Like some recent philosophers of the West, I needed to turn myself toward the East in order to find guides and basic principles of method. . . . I followed the teaching of masters for whom a daily practice—in fact, yoga—was what could help awaken or reawaken and discover words and gestures carrying another meaning, another light, another rationality."

Luce Irigaray, *Between East and West*

"The true artist, monk, and scientist are not searching to grasp knowledge as object, but rather as event."

Arthur Zajonc, *Catching the Light*

The topic of the following volume, *Romanticism and Buddhism*, has a relatively short history worth brief consideration relative to the intellectual and spiritual energies expressed in the epigrams by Luce Irigaray and Arthur Zajonc. Like Irigaray, my open and broad inquiry emerged from a coincidence of particular practices and theoretical interests where the fissures cut into consciousness by culture re-fuse division to "reawaken and discover words and gestures carrying another meaning." Like Zajonc, my experience of "knowledge" as dynamic event (where "Events in Time" issue forth from the space between "a Pulsation of the Artery" [Blake, *M* 29.2; E 127]), fleeting though it might be, united the personal and professional in ethical commitments (the "pleasure" of knowledge Wordsworth evokes in the 1802 "Preface" to *Lyrical Ballads* and in language quite compatible with Zajonc [606]). The experience evoked by Irigaray and Zajonc occurs at the spacetime coordinates termed self and represents the continuum where "knowledge [is an] event" through which consciousness "reawakens" to "another meaning, another light, another rationality." This sounds to me as good a description of "enlightenment" as any other, and what Irigaray and Zajonc voice fits well with the definitions of enlightenment current at the beginning of the Romantic period and conveniently codified by Dr. Johnson in 1756: "To quicken in the faculty of vision, to furnish with encrease [sic] of knowledge," and "to illuminate with divine knowledge" (239). At the beginning of the last intensive phase of encounter between Buddhism and the west during the Romantic era (afterward those relations shift from encounter to mutual interaction), sufficient refinement of western enlightenment epistemology had occurred to provide western philosophy with a glimpse of eastern views of enlightenment.
Although I have traced elsewhere the punctuated phases of encounter leading to the emergence of Buddhism—by which the major sutras were disseminated across southeast, central, and northern Asia and through which the teachings of the Buddha returned to India and subsequently flowed into western consciousness.

I. The Emergence of Buddhism into Romantic Europe

The transference (or perhaps sublimation) of energies generated through the gaze of these far shores was easily accomplished, since Romantic descriptions of enlightenment offered by, for example, Blake (in The Four Zoas) and Shelley (in Prometheus Unbound) converge with those found in Buddhist texts emerging in European languages for the first time across the nineteenth century. This coincidence of forms for enlightenment as self-emptying ripples through all the works in this volume. The genesis of this collection, then, began with seemingly simple questions asked of myself (and occasionally others), and the works appearing in this volume represent answers offered by insightful and engaged colleagues: "What's going on with Buddhism during the Romantic period? Can and should academic and spiritual practices be unified and interrelated, thereby helping heal an artificially conditioned alienation common within the increasingly corporate academy?" My answer began through merging meditative and devotional practices with pedagogical and service commitments, where William Blake's "proverb of hell" served as the ethical foundation for them all: "The most sublime act is to place another before you" (36.17).

2. The same time I first asked the question, admitted the motive, and sought to move theory into practice, I met Timothy Morton at the 1995 North American Society for the Study of Romanticism (NASSR), and across the next two years and several conferences, whether in Baltimore or Bloomington, our conversations often swirled around coincident personal histories and shared academic affinities within the broad area of "Buddhism and Romanticism." When I was asked to review John Rudy's Wordsworth and the Zen Mind: The Poetry of Self-Emptying (SUNY, 1996) for Romantic Circles, my sense of growing community and commitment created broadened possibilities, and in a preliminary attempt to put academic flesh on the intuitive bones, I proposed a special session at the 2001 NASSR conference in Seattle, where Tim Morton and John Rudy were joined by Louise Economides in the initial articulation of the issues and authors grappled with through this volume. When I began to receive the essays for this volume, I had two other significant encounters that pushed the work toward development ripeness. At the moment when the following essays began to arrive, Norman Dubie kindly offered me an autographed copy of his most recent collection of poems (Ordinary Mornings of a Coliseum, which includes the stunning "Shambhala" [48-53]), and I asked whether he might want to submit a poem for the volume, given his long-term practice of Tibetan Buddhism and its rippling presence in past poetry. After explaining his exhaustion from his poetic past labor, he said he would consider it but that I should not be overly hopeful.

However, within forty-eight hours, he stunned me when he read the first iteration of the opening poem for this volume on my answering machine. As I moved into the editing for the volume, I re-encountered Dennis McCort's Beyond the Pairs: The Coincidence of Opposites in German Romanticism, Zen Buddhism, and Deconstruction and immediately wrote him to request an essay. Initially, he indicated that, with the exception of an essay on Kafka, he had no work prepared for such an undertaking, and with a sense of loss, I wrote to say that Kafka might fall too far outside the temporal range of the volume. But within forty-eight hours, having been mounted by the intersections such an essay promised, I wrote him again and asked for the essay, and I am thrilled he agreed to join this "visionary company." Rather than rehearse the elements easily discerned from the essays themselves, the remainder of this introduction will provide a context within which readers can explore the resonances at work in the essays themselves as they connect to broader historical and cultural developments mapped in subsequent sections of this introduction. At the outset, readers of this introduction should know that I have cast an intentionally broad textual net (of Indra perhaps), drawing upon works from the two primary vehicles of the dharma—the Hinayana and Mahayana—as well as the three major languages—Pali, Sanskrit, and Tibetan—by which the major sutras were disseminated across southeast, central, and northern Asia and through which the teachings of the Buddha returned to India and subsequently flowed into western consciousness.
The contradictions inherit in England's relations with India and its northern neighbors can clearly be discerned in the complicated history of Warren Hastings, the Governor-General of Bengal, who expressed his admiration for the "great originality...and sublimity of conception, reasoning and diction" of Indian mythology and culture in his preface to Charles Wilkins's 1785 translation of *The Bhagavad-Gita*, yet who was later put on trial for the supposed exploitation and abuse of "his power over the Indian people in Bengal" (Allen and Trivedi 171) yet who was later put on trial for the supposed exploitation and abuse of "his power over the Indian people in Bengal" (Allen and Trivedi 171). Ultimately, in spite of scathing attacks mounted by Edmund Burke and Richard Brinsley Sheridan in the House of Lords, Hastings was acquitted of all charges after a decade-long impeachment trial, but his influence directly impacted policies subsequently pursued by the East India Company. However, even before his impeachment trial, Hastings initiated contact with the high lamas in Tibet through the diplomatic mission edited. This dimension of the orientalist project led directly to the flowering of the dharma in Europe during the nineteenth century.
undertaken by the Scotsman George Bogle to the Teshoo Lama (Panchen Lama in current parlance), and as Kate Teltscher suggests, the effort "was as much textual as commercial or diplomatic" and was motivated by Hastings's hope to "imprint on the hearts of our own countrymen the sense and obligation of benevolence" such texts might engender (Teltscher 94, 95). However, the hope of establishing long-term relations between Calcutta and Lhasa ended somewhat abruptly when the Panchen Lama and Bogle died "at nearly the same time," which, in the words of Captain Samuel Turner, created "almost insuperable difficulties in the way of re-establishing our intercourse with Tibet, at least for some considerable time to come" (Turner xvi).

7. As most critics of Oriental scholarship acknowledge, the prime mover of the eventual resolution of Buddhism from Hinduism in the European mind was certainly the towering presence behind the Oriental Renaissance, Sir William Jones, although his immediate interests upon arrival in Calcutta in 1783 were the Indian legal system and Hindu mythology (Cannon 194-6; Franklin 84-120). Jones shared Hastings's "respectful and sympathetic response to Hindu culture," for example beginning the study of Sanskrit almost immediately after his arrival, and through these studies Jones generated considerable "cultural empathy" for Indian literature and culture (Franklin 118, 120). In his first year of residency, Jones founded the two most conspicuous vehicles, the Asiatick Society of Bengal and its influential journal, through which Buddhism emerged into European knowledge, a point easily on display in the first issue of the journal, which included materials on Buddhist practices in Ceylon and Tibet. As a result of Jones's efforts, "the nascent field of Oriental philology" began to discover "certain linguistic, historical, cultural, and social continuities between the Orient and Europe" (Makdisi 110), yet the influx of materials also created, as Nigel Leask has documented, "anxieties about the Other" (2) that emerge in a broad range of writing across the Romantic period itself.

8. In spite of his Sanskrit studies, Jones never clearly differentiated Buddhism from Hinduism, since he continued to see the "Sage of the Shakyas" as "the ninth incarnation of Vishnu" (Fields 47), and Buddhism remained somewhat submerged in the literature and mythology of India until the second decade of the nineteenth century, when two individuals with radically different agendas, Brian Houghton Hodgson and Alexander Csoma de Körös, codified the canonical literature embedded in Sanskrit and Tibetan and transmitted manuscripts and texts to centers of oriental scholarship in Calcutta, London, and Paris. Known respectively as the "fathers" of Himalayan and Tibetan Studies, Hodgson and de Körös provided the linguistic and textual materials necessary for the translation and interpretation of major Buddhist works.

9. The motives of Hodgson were clearly colonial; he obtained a "special license" to enter Haileybury, which "had been founded in 1806 as a college to educate future civilian employees of the East India Company," through the intervention of James Pattinson, then director of the Company itself (Waterhouse 1-2), and during his residency he befriended and mentored by Thomas Robert Malthus and completed studies by earning "honours in Bengali, Persian, Hindi, Political Economy and Classics—though failing in Mathematics" (Waterhouse 3). Although initially selecting Calcutta for his residency, Hodgson was promoted to Assistant Resident for Nepal shortly after his arrival and transferred to Katmandu, where he remained for almost twenty years, where the study of Buddhism became "his first interest," and where he encountered "the scholar Amritanada" (Waterhouse 4, 5). Hodgson began to collect Sanskrit manuscripts during this period, leading to the publication of his most influential "Sketch of Buddhism" (a work that cast long yet problematic shadows across the nineteenth century), yet his motivation was not any religious interest in the religion of the Buddha (he often expressed ambivalence in his own published works); rather he sought "to gather materials that would make it possible for others, specifically the members of the Asiatic Society in Calcutta, to conduct such an investigation" (Lopez 52). Across his lengthy and distinguished, although somewhat controversial, career, Hodgson accumulated 423 works, and as Donald S. Lopez, Jr. indicates, this textual cache contained "the most important sūtras and tantras of Sanskrit Buddhism, works that in India, and in translations into Chinese and Tibetan, were among the most important in the history of Buddhism" (55). In Stephen Batchelor's assessment, "Hodgson's contribution to Buddhist studies was not his scholarship; his importance lies in having provided the scholarly community with hitherto unknown Buddhist texts" (238). These works were transmitted to a variety of entities and individuals, including the Library of the Asiatic Society of Bengal and the Royal Asiatic Society, but most importantly, Hodgson sent 59 works to Eugene Burnouf, who succeeded his teacher (Léonard de Chézy) to the first academic chair of Sanskrit in Europe at the Collège de France in Paris (Batchelor 239).
10. While Hodgson's motives were clearly colonial, the efforts of Alexander Csoma de Kőrős were decidedly "Romantic," since his was a search for linguistic and cultural origins, rather than colonial gain: "I cheerfully engaged in the study of it [Tibetan], hoping it might serve me as a vehicle to my immediate purpose, namely, my researches in respect to the origins and language of the Hungarians" (Csoma, "Preface" vi). Born in the small Transylvanian village of Kőrős and trained in philology and enlightenment epistemology by Eichhorn and Blumenbach at the University of Gottingen (where he joined two friends in an oath to seek the origins of the Hungarian peoples), Csoma undertook his "epic journey" in February 1819, one of the most arduous ever pursued outside of "official" sponsorship (Lussier 16-9). As his biographer Hirendra Nath Mukerjee relates, he left his small village "before the snows [melted and] only lightly clad as if he intended merely taking a walk," with only "a stick in his hand and a small bundle" of food and paper under his arm (15, 16). After almost two years of travel, primarily on foot, Csoma arrived at the Kashmir border with his meager financial resources exhausted and was offered letters of introduction and supplemental funds by William Moorcroft, a murky, mysterious "agent of the East India Company intent on securing influence in central Asia as a means of thwarting the southward advance of imperial Russia" (Batchelor 235) in the opening phase of what later became known, in Rudyard Kipling's apt phrase, as "The Great Game" (Hopkirk 20-3).

11. Csoma arrived at the Zangla Monastery in June 1823, where he entered Tibetan Studies with the head lama, Sangye Puntsog, who identified Skander Beg (the name Csoma used upon entering the subcontinent) as "a European. The first one, the very first one[,] to reach that place" (Terjék vii). More importantly for the emergence of Buddhism, the source used to teach Csoma Tibetan was nothing less than "the great compilation of the Tibetan Sacred Books, in one hundred volumes . . . styled Ka-gyur" (Csoma Tibetan Studies 175), placing him in contact with the entire Buddhist canon preserved in Tibetan. After seventeen months of intensive study, Csoma headed for Calcutta to seek the publication of an astonishing group of completed works, including the first Tibetan-English Dictionary, a Tibetan Grammar in English, and the massive Mahavyutpatti (which offered nothing less than a discursive map of the entire "psychological, logical, and metaphysical terminology of the Buddhists" [Csoma Tibetan Studies 20.397]). This last compilation included discussions of the most important works in the history of Buddhism, including "The Four Noble Truths" (Buddha), "The Middle Way" (Nagarjuna), "The Way of the Bodhisattva" (Shantideva), and the "Lamp for the Path of Enlightenment" (Atisha), and although the publication of this work was long delayed, Csoma drew upon his summation in numerous articles published in the major periodicals of oriental studies. Across the next nine years, Csoma often returned to Tibet to continue his studies and finally died on March 24, 1842 in Darjeeling while seeking to enter Lhasa for the first time. Unlike Hodgson's involvement in colonial machinations, Csoma remained aloof from such activities (for example, he never sealed a single letter in his long residency in the Indian subcontinent), earning the respect of those indigenous to the region, and "On 22 February 1933, Csoma was officially canonized as a bodhisattva in the grant hall of Taisho Buddhist University in Tokyo" (Batchelor 237). As Murkejee notes, this was "the highest praise a man can get in Buddhist terms" (74), since the term bodhisattva (Sanskrit for "enlightenment being") designates one who strives for enlightenment for the sake of all sentient beings, rather than one working toward individual release from the wheel of reincarnation (and this difference defines the chief doctrinal departure between, respectively, the Mahayana and Hinayana vehicles in Buddhist practice).

12. Once the work of Csoma was joined to the work of Hodgson, the majority of elements necessary for the full flowering of the dharma in European thought were in place, since Eugene Burnouf, the recipient of some of Hodgson's manuscripts and aware of Csoma's research publications, was simply the "man best equipped to make sense of them" (Batchelor 239). Burnouf had completed a major study of the other linguistic thread within which the Buddhist canon was preserved (Pāli) and published a dictionary of the language in the 1824. Once his work was supplemented by that of George Turnour, who published a summation of "the Buddhist literature of Ceylon, and who composed in the sacred language of that island, the ancient Pali" (Lopez 54) in 1834, the linguistic pieces were in place. As a preliminary move to publishing major translations of the sūtras, Burnouf published a definitive history of Buddhism in India in 1844 (a work exerting massive influence across the second half of the nineteenth century), and although Burnouf died before it could appear, his translation of the Lotus Sūtra, published in 1852, became "the first full-length translation of a Buddhist sūtra from Sakskrit into a European language" (Batchelor 241).
13. Burnouf's *Introduction à l'histoire du Buddhisme Indien* offered "the prototype of the European concept of Buddhism" (Batchelor 239) and quickly became "the most influential scholarly work on Buddhism in the nineteenth century" (Lopez quoting Max Müller), first influencing Arthur Schopenhauer and through post-1844 editions of his masterwork *The World as Will and Representation* subsequently influencing Friedrich Nietzsche and Richard Wagner among others. As Schopenhauer admits, his knowledge of Buddhism was incomplete, and his emphasis on "will" and "representation" underwrote his "misreading or misprision" (Bloom 3), thereby skewing his understanding of Buddhist concepts like "empty nothingness" and "nirvana." Yet, through his specific misunderstanding of these concepts, he found them provocative and important, since both concepts were compatible with a mindset where "subject and object no longer exist" (Schopenhauer I.412).

14. Of course, this eradication of dualism lurks at the core of most European Romanticism's refinement of enlightenment epistemology. For this reason, the shift in ethical thought one finds in Nietzsche, where the major problem for philosophy and society alike was not the battle against "sin" (a resistant element from the eclipsed theological episteme that preceded the emergence of enlightenment epistemology) but against "suffering," finds its roots in Schopenhauer's reception of Buddhism:

Buddhism is a hundred times more realistic than Christianity—it has the heritage of a cool and objective posing of problems in its composition, it arrives after a philosophical movement lasting hundreds of years; the concept "God" is already abolished by the time it arrives. Buddhism is the only really positivistic religion history has to show us . . . it no longer speaks of "the struggle against sin," but quite in accordance with actuality, "the struggle against suffering." It has already . . . the self-deception of moral concepts behind it—it stands, in my language, beyond good and evil. (Nietzsche 129)

The language Nietzsche draws upon—"cool and objective" and "positivistic"—shows its enlightenment epistemic roots, yet the hammering philosopher's view that all suffering results from "the self-deception of moral concepts" intersects both Buddhist and Romantic theories of self and society.

III. The Four Noble Truths of Buddhism and Romanticism

15. The issue of suffering and its causes, the focus of Nietzsche's salutary comments about Buddhist thought, functions as "the very foundation" (Gyatso 1) of both Hinayana and Mahayana forms of Buddhist practice yet equally operates in foundational ways within a broad range of Romantic thought as well. As Ken Jones suggests, the tradition of "inconceivable liberation" embedded in most Buddhist traditions (a term borrowed from the *Vimalakirti Sutra*) and "modernity's humanistic project of social emancipation are complementary" (xvi), and numerous Romantic thinkers across both its periodic term and national traditions were motivated to develop an engaged form of philosophic praxis that strove to transform both physical and metaphysical reality. Perhaps confirmed through my admittedly all-too-brief historical survey of Buddhism's direct emergence into European awareness during the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, anyone seeking direct "influence" between Buddhist thought and practices and those developed within the full range of Romantic thought will quite likely only experience historical disappointment, since the canon of the sutras was simply not available until the second half of the nineteenth century. (Indeed, I have considered this aspect of the topic in two other works, one appearing in the electronic journal *Literature Compass* and the other included in the collection *Interrogating Orientalism*[s].) After all, even Sir William Jones (who was primarily responsible for launching what Raymond Schwab termed the "Oriental Renaissance") had still not clearly differentiated Buddhism from Hinduism by his death, and such discernment awaited the work published in Jones's influential journal (e.g. by Csoma, Hodgson, and H. H. Wilson among others) and the translation of texts arriving into centers of European orientalism via a strong colonial countercflow of materials. And so, this last section will only gesture at the deeper resonances between the broad terms of "Buddhism" and "Romanticism" by focusing on the nature of suffering and the degree to which the pursuit of enlightenment, either in its eastern or western forms, delivers freedom from that suffering.

16. Buddha's elaboration of the role of suffering was offered seven weeks after his enlightenment, although it took the pleas of "the two highest gods in the realm of samsara [illusion], Indra and Brahma" (K. Rinpoche 13) to overcome the Buddha's initial reticence regarding his ability to teach those "who live in lust and hate" (Bodhi 48, 70). The Buddha's "first formal teaching [took place] at a place known as the Deer Park, in Sarnath near Varanasi, India" (K. Rinpoche 13), and this opening sutra stands at the foundation of all Buddhist vehicles and canons:
Prompted by Brahmā Sahampati, the enlightened Buddha turned the first wheel of the dharma in order to expound the four noble truths to only "five of his former ascetic companions" (Keown 71), and these truths are based on the recognition that all sentient beings aspire to achieve happiness by overcoming suffering:

1. The truth of suffering ("birth," "decay," and "death")
2. The truth of the origins of suffering ("craving")
3. The truth of cessation of suffering ("fading away," "extinction of craving")
4. The truth of the path beyond suffering ("The Noble Eightfold Path": "right understanding, right thought, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, right concentration")

(Bodhi 71)

Commentaries on these concepts literally fill monastic libraries (east and west), but a condensed discussion should provide transition to analogous insights resonating with Romantic literature.

Buddhist literature proposes a tripartite structure to the suffering associated with samsāra (Sanskrit: Pāli, "flowing on"). "the cycle of repeated birth and death that individuals undergo" (Keown 248). At a fundamental level, all sentient beings share the painful experiences of birth, sickness, old age, and death, and it was precisely Siddhartha Gautama's early encounter with these four universal "ties of life" (Carus 13) that propelled him from his luxurious existence and onto the path of the dharma (Carus 13-25). At a secondary level, the suffering of change emerges through recognition that the temporary relief provided by short-term pleasures eventually undergoes change as well, giving rise to subsequent suffering through the form of grasping at such pleasures. Finally, the third level of suffering of conditioning "refers to the bare fact of our unenlightened existence . . . under the influence" of ignorance of these noble truths (Gyatso 54). This last, broadest view of suffering is directly connected to the tendency of individuals to grasp as fixed and immutable "the impermanent nature of reality" (Gyatso 54-5), an existential misprision that relentlessly generates on-going suffering through the ego's willed ignorance of and resistance to dependent origination (interdependent versus independent existence). Once the first three "truths" are recognized and embraced, then meditative practice would work to re/cognize mind's relationships with itself and all others, therein leading consciousness into nirvana, the state of freedom beyond all suffering inscribed within cyclic existence.

Once suffering as boundary condition is perceived and once the role ignorance plays in maintaining suffering is unveiled, the crucial question shifts to the possibility of cessation and the "nirvana" experienced in that cessation. Can one achieve liberation from suffering and what method best assures such cessation? Within Buddhist practice, cessation emerges with the recognition of the impermanent nature of all things, all thoughts, all selves, hence the tendency to focus on śūnyatā (Sanskrit: Pāli, sūññattā), "emptiness or nothingness" (Keown 282) in some forms of analytic meditative practice. The robust literature surrounding the Prajñā-pāramitā Sūtras (The Diamond Sutra and The Heart Sutra) pursues precisely this "perfection of insight/wisdom" (Keown 218) and "consists of thirty-eight different books, composed in India between 100 B.C. and A.D. 600" (Conze xxviii). Both works are associated with teachings undertaken by Shakyamuni Buddha on Vulture Peak in the sixth century B.C.E., and both aim at nothing "less than the total extinction of the self" (Conze xxix).

As well as being one of the first works directly translated into a European language from Sanskrit, The Diamond Sutra, which literally translates as "diamond-cutter," also "has the distinction of being the oldest printed book [and] was completed by Wang Chieh on May 11, 868 [CE]" (Conze 75). This work traces the shift of emphasis from individual cessation to the bodhisattva dedication to relieve universal suffering at all levels of existence (from a Hinayana to a Mahayana interpretation), a view apparent in the following response Buddha offers to a query by Subhuti: "As many beings as there are in the universe of beings, comprehended under the term "beings"—egg-born, born from a womb, moisture-born, or miraculously born; with or without form; with perception, without perception, and with neither perception nor nonperception—as far as any conceivable form of beings is conceived: all these I must lead to Nirvana, into that Realm of Nirvana which leaves nothing behind" (Conze 16).
20. While The Diamond Sutra offers an elaborate and extended refinement on the first turning of the wheel of dharma, The Heart Sutra presents the negative dialectics associated with the Buddhist view of "emptiness" in a condensed (and hence dense) formulation, rendering the conception (śūnyatā) perhaps the most difficult concept for the initial reception of Buddhist thought in Romantic Europe, due to its seemingly paradoxical path to knowledge. Early in the work, the bodhisattva Avalokitesvara volunteers to explain "the bodhisattva's Heart of Perfect Wisdom which is the Universal Womb of Wisdom" (Kornfield 135) and offers the following phrase: "form is emptiness and the very emptiness is form; emptiness does not differ from form, form does not differ from emptiness" (Conze 86). This complex view of the emptiness of forms and forms of emptiness leads to articulate the mantra that stands at the "heart" or "core" of the wisdom leading to enlightenment precisely because it points "beyond": "Gate, Gate, Paragate, Parasamgate, Bodhi, Svaha!" ("Gone, gone, gone beyond, gone altogether beyond, O what an awakening, all hail!" [Conze 113]). As Paul Williams suggests, the terms of this mantra point to "the Abhidharma [Sanskrit, "higher doctrine"] wherein is critiqued "the claim to have found some things which really, ultimately exist," and for those who strive "to practice these teachings in meditation and life the requirement of completing letting go [going beyond altogether] . . . is an extremely difficult one [and] very frightening" (48).

21. Not surprisingly, the German revolution in Romantic philosophy at the beginning of the Romantic period, inaugurated with Goethe and Kant and extending through the Schlegels and Novalis to Hegel, elaborated a similar view of required complementarity capable of moving beyond polar opposition. The realization of freedom within the Kantian configuration of consciousness as the experience of "unity in the existence of appearances" (Kant 393) arguably provides within late eighteenth century European philosophy the strongest analogue to diverse Buddhist descriptions of enlightenment and certainly requires the necessity of thinking of the self "both a 'phenomenon' and as 'noumenon'" where perceived complementarity requires "a kind of negative consciousness" (36-7). Romantic literature is replete with aesthetic examples of this philosophical tenet, whether in Coleridge's recognition of "the one life within us and abroad" ("The Eolian Harp" [28.26]) or Shelley's insistence that subjectivity itself is defined by the "unremitting interchange" ("Mont Blanc" [98.39]) between mind and matter. In its rethinking of European enlightenment epistemology, Romantic thought began to grapple with both metaphysical complementarities and cultural relativities, where the "vital nothingness" discovered at the foundation of both consciousness and cosmos necessarily requires a process of self-emptying to confront the reality of subject as "egoless participant" (Rudy [2004] 20). As Dennis McCort has rigorously argued (see as well his essay included here), the German Romantic tradition offered "the brilliant if brief climax of the long spiritual development of a world view that was heterodox, though in no way opposed, to the predominantly rationalist outlook of the preceding and following eras" and strove to make, in August Schlegel's phrase, a "commitment to everything" (21, 23) that would lead to "self-realization" through negative dialectics and self-annihilation. Of course, dialectical thought in all its varied vehicles can only lead to G. W. F. Hegel, and as Timothy Morton's thoughtful and energetic analysis of Hegel's somewhat conflicted reception of Buddhism attests (see below), the very element of emptiness resisted so strongly by Hegel subsequently becomes the very ground of analytic critique for the philosophical inheritors of European Romantic philosophies and practices, from Schopenhauer and Nietzsche to Bohr, Derrida, Foucault, Heisenberg, and beyond (Plotnitsky 7-13, 249-60).

22. Hegel provides an appropriate transition back to Romanticism's version of enlightenment, which is described briefly above and by which the age modifies prior forms of epistemological enlightenment prevalent during the eighteenth century. Certainly, as this brief discussion indicates, great accord can be found between emergent forms of Romantic thought and practice and the four noble truths and the perfection of wisdom derived from The Diamond Sutra and The Heart Sutra. As the essays in this volume attest, the elements within the German expression of Romanticism provide strong resonance with emergent Buddhism, where writers like Friedrich Schlegel and the Jena group "are seen as 'enlightening the Enlightenment about itself and saving it thus'" (Chaouli 44). This saving of the Enlightenment involved the eradication of crippling dualism within western thought, a philosophical move conversant with the similar strategy, deployed against binary structuration, pursued much later by deconstruction in general and Derrida in particular (McCort 167-8). Such refashioning of
enlightenment epistemology lead Friedrich Schlegel to insist, in 1800, that "in the Orient we must seek the highest Romanticism," and, in 1803, to coin the phrase "Oriental Renaissance" to characterize the reception accorded the explosion of materials arriving in Europe from Asia (quoted in Batchelor 252).

23. One can see the German version of this "highest Romanticism" in the writing of numerous authors. For example, in August Wilhelm Schlegel's 1808 Vienna lectures, he argues for a "commitment to everything" later summed up in Novalis's arresting image of "being": "All being, being per se, is nothing but a being-free—a hovering between extremes" (McCort 23, 24). As Dennis McCort forcefully argues, Novalis "holds the self, conceived as an autonomous entity, to be relatively unreal," with the self functioning as "dialectical oscillation rather than discrete entity" (McCort 167), where the poet's view of self exists in relational rather than essential terms: "The seat of the soul is to be found there where inner world and outer world touch. Where they interpenetrate, it is in each point of the interpenetration" (quot. by McCort 31). German Romantic thought sought to overcome the "human drive for fixity . . . that must, finally be relinquished if man is to realize what Nietzsche, in a moment of neo-Romantic illumination, called 'the transvaluation of values,' that is, the equal and absolute value of everything" (McCort 23).

24. In both Norman Dubie's poem and Louise Economides's essay, Blake is seen as a crucial mediating figure for the volume's concerns, and Blake has often, through his robust and extended critique of enlightenment epistemology, offered direct connections to Buddhist thought, as Allen Ginsberg makes clear in poems and essays (Ginsberg 282-4). To make his connections apparent, Ginsberg points directly to Blake's analysis of "the changes of Urizen" in The Book of Urizen, where each age offers "torment," "harrowing fear," "craving," "terror" and leads to states of "dismal woe" (74-76). Blake's Urizen offers a severe critique of "the 'rational' pursuit of a self" (McCort 31) through Urizen's illusory vision of "solitary" existence (a sovereign self) and his desire for a reality "without fluctuations" (Blake 71). Blake's antidote to this severe diagnosis occurs rather late in the canon and involves "self-annihilation," with the poet proposing in Milton that "the Laws of Eternity [require] that each shall mutually/Annihilate himself for others good" (139.36). Blake's view here clearly intersects the position articulated by the Buddha, where "the annihilation of self is the condition of enlightenment" (Carus 4) yet equally connects with his articulation of an ethos of otherness expressed as early as The Book of Thel: "everything that lives,/Lives not alone, nor for itself" (5.26-7).

25. As John Rudy has previously argued, initially through Wordsworth and more recently through other English Romantics (e.g. Blake, Coleridge and Keats), the cultivation of meditative quiescence in the indwelling of Romantic poetry led directly to the implosion of "all potential dualism between self and other" and yielded as its by-product an experience of "the soul's greatness" through "its ability to eliminate itself" (Romanticism 40, 78-9), and here he traces a similar process through Percy Shelley's Ode to the West Wind. In similar ways, the poet John Keats offers an analogous form of the "no self" state (Sanskrit: "anātman") within Buddhist thought. For Keats, as argued in the oft quoted letter to Richard Woodhouse (27 October 1818)—wherein he stands against the "Wordsworthian or egotistical sublime"—the poet argues that "poetical Character itself . . . has no self," since "it is everything and nothing," and he then argues further that the poet "is the most unpoetical of any thing in existence; because he has no identity . . . he has no self" (501). Thus, both Keats and Novalis as Romantic authors "inaugurated a certain sense of authorship and, at the same time, in the very same breath, announced the author's imminent demise" (Bennett 55), a view clearly intersecting several strands of argument pursued in all the essays in the volume.

26. Certainly, when exploring the varied types of suffering evoked by Romantic writers, the movement from "sin" to "suffering" is manifest repeatedly. The period's most overt evocation of an eternal state of suffering, Samuel Taylor Coleridge's The Rime of the Ancient Mariner, precisely positions the origin of that suffering in a willed act of an "independent" self who has forgotten the "reality" of dependent origination. In one of the text's endlessly fascinating nuances, the residual of this knowledge lurks in the crew's "superstitious" belief that albatross and weather are connected (I forgo further commentary here, since I have treated it in more extensively elsewhere). The Byronic mode of Romanticism, as represented by works like Childe Harold, The Giaour, or Manfred, maintains relentless focus on suffering and its subsequent re-inscription through relentless and remorseless self-consciousness (the "self-anatomizing gaze" shared by the Cenci family in Shelley's drama) when the temporary satisfaction of transient pleasures collapses. The "fullness of Satiety" that occurs through running "Sin's long labyrinth" simply leaves Harold "sore sick at heart" (26). The moment that the Giaour realizes that his actions
have caused the death of his beloved Leila, he becomes enclosed in "a life of pain" (90), leading to "the grief of years," as he compulsively replays the event (even on his death bed), while for Manfred, his existential state is defined by "Grief" and "Sorrow" that accompanies his inability to achieve "forgetfulness" and "self-oblivion" (125, 128, 129). What Byron's major characters seek yet achieve not is a form of self-forgetting affiliated with "self-annihilation" termed by Geoffrey Hartman "anti-self-consciousness," since "it is consciousness, ultimately, which alienates them [Romantic artists] from life and imposes the burden of a self which religion or death or a return to the state of nature might dissolve" (51). Like Blake, Percy Shelley finds a middle path beyond these ultimately restrictive possibilities, the "perfect symmetry" of seamless interconnectivity between Promethean mind and alterity itself.

27. The type of self-overcoming suggested by Hartman is most prominently displayed in Percy Shelley's *Prometheus Unbound*, a work that intersects the concerns offered in Blake's *The Four Zoas* but which pursues its aims in a Hellenic rather than Hebraic mythic framework. Yet the work of Shelley that most presages suffering as vehicle of self-realization is "Lines Written Among the Euganean Hills," which offers an extended poetic analysis of "the deep wide sea of Misery" we share but which culminates with the realization that shared "love . . . heals all strife" (118.365). For both Byron and Shelley, the Promethean mode provides a vehicle for exploring "suffering," "pain," and "agony" (Byron 15.6; 16.9-10) founded in an ethos of otherness, where the attempt to assuage "the sum of human wretchedness" leads to relentless "torture" (Byron 16.18, 37). In Shelley's more compelling and extended treatment, the bound Titan offers, following the recollection of his curse against Jupiter (where he wishes for infinite suffering for the usurping god), a stunning renunciation that enacts a form of self-annihilation grounded in his own version of an ethos of otherness: "words are quick and vain;/Grief for awhile is blind, and so was mine./I wish no living thing to suffer pain" (Shelley 218.303-5). Here Shelley opposes hate with love, a position seen in Blake's earlier argument from *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* and elsewhere that "everything that lives is Holy" (45).

28. In both Romantic and Buddhist forms, self-annihilation functions as antidote to the cultural reification of an illusory sceptre of identity, an essential and sovereign self, that continually creates all the suffering experienced in the world. Of course, this is precisely the truth of suffering resident in the inaugural teaching of the fourth noble truths at the foundation of all Buddhist systems. What the "highest Romanticism" discovers beyond the self is, simply put, everything and nothing. With some shared affinities established, although by no means exhausted, I invite readers to plunge into the works that follow, since each work in the volume argues in different yet interrelated ways for a shared view in Buddhism and Romanticism of forms of suffering created by the self and of the freedom from suffering found in self-annihilation. Emptiness resides in plenitude and solitude, the problematic path for Buddhists and Romanticists alike.

**Works Cited**


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