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Philosophy of Religion: An Historical Introduction, Linda Trinkaus Zagzebski, Blackwell 2007 (ISBN: 1-4051-1872-5) x + 254 pp., pb \$31.95

Linda Trinkaus Zagzebski's *Philosophy of Religion* is a clear and engaging introduction to her subject, one that will serve instructors well both as a survey of the field and as a springboard for student reflection. Her historical approach is visible from the very first chapter. After a brief discussion of the broad features of religion (which begins by setting aside the task of a precise definition as unnecessary), she gives account of the origin of philosophy, defined as “critic of all major human practices” (1), out of the religion of ancient Greece and then the origin of philosophy of religion in the modern period with the work of Hume, Kant, and Hegel (14). In virtually every subsequent chapter, she remains faithful to her historical approach, drawing upon a wide range of ancient, medieval (including Islamic), modern, and contemporary sources.

The first chapter is also emblematic of Zagzebski's approach in another respect: while she respects her mandate to provide a reliable overview of the field as it actually is, she nevertheless provides indications of directions she might push her colleagues. Most notably, she draws on her own previous work on the theory of emotions to claim that belief is actually secondary to the ways of seeing and feeling that religion cultivates: “Beliefs typically appear when a person becomes reflectively aware of his or her emotion and trusts it, so beliefs are consequent to the emotion” (3). Nevertheless, she follows the mainstream of her field in placing the question of religious belief at the center of her discussion, which can perhaps be divided into three parts: attempted justifications for religious belief (chapters 2-4), philosophical investigations of certain consequences of religious belief (chapters 5-8), and the ethics of belief (chapters 9-10). Though she begins with the classical arguments for the existence of God (chapter 2), she follows it with a chapter on less traditional justifications for religious belief, namely Pascal's wager, Kierkegaard's fideism, and arguments inspired by Wittgenstein's account of language games. A similar push beyond traditional boundaries can be seen in her chapter entitled “Who or What is God?,” which begins with a discussion of the classical attributes of God but then turns to a discussion of God's personhood. There she acknowledges the origin of the modern concept of personhood in the debates surrounding the Christian doctrine of the Trinity (94), which she had earlier cited as an (implicitly very unusual) instance of theology influencing philosophy rather than the reverse (15), and argues that many of the classical attributes of God do not seem to be compatible with the presumably more important personhood of God. As always, she reveals her sympathies while leaving questions sufficiently unsettled to provide space for the student's own philosophical reflection.

The middle of the book is taken up with narrower problems than the existence and nature of God, including the problem of free will and determinism, the link between religion and morality, the problem of evil, and the question of the afterlife. In each case, Zagzebski continues

to put forward unconventional positions alongside her reliable exposition of the classic problems—for example, at one point suggesting that near-death experience should be taken seriously, or at least not dismissed out of hand, as potential evidence for life after death. Some of the most interesting parts of those chapters, at least from my perspective, are her discussions of her own work, particularly the Divine Motivation Theory, which puts forward the view that the ground of moral value is “God’s emotions, preferences, or will” (158). I assume that her extensive work on virtue also underwrites the uncharacteristically declarative conclusion to her chapter on the links between morality and religion, where she insists that “the days when moral relativism was *de rigueur* are over” and that whatever the importance of religion for morality, it is absolutely urgent for human beings to develop a universal morality to defend against war, terrorism, and environmental disaster (141). This personal investment makes the concluding two chapters perhaps the most compelling, in large part because she finally allows her focus on emotion to take on a controlling role, arguing in turn that a major problem in the face of religious pluralism is coming to terms with our admiration of individuals with radically different views and that religious belief is to a significant degree a matter of trusting our own judgment, including our own emotions. This is not to say that Zagzebski should have focused *more* on her own work or her own opinions about the shape the field should take—she strikes what seems to me to be a very good balance, allowing her to book reliable without being impersonal.

I do have two reservations, however, both stemming from Zagzebski’s analytic point of view. The first is a relatively minor issue. As one accustomed to reading modern European philosophy, I initially found her clear argumentative style, including explicit division of arguments into parts and subparts, to be quite refreshing. By the end of the book, however, I found it exhausting to keep up with her continual abbreviated references back to previous arguments, often consisting of single numbers or letters. If I was frustrated by this, students likely will be as well. The second is, to my mind, more serious. Though she draws on a broad range of historical sources, her focus is much more narrow in her discussions of contemporary debate. A brief review is obviously not the place to rehash the seemingly endless debate over “analytic vs. continental philosophy,” but as one whose loyalties lie on the continental side, I was struck by the lack of any discussion of the “religious turn” in phenomenology. Perhaps some of it would have taken her too far afield of the traditional topics, but surely Jean-Luc Marion’s *God Without Being* could easily have found a place in her discussion of who or what God is. Another major gap can be seen in her claim that the concept of personhood, derived originally from the doctrine of the Trinity, is a very exceptional example of philosophy taking a concept from theology. Such a claim totally ignores the rich literature, spanning several of the traditions usually grouped together as “continental philosophy” in American debate, devoted to tracing the theological origin of many important philosophical and especially philosophical concepts. (One thinks here particularly of the later work of Jacques Derrida.) This genealogical work does not fit easily under any of the traditional divisions of the field, yet it seems to me to be undeniably “philosophy of religion”—indeed some of the most important work being done in the field today. The problem I am getting at here is of course much bigger than any one book, and I realize that it is probably unrealistic to expect any introductory textbook to responsibly bridge this philosophical divide—any introduction written from an analytic perspective would have to be supplemented with continental materials, and vice versa. With that in mind, then, I reiterate the point with which I began: this is a very useful and engaging book. I encourage all instructors of introductory courses in philosophy of religion to consider seriously.