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Nota di contenuto	Hermeneutics and the philosophical future of religious studies -- The present contenders: the hermeneutics of recollection and the hermeneutics of suspicion -- The hermeneutics of contemplation -- Beyond interpretation to contemplation -- Beyond frameworks and grids to concept-formation -- Suspicion about suspicion -- The hermeneutics of contemplation and Wittgensteinian Fideism -- Bernard Williams on the gods and us -- Hermeneutics and modernity -- Assumptions about the gods -- Questioning the assumptions -- Hume's legacy -- Hume and hermeneutics -- Hume's first level of criticism -- Hume's second level of criticism -- Hume's third level of criticism -- Hume's 'true religion' -- Hume on miracles -- Beyond design to a song of creation -- Hume's one-sided diet -- Hume and us -- Feuerbach: religion's secret? -- Feuerbach and demystification -- God among the predicates -- God and the human species -- Contradiction and contemplation -- Death and finitude --

Contemplating reactions to death -- God and death -- Conclusions about death -- Marx and Engels: religion, alienation and compensation -- Marxism and monism -- Religion and ideology -- Tylor and Frazer: are religious beliefs mistaken hypotheses? -- Animism and intellectualism -- Animism, souls and spirits -- What rituals can be -- Rituals and the mythology in our language -- Rituals and explanations -- Marett: primitive reactions -- Marett and anti-intellectualism -- Marett and suspicion -- In the beginning was the dance -- Marett's other course.

Sommario/riassunto

Leading philosopher of religion D. Z. Phillips argues that intellectuals need not see their task as being for or against religion, but as one of understanding it. What stands in the way of this task are certain methodological assumptions about what enquiry into religion must be. Beginning with Bernard Williams on Greek gods, Phillips goes on to examine these assumptions in the work of Hume, Feuerbach, Marx, Frazer, Tylor, Marett, Freud, Durkheim, Levy-Bruhl, Berger and Winch. The result exposes confusion, but also gives logical space to religious belief without advocating personal acceptance of that belief, and shows how the academic study of religion may return to the contemplative task of doing conceptual justice to the world. Religion and the Hermeneutics of Contemplation extends in important ways D. Z. Phillips' seminal 1976 book Religion without Explanation. It will be of interest to scholars and students of philosophy, anthropology, sociology and theology.
