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Book Review: Metapher Und Lebenswelt Hans Blumenbergs Metaphorologie Als Lebenswelthermeneutik Und Ihr Religionsphanomenologischer Horizont

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observed, “[T]he subjectivity essential to love does not detract from objective reality but adds to it. Love brings us into relationship with an objectively existing reality, but because it is love it is able to bridge the gap between subject and object and *commune in the subjectivity of the one loved*. Only love can effect this kind of union and give this kind of knowledge-by-identity with the beloved....” (“The Power and Meaning of Love,” in *Disputed Questions*, Farrar, Straus and Giroux: NY, 1976, p. 103.)

Murphy’s book is an original and rigorous exercise in articulating a newly defined Problem of Divine Authority. If contemporary analytic philosophers of religion are to make progress on this important problem, perhaps in addition to delighting in the deployment of the technology of logical and modal reasoning, we need also to consider exploring, more contemplatively, the compelling and authoritative dimensions of loving God.

Metapher und Lebenswelt Hans Blumenbergs Metaphorologie als Lebenswelthermeneutik und ihr religionsphänomenologischer Horizont, by Philipp Stoellger. Tübingen, Germany: Mohr Siebeck, 2000. XVI + 583 pp. 99.00 Euros.

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This rich and learned book is not for the faint hearted. It contains 583 pages of densely (but beautifully) printed reflection upon the thought of German philosopher Hans Blumenberg’s theological sources and theological relevance. It is well worth the effort—one can glean many insights and profit from the immense learning of this book: a splendid attempt to analyse the philosophical significance of one of the most interesting twentieth century German philosophers, Hans Blumenberg. Blumenberg has stimulated much discussion on particular issues, but this is an attempt to interpret his *Œuvre* as a whole and to reflect upon its theological ramifications. Stoellger’s thesis is that theology deals with the metaphors of religious language, and Blumenberg can help articulate the theological project.

Stoellger’s choice is *prima facie* surprising. Blumenberg was not a theologian and in many ways as a philosopher he was, though not hostile to Christianity, convinced that modern culture and philosophy ought to extricate and emancipate itself from the Christian legacy—as indeed the title of his most famous work, *The Legitimacy of Modernity*, suggests. Stoellger, however, endeavours to demonstrate that Blumenberg is a rich resource for theology in moving away from a ‘Logik des Begriffs,’ i.e., a rigidly conceptual logic, to a *Metaphorologie*, i.e. a logic of metaphors within a hermeneutical phenomenology of the experienced world.

Stoellger’s fine book is a detailed analysis of the major works of Blumenberg from his early theological work to his final work on Bach’s *St. Matthew Passion*. We also find detailed and illuminating discussions of Vico, Ricoeur, Derrida and Jüngel, as well as Hick and Aristotle. Stoellger’s discussion of metaphor and symbol is incisive and informed by a striking

array of sources in both the analytic and continental tradition.

There is a significant, fascinating and telling discussion of the distinguished Tübingen theologian Eberhard Jüngel, who linked an anti-metaphysical hermeneutical philosophical position with theological Barthianism. Barth's critique of Schleiermacher and the latter's anthropological approach to theology together with Heidegger's critique of metaphysics coincide in Jüngel's theology. Jüngel is the *Spiritus Rector* of the book; the thesis of this book may be construed as an instance of left wing Jüngelianism. One of Jüngel's first major work was *Metaphorische Wahrheit* (Metaphorical Truth) (1974), in which he develops a theory of the particular appropriateness of metaphor for theological language. For Jüngel, thinking about God presupposes the revelation of God in speech. God is a mystery who communicates in language. In the (Barthian) analogy of faith, the Word of God approaches humanity in human words- without relinquishing its transcendence. In opposition to the Platonic doctrine of the ineffability of the Divine, God's mystery is expressed through God own self-utterance.

In following this broad perspective, Stoellger examines the resources that Blumenberg might furnish. Indeed, Stoellger sees these as part of a programmatic 're-metaphorisation' of theology and an appeal to 'imaginative reflectiveness' or 'Imaginative Nachdenklichkeit.' This theme is linked to Blumenberg's deep but ambivalent relationship to Heidegger and their common anti-metaphysical, hermeneutical approach (which one might also associate with Gadamer, Ricoeur and Rorty). It is certainly part of a rejection of the metaphysical ambitions of Pannenberg, Process theology or some of the metaphysical claims of certain prominent analytic philosophies of religion.

Stoellger also places Blumenberg fruitfully within an anti-conceptual philosophical-theological milieu, which Stoellger sees as rooted in the Augustinian-Franiscan tradition, Nicholas of Cusa and Vico. The 'conjectural theology' of Nicholas of Cusa and Vico's defence of the imagination against Cartesian rationality, play an important role in this work, and Stoellger's discussion of both is rich and subtle. Even those who, like the reviewer, are more sceptical than Stoellger about anti-realist hermeneutics, can profit from the rich and suggestive material on the imagination. One of the major themes of the book is the question of the justification of the 'imagination' in opposition to a narrowly construed rationality. Yet perhaps the very idea of a *conjectural* theology of the kind exemplified by Nicholas of Cusa shows that, *pace* Nietzsche, Heidegger et al., metaphysics need not be an arid and obsolete glass bead game, or some baneful precursor of MacDonalds and the Pentagon, but one of the continuing sources of, and aids to, any serious theological reflection.

Despite my reservations about the prospects for a quasi 'Left Wing Jüngelianism,' *Metapher und Lebenswelt* is a very significant piece of scholarship and a very impressive achievement as an essay in philosophical theology. It is also a timely reminder that there is still much excellent material in philosophical theology which is being published in German- and it is both churlish and parochial to ignore such tokens of the contemporary Teutonic *Ideenparadies*.