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Goodman shows the rich interaction among the Abrahamic religions and their various philosophical and theological traditions. He points to the biblical and rabbinic heritage found in the scriptural and midrashic narratives of the Qur'an and offers interesting observations such as the following: like biblical Judaism, Qur'anic Islam does not sharply distinguish between law and morals; and like biblical Christianity, it gives a prominent position to faith. And in the Bible and the Qur'an he sees a cosmopolitan humanism as opposed to the chauvinism found in many ancient Greeks and the partisanship in early Arab secular and Islamic sacred institutions.

Some of Goodman's interpretations of individual philosophers are debatable. For example, his claims that al-Farabi did not produce a complete and independent Islamic philosophy and that Avicenna agreed with al-Farabi that creation stories were myths will be challenged by some. Again, according to Goodman, al-Farabi was a Shi'ite, while Avicenna was not, yet there are some views suggesting just the reverse.

As stated above, although Goodman's writing is free from most of the orientalist shortcomings, I find his treatment of Muslim philosophers and thinkers in this book a bit too pan-Hellenizing. Although he makes some references to Indian and Persian connections and sources, their possible influence on the development of Islamic humanism is lacking. We know, for instance, that in al-Ghazali's interesting discussion of causation some of his examples are also found in Indian texts.

This work shows that unlike many other scholars in the field, Goodman is aware of the significant role of the Qur'an and its impact on the development of Islamic philosophy. It may also be added that a study of some of the early theological movements and Muslim sects as well could provide vivid examples of Islamic humanism. Some Kharijite groups, for example, argued that a woman can be the head of a Muslim state (which was totally contrary to the Arab tradition of that age), since there was nothing against such a proposition in the Qur'an.

Goodman's approach and perspective throughout this book are inspiring and thought-provoking. Studies of this kind will definitely contribute to a better understanding of Islam as well as mutual understanding and dialogue between Muslims and non-Muslims.

Death, Contemplation and Schopenhauer. By R. Raj Singh. Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing, 2007. Pp. xiv + 126.

Reviewed by **Douglas L. Berger** Southern Illinois University, Carbondale

In his newly released *Death, Contemplation and Schopenhauer*, R. Raj Singh, Chair of the Philosophy Department at Brock University in Ontario, attempts to reawaken what he argues to be the true vocation of the "authentic" philosophical life. For Singh, "death is not only a theme but *the* theme of philosophy, and . . . the very impetus to philosophize issues from a reflection on death" (p. 10). The classics of ancient and modern philosophy, in both Western and Asian civilizations, attest to the vocation of philosophy as "death contemplation." Death is seen as the inspira-

tion of the search for wisdom in Socrates, who characterizes philosophy as “rehearsal for death (*thanatoi meletos*)” (pp. 1–4); in Plotinus, who extols “the attempt to free one’s soul from ‘matters bodily’” (pp. 4–8); in Nachiketas, who seeks knowledge of the soul from the god of death in the *Kaṭha Upaniṣad* (pp. 13–22); in the *bhakti* poet Kabir, who praises fearlessness of death in the knowledge of *brahman* (pp. 22–23); and in Heidegger, who finds in the existential encounter with death the key to human authenticity (pp. 8–10).

Rather than construct a thematic anthology that would include the breadth of these classical statements, Singh focuses his study on Arthur Schopenhauer, both because Schopenhauer’s metaphysics, ethics, and soteriology are thoroughly suffused with the insights of genuinely philosophical “death-contemplation” and because Schopenhauer draws his insights from the religious and philosophical classics of the West and from the Vedāntic and Buddhist treatises of India. In Schopenhauer, as Singh sees it, we find a thinker whose searching is profoundly rooted in the significance of death as the motivator of contemplation and who can truly be called a “world philosopher.”

Singh begins with an examination of the development of Schopenhauer’s philosophy in the three editions (1818, 1844, 1859) of his “chief work,” *The World as Will and Representation (WWR)*. Schopenhauer’s metaphysics of will grounds all individuals in an eternal, undifferentiated force that nonetheless consigns those individuals to contest, conflict, and death, and this inspires the “denial of the will-to-live” in the sages and saints of the world’s religious traditions (pp. 29–37). This metaphysics leads Schopenhauer to an overarching doctrine of “eternal justice,” according to which suffering and death are the just penalties that the will inflicts on itself in the lives of successive individuals, who in the delusions (*māyā*) of egoism carry out this mutual punishment (pp. 37–42). Schopenhauer overtly sees this doctrine symbolically reflected in the Brāhmiṇical and Buddhist notions of rebirth (p. 42).

Singh then devotes a chapter to exploring the precise relationship between Schopenhauer and classical Indian thought, since the influence of the latter on the former has been so often discounted by Western Schopenhauer commentators and derided by modern Indian critics. Wilhelm Halbfass is approvingly quoted in support of the contention that Schopenhauer appropriates various concepts from the Indian tradition, notably those pertaining to illusion, desire, and worldly suffering, in order to critique Western approbations of rationality and Hegelian progressivism (pp. 57–58). Moira Nicholls is taken to task, however, for linking Schopenhauer’s increased interest in Brāhmiṇical and Buddhist thought to “shifts” in his articulation of the will as the thing-in-itself (pp. 58–60), and Bhikkhu Nanajivako is critiqued for positing that Schopenhauer’s early fascination with Vedānta was overshadowed in his later career by a preference for Buddhism (pp. 60–62). Western commentators such as Michael Fox, David Cartwright, and John Atwell are criticized for rejecting out of hand Schopenhauer’s defense of “eternal justice” as overly pessimistic because they lack sufficient knowledge of the Indian texts from which Schopenhauer drew inspiration (pp. 62–65).

Singh expresses sympathy with modern Indian philosophers (presumably Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan) who deem Schopenhauer's construals of concepts such as *māyā*, *tr̥ṣṇa*, *upādāna*, or *dukkha* as too pessimistic, for Schopenhauer does not take into account that the same Vedāntic and Buddhist traditions that employed these concepts also spoke about the bliss of unitary consciousness, the *bhakti* or devoted love of saints pursuing mystical union, and the *dharma* of moderation enjoined by the eightfold path (pp. 66–70). Furthermore, Singh points out, Schopenhauer's identification of his concept of will with the Vedāntic notion of *brahman* is surely misguided (pp. 58, 66). Nonetheless, Schopenhauer's lifelong commitments to appropriating both Vedāntic and Buddhist ideas into his system, his constant recountings of the lives of Indian saints, and his realization that truly philosophical contemplation is riveted to the problem of death in both Western and Indian traditions are to be commended.

The remaining chapter of Singh's book details Schopenhauer's ruminations on the relationship of death-contemplation to the vocation of philosophy and to the wisdom of detachment and "renunciation of the will-to-live" in the late editions of *WWR* and the popular tracts *Parerga* and *Paralipomena* of 1851. Significantly, these later reflections demonstrate that wisdom and the religious asceticism that can follow upon it may arise from two sources, namely through a true metaphysical insight into the ephemeral nature of individuality, as opposed to the eternal and indestructible will as the ground of being (pp. 74–78), or through an acute awareness of the suffering of either oneself or of loved ones (p. 94). It is reiterated that a more thorough knowledge of classical Vedānta and Buddhism would have tempered Schopenhauer's "oversimplified" and "extreme" view of the negativity of the ascetic life, since these traditions emphasize the joyfulness of ultimate wisdom and the moderation of conduct that this knowledge engenders (p. 106). And yet, Singh concludes, Schopenhauer's philosophical achievement, which marries his unique Western metaphysic to classical Indian models of renunciation, is profound in its "voluntary adoption, acceptance and practice of death in one's life" (p. 84). In this, Schopenhauer can be considered an exemplar of genuinely philosophical living, right along with Socrates, Plotinus, Nachiketas, Kabir, and Heidegger.

Singh's insistence that Schopenhauer's mature philosophical system was directly influenced, in both its initial formation and its later development, by his encounter with pre-systematic Vedāntic and Buddhist ideas is a welcome one, especially since this influence had been curtly rejected in Schopenhauer scholarship for almost the entirety of the second half of the twentieth century. Singh's work would have benefited from more recent and careful hermeneutic and historical investigations that affirm this influence, notably in the revolutionary essays of Urs App, the cataloging of Jochen Stollberg, and in my own book-length study. But such familiarity would only have enhanced Singh's arguments and not fundamentally altered them. Singh's contention that Schopenhauer's characterizations of classical Indian concepts such as *dukkha*, *māyā*, or *brahman* are simplistic and uncontextualized is certainly correct and very much called for. But Singh's account of Schopenhauer's appropriation of these ideas is fraught with its own oversimplifications of the Indian tradition. Distinc-

tions between how the various schools of classical Vedānta conceived of the relationship between the individuated, bodily self and the unitary *brahman* or *ātman* are entirely glossed over, as are distinctions between the very different ways that specific Advaita, Viśiṣṭādvaita, and other theistic *bhakti* movements conceived of the relationship that bliss (*ānanda*) bore to consciousness that was unified with *brahman*. The reader is left with the impression that Advaita Vedānta was responsible for all these representations of joyful mystical experience and asceticism, which offsets Schopenhauer's ascetic negativity. A more detailed explication of the complexity of the Indian traditions of metaphysics and asceticism would very much help to throw Schopenhauer's imperfect understanding of Indian thought and religious practices into necessarily sharper relief.

In his desire to represent genuine philosophy as a vocation inspired by "death-contemplation," Singh seems to want to construct a kind of perennialism out of the varieties of world philosophies. He seems temperately convinced that the modern technical specializations of philosophy have drawn us away from what inspires the most genuine type of wonder, the problem of death, and from the most authentic pursuit of transformative wisdom, the practice of worldly restraint and reflective contemplation (pp. x–xii). This genuine wonder and authentic pursuit are the threads that bind Socrates and Nachiketas, Plotinus and Kabir, the Buddha, Śāṅkara, and Schopenhauer together in one powerful legacy, regardless of however much, as Singh is always careful to acknowledge, the details of their metaphysical systems may differ. And yet, I am left to wonder, don't the metaphysical differences between these thinkers solicit them to very different vocations, awed by the same problem of death though they all are? Are not the lure of Socrates' form of the Good, the peace of Buddha's quelling of desires, the eternal rapture of Kabir's God, and the serene omniscience of Śāṅkara's featureless Self distinctly different kinds of calling? Schopenhauer appears to have believed that, in the ultimate mystical sense, all these calls emerged from the same sources, the specter of individual death and the deathlessness of being. The perennialism Singh constructs of "true" philosophy gestures sympathetically toward this conviction.

I am more inclined to think that the plurality of answers is at least as important as the great philosophical questions death has undoubtedly always posed. Śāṅkara himself surrendered to this realization when his dying, frightened mother Śīvatārakā, utterly unconsolated by her son's abstruse metaphysical sermons, only found peace when he sang her hymns of devoted love to Śīva and Viṣṇu.

Ordinary Mind as the Way: The Hongzhou School and the Growth of Chan Buddhism. By Mario Poceski. New York: Oxford University Press, 2007. Pp. xiv + 287. Hardcover \$65.00.

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Professor Mario Poceski's *Ordinary Mind as the Way: The Hongzhou School and the Growth of Chan Buddhism* aims at a systematic examination of the Hongzhou