dubious judgment of a biased critic whom Schleiermacher would dub a defaming witling notwithstanding, Wordsworth's mysticism, to put it mildly, remains putative, at most.

Or, to dispense with Jeffrey more fairly, Wordsworth's mysticism stays under such firm control that his most characteristically religious poetry does not just intuit God, like Henry More's and Henry Vaughn's mystical writings of the 17th century, but discerns God's things through "the language of the sense" (Wordsworth, "Tintern Abbey," 1798, 108). True, Wordsworth's art of belief is very well capable of confining his faith concerns to "things hoped for," "things not seen" (Heb. 11:1; KJV). His personae, moreover, can be intent on overleaping "substance" of the former and "evidence" of the latter. Finally, his paradoxical (verbal) intimation of the apophatic (ineffable) undertow of phenomena can come across as rich and strange enough to satisfy anyone's inner (sea-changed) believer. But "subtler language" for "the deep truth" qualifies as branding for British Romantic poetry only with the stipulation that "the language of the sense" glints in the blend.³

³ Percy Bysshe 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 thus concrete, too, from time to time), are highlighted in Pulos; Wasserman. Image-laden language, though, 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" (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" (224).

And Anglo-American Romanticism keeps empirically philosophical and evangelically religious language so much in play as to leave mysticism at the margin of such both/and logic. Thus the “truth” that “you shall know,” and which “makes you free,” can prove all the more accessible, lived, felt, or experienced, for not being remote, abstract, formulaic, or innocent (John 8:32; KJV).

In the letter to Wordsworth in which Lamb mentions “natural methodism” as what works well for *The Excursion*, he laments how William Gifford, editor of *The Quarterly*, has excised from Lamb’s review its elaboration on the tagline as encomium. Did a Jeffrey-like prejudice against Methodists motivate Gifford to mute Lamb’s Methodism-whispering language, consigning it to the virtual ether? Lamb makes clear to his friend that something good would have been coming Wordsworth’s way: “I regret only [Lamb writes] that I did not keep a copy [of the review]. I am sure you would have been pleased with it, because I have been feeding my fancy for some months with the notion of pleasing you.” It is maddening-but-tantalizing that like the *Quarterly* review (as truncated), the letter says nothing about anything Lamb might have meant by the designation, let alone about how this adjective-noun link-up hints approval. Lamb may have thought that his literary compatriot would already have known and taken pride in what natural methodism points to. What, if anything, does Lamb’s veiled reference to Wordsworth’s greatness signify for just how English-language Romanticism proves distinguished, too?

Does Lamb’s phrase encapsulate the religious connotation as well as the philosophical denotation of Colin Clarke’s classic brief (1963) for Wordsworth’s “Romantic paradox” as an at once objective and subjective phenomenon? Can natural methodism epitomize the empirical connotation as well as the evangelical denotation of F. C. Gill’s classic title: *The Romantic Movement and Methodism* (1937)? Is the long-running series of which this essay forms part—including not just the collection’s twenty-one essays and seventeen reviews, but the six books—justified in what an anonymous University Press of Florida reader once called its “interminable lucubration” concerning Lamb’s phrase? Would a Clifford Geertz agree, though, that a “thick description” of natural methodism is nonetheless desirable, or perhaps even devoutly to be wished, however incrementally or speculatively it must be accreted or induced? Answers to such questions would indicate, if only tentatively or provisionally, how Wordsworth and his fellow Romantics might welcome or even co-opt the phrase as an intellectual-*cum*-emotional descriptor of their collec-

tive work. Answers would thereby atone vicariously for Gifford's sin of omission, and would therefore placate the shades of Lamb and Wordsworth (to say nothing of scholarly curiosity). Answers, in short, would fill this gap with what the concept adds up to.

This essay, accordingly, poses, as well, the following related, yet more general, questions, all to be held in mind for both the short and long term of this cumulative, ongoing project in bi-national cultural poetics. Did the experience-framed correspondence between empirical philosophy and evangelical faith build a fire under Wordsworth's dialogical imagination? Could such an existential but mystery-laden parallel between the natural and spiritual things of earth suffice as a requisite counter-intuition for the both/and logic of any other poet worth his or her salt in that or in any other era? Did Lamb devise his locution subliminally to cry out to posterity that science and religion could once more roll into one stance, as in days not long ago? Will the creative imagination ever again make these two "quite different frames of reference" interactive enough to rediscover "similitude in dissimilitude" (Samuel Taylor Coleridge's breakthrough expression)? If the coalescence or interpenetration implied by Coleridge's enigmatic but memorable phrase is by definition rare, then it nonetheless signally obtained during the Romantic-period chapter of Anglo-American literary history.

Lamb's phrase suggests, at least, that science and religion used to converse, and did so relatively fruitfully. By contrast, interaction between evolutionary biology and post-liberal-theology evangelicalism seems out of the question now, or at any other time for the foreseeable future. Does Lamb's intimation of experience-framed correspondence between empirical philosophy and evangelical faith model both/and creativity? Regardless, high-to-late-Romantic irony was homegrown in the Anglo-American style of empiricism-*cum*-evangelicalism—and not just imported from within the both/and logic of German Romantic philosopher Friedrich Schlegel's dynamic idealism.⁴ At any rate, just as the term *natural methodism* appears

⁴ Pertinent studies of the Britain/Germany branch of 19th-century comparative literature are Garber, ed.; Mellor; Ryals; Simpson. Although binary oppositions yield irony generally, Schlegel activates double-ness in German idealism—ethics vs. complete individual freedom in *Transcendentalphilosophie* (1801); and sensual vs. spiritual love in *Lucinde* (1799). Schlegel shows that irony and unsystematic dialogues go together; that irony arises from chaos; and that all of this, on balance, is "a good thing." For an early German example of science-religion interaction, Ulinka Rublack's *The Astronomer and the Witch: Johannes Kepler's Fight for His Mother* (2015) serves well, showing, for instance, that the scientific revolution accounts not just for the end, but for the beginning, of witchcraft trials. Robert Venturi, like Schlegel, employs a slash to

to combine empirical import—*NB*: Lamb’s lower-case “m,” as in scientific method—with straightforward overtones of Methodism, so every crevice of Wordsworth’s poetry assays natural-*cum*-spiritual ore. Just as Wesley’s immersion in British empiricism and his innovation in heart religion find an experiential common denominator, so British Romantic writers live in, but are not of, this world (compare Rom. 12:2; KJV). And just as the rational empiricism of Locke suffuses the religious methodology of Wesley and Edwards, so the Locke-infused spiritual sense of “the Methodist Revolution” (Semmel) and of the First and Second Great Awakenings—triple-revival punch!—explain (without explaining away) the Anglo-American Romantic kerfuffle of intellect and emotion.

Lamb’s two-word standard of knowledge-*cum*-belief, which is perhaps even his lyric measure or “criterion for tune” (to borrow a phrase from Dickinson’s Poem 256), delimits a bi-national arena, and perhaps even mandates a bi-national agenda, of historical, interdisciplinary criticism. Coordinates on the arc from Locke’s *Essay* to Wesley’s abridgment (1773) of Edwards’s *A Treatise concerning Religious Affections* (1746) to works of British and American Romanticism from William Blake’s to Dickinson’s spark a bi-national canon of epic proportions. The twin pioneers of transatlantic revivalism—Wesley and Edwards—are also the originating duo of such seasonally proliferating pairs of British and American writers as Thomas Carlyle and Ralph Waldo Emerson, arguably the deliberately cooperating co-founders of Anglo-American *belles-lettres*, or Alfred, Lord Tennyson and Dickinson (Brantley, 1993, 2004, 2013). High-Romantic triumvirate Wordsworth, Coleridge, and John Keats, and late-Romantic trio Emerson, Tennyson, and Dickinson—as this essay will emphasize—take the time-honored dispute between tough and tender, “Betwixt damnation and impassion’d clay,” forward to the bittersweet of a latter day (Keats, “On Sitting Down,” 1818, 6).

The great principle of empiricism, that one must see for oneself and be in the presence of the things one knows, applies, as well, to evangelical faith, and this prime set of interlocking contraries makes for an Anglo-American “Poetic Genius” (Blake, *All Religions Are One*, 1788, principle 3). Dickinson’s

join and at the same time to separate “both” and “and.” Venturi then places “both/and” before “logic,” in order to spin reasoning toward the suspended animation—the “have your cake, and eat it, too”—brand of creativity. M. H. Abrams’s incisive interpretation of William Blake’s phrase *the marriage of heaven and hell* proves apropos: “the sustained tension, without victory or suppression, of co-present oppositions” (Abrams et al., eds., 2:60). Such both/and logic complicates, and enlivens, the intellectual, emotional, and literary history of the United Kingdom and the United States alike, perhaps even lending some sanction to that two-nation chronicle.

counter-intuitive but steadfast watchword, that “Retrospection is Prospect’s half— / Sometimes, almost more—” pertains to how Wordsworth and other British Romantic writers hark back to the 18th century, and then blaze a trail to Emerson’s “double consciousness” and Dickinson’s “Compound Vision” of science vs. religion (Dickinson, Poem 1014B, 7-8; Emerson, “Fate,” 1852; Dickinson, Poem 830, 9). What Emerson would call the “stupendous antagonism” between Locke and Wesley/Edwards heightens the dramatic urgency of Romantic lyricism in the English-speaking world.⁵ Whether or not natural methodism goes so far as to parry the exclusionary thrust of man-unkind, this antidote to single vision nonetheless tempers the either/or excess of humankind: Lamb’s phrase bears the weight of projecting how faith in experience yields to experiential Faith, and vice versa. This progression *ad infinitum*, this “unremitting interchange / With the clear universe of things around,” recycles no mere monotony of the quotidian malady but enacts, instead, a purposive interplay, a “dual” of, as well as a “duel” between, philosophy and faith (Shelley, “Mont Blanc,” 1816, 39-40; Shoaf xi).

The broadly experiential, spiritual as well as natural vision of Romantic Anglo-America, in turn, sees empiricism vs. evangelicalism not just as a defining dichotomy of the English-speaking world, a non-collapsible, hard-and-fast distinction, but as a joint force liberated through creativity, a dynamic balance of the imagination. The next four segments, devoted, respectively, to high and late Romanticism and to ramification and recapitulation, will attempt to orient readers not only to these hitherto un-gathered essays and reviews (and the books), but also to the hitherto unpublished and freshly expansive epilogue. Prologue and epilogue can illustrate how collection and books are alike pitched, first, to the fit and special set of readers who can call upon esoteric backgrounds and, second, to that non-academic but gamely Googling and dictionary-loving audience who can read widely for what to do and how to live. Just what is most meaningful and truthful in this specific account of how “the new philosophy calls all into doubt”? The answer is: the will to find a way to natural methodism (what Wordsworth calls “natural piety”) is the will to keep believing.

A cross-culturally central set of intertwining antinomies, then—the British and American scene of science vs. religion—informs the poetic exegesis and the donnish conversations that here follow along lines of chronological

⁵ Eric G. Wilson discusses Emerson’s “stupendous antagonisms” as generic. From the Middle Ages to Emily Dickinson, the lyric was not so much a transcendent as a history-conditioned genre (Butterfield; Jackson). The interactive relation between the 19th-century lyric and its 18th-century philosophical and religious background suggests that the lyric overlaps the dramatic.

unfolding. The prologue, in relation not just to the collection, but the series as a whole, smacks of the pastiche. In one sense, its shored fragments do profess imitation of the style and content of the series. And its parenthetical references to authors and thinkers may not necessarily seem always germane to the core idea of natural methodism. Such quotations and the many allusions here show just how this cultural poetic, a subject, now, for well over forty years, exemplifies the energy of both/and logic as a colloquial but organic whole, and appears one great poem. And finally, is the prologue not just a sequel, but a further story? Perhaps, for this impossible genre of summing up a career in a single attempt aspires to that very coherence.

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Consider, first, a signature lyric (1802) of Wordsworth's high Romanticism:

My heart leaps up when I behold
A rainbow in the sky;
So was it when my life began;
So is it now I am a man;
So be it when I shall grow old,
Or let me die!
The Child is Father of the Man;
And I could wish my days to be
Bound each to each by natural piety.

“Natural piety,” according to Abrams, “is distinguished from piety based on the Scriptures, in which God makes the rainbow the token of his covenant with Noah and all his descendants (Genesis 9:12-17)” (Abrams et al., eds. 2:207). Distinct from an exclusively spiritual promise, “natural piety” takes tough-minded account of contingency (“When [and only when?] I behold”), of mortality (“I shall grow old, / . . . let me die!”), and of the forbidding gulf between the actual and the ideal (“I could wish . . .”). However, “natural piety” also turns out sufficiently tender-minded in these nine lines of near-perfect visionary summary to be characterized finally by hope. Indeed, Wordsworth here entertains the conspicuous possibility of experience-faith synthesis and, for better or worse, comes as close to attaining it as anyone could.

Freudian theory to the contrary, this text does not just emerge exclusively or narrowly from trauma, and then trend headlong deathward (Carruth). In-