Article

Thesis Eleven
1–18

DOI: 10.1177/0725513619888665
journals.sagepub.com/home/the
SAGE

Theory of a practice: A foundation for Blumenberg's metaphorology in Ricoeur's theory of metaphor

Spencer Hawkins
University of Notre Dame, USA

Abstract

Hans Blumenberg is celebrated for demonstrating that metaphors have had a more foundational influence than concepts on European intellectual history. Many acknowledge that his insights might have achieved even greater impact if he had articulated a more explicit theory of metaphor. In 1960 Blumenberg discusses the historical formation of metaphors that have given rise to meaningful discourses on metaphysical abstractions, like God, existence, or Being, but he does not develop a general model of metaphoric language, and his work rarely engages with other contemporary theories of metaphor. During Blumenberg's lifetime, French and German postwar philosophers rarely cited one another. Yet French hermeneutics, and the work of philosopher Paul Ricoeur in particular, may have strongly influenced Blumenberg's research group, *Poetik und Hermeneutik*. This paper is an attempt to recuperate intellectual affinities between Blumenberg and Ricoeur, in order to demonstrate that Ricoeur's claims about metaphor provide the theoretical background for a fuller appreciation of Blumenberg's metaphor analyses.

Keywords

Blumenberg, metaphorology, poetics and hermeneutics, postwar intellectual history, Ricoeur

Corresponding author:
Spencer Hawkins, Johannes Gutenberg University of Mainz, An der Hochschule 2, 76726 Germersheim, Germany.
Email: shawkins@uni-mainz.de

Paul Ricoeur and Hans Blumenberg, two of the 20th century's most influential postwar philosophers, might have met in 1967 if Blumenberg had taken the advice of his friend and colleague Jakob Taubes and had invited Ricoeur to an upcoming session of the *Poetik und Hermeneutik* research group, which Blumenberg co-organized for over a decade. On 20 September 1966, in a letter to Blumenberg, Taubes touted Ricoeur as 'perhaps the most important philosophical mind in France' and specifically pointed out Ricoeur's learnedness in the history of religion – the research interest that Blumenberg and Taubes shared (Blumenberg and Taubes, 2013: 100). Blumenberg and Ricoeur may never even have read each other's work, yet Blumenberg's studies on the history of metaphor have a long unacknowledged theoretical grounding in Ricoeur's work on metaphor.

Divergent methodologies explain the fact that their strikingly compatible views have only been acknowledged belatedly and in passing. Blumenberg narrates the historical processes whereby myth becomes dogma, and metaphor becomes formula. Ricoeur likewise finds metaphors at their most interesting when they move between canonical discourses with different claims to descriptiveness of reality (Gnosticism, Neo-Platonism, philosophy, and poetry, for instance). In terms of argument structure, Blumenberg shows a preference for studying sets of particular metaphors *inductively*, rather than presenting theoretical claims about metaphor in general. Blumenberg refused to announce a theory of metaphoric function prematurely; instead, he continually searched for evidence about how metaphor use orients human beings' concept of reality. And he found and analyzed far more examples than he could work back into a revised theory. However, a surprising number of points of convergence emerged between Blumenberg's *inductive* approach to metaphors and the far more *deductive* theories of Paul Ricoeur.

This paper begins by describing the resonance between these two philosophers' understanding of metaphor. Then, after discussing historical reasons for the missed encounter between the two philosophers, the paper discusses the criticisms often levied against Blumenberg, which an embrace of Ricoeur's model of the metaphoric function would fortify him against. After that, the paper shows the core point of convergence in the two thinkers' basic attitude towards metaphor: that metaphor provides the most abundant source of new concepts in the history of philosophy. The last two sections ground this shared understanding of metaphor in the two thinkers' shared philosophical agendas: both philosophers opposed Heidegger's view of metaphor as metaphysical delusion precisely because both Blumenberg and Ricoeur understand the concept of 'Being' as the prototypical occasion for metaphoric language. They criticize this treatment of 'Being' as it appears both in medieval theology and in Heidegger's work.

Philosophers in spite of national socialism

Paul Ricoeur was born in 1913, Hans Blumenberg in 1920, and both came of age under severe restrictions imposed on prisoners of war and on German 'half-Jews' respectively. After studying advanced German language in Munich in 1939, Ricoeur was imprisoned in Oflag IID at the Northeastern corner of the German Empire from the summer of 1940 to April 1945. The conditions in Oflag IID were severe, but among the French prisoners were many fellow intellectuals and philosophy professors, such as Roger Ikor, Jacques Desbiez, Paul-André Lesort, Jean Chevallier, and Mikel Dufrenne. Confinement thus did

not stop Ricoeur from completing most of a translation of Husserl's *Ideas I*, drafting future work, and even conducting philosophy seminars for other prisoners (Reagan, 1996: 7–14). Blumenberg too conducted intensive studies while restricted in his movements: his early work on science and technology derives in large part from his studies from 1942–4, when industrialist Heinrich Dräger protected young Blumenberg from the threat of deportation by giving him a secret office inside of a factory that built periscopes for submarines. Perhaps inspired by his benefactor's trade, Blumenberg put the history of optics at the center of his wartime research (Flasch, 2017: 14–15). In his postwar work, Blumenberg would regard the historical understanding of mechanical optics as dependent on innovations in the apperceptive optics of metaphor.

In 1957, Blumenberg began publishing on the history of metaphors with a long article that connected illumination, enlightenment, natural light, and electric lighting – a topic that had interested him at least since his work in Dräger's factory. The next year, 1958, Blumenberg begins to articulate a research program centered around tracing the history of a set of key metaphors in a presentation to the German Research Council's Senate Commission on Conceptual History – presided over by Hans-Georg Gadamer. The central point of his talk entitled, 'Theses towards a Metaphorology', would be repeated in his longer 1960 essay, 'Paradigms for a Metaphorology': history can only be understood properly through the study of its dominant metaphors. 'The historical transformations of metaphors bring the metakinetics of historical viewpoints, conclusions, and sensoria into view [….] In historical metaphorology, the actual topic is the historicity of history itself' ('Thesen zu einer Metaphorologie' in Kranz, 2011: 187). Over the next four decades, Blumenberg published thousands of deeply researched pages tracing the histories of the metaphors that ushered in shifts in European cultural and intellectual history, especially the rise of Christian monotheism in late antiquity and that of secularism in early modernity.

In 1960, Ricoeur's conclusion to *The Symbolism of Evil* makes many of the same programmatic statements that Blumenberg makes in the same year in the introduction of *Paradigms for a Metaphorology*. Both argue that metaphors cannot be eliminated from philosophical language, nor can their meanings be universalized. Ricoeur puts great value on the insight, 'the symbol gives rise to thought', and even if these symbols (stain, burden, and alienation, for instance, as symbols of evil) express what we mean by 'evil' to most people's satisfaction, the discovery of the history of these indispensable symbols produces 'demythologization; that is an irreversible gain of truthfulness, of intellectual honesty, and therefore of objectivity' (1986: 352). After 1960, their two approaches diverge more sharply: Blumenberg focuses on the histories of particular metaphors, while Ricoeur delves further into the concept of metaphor itself.

Based on a seminar taught in 1971 at the University of Toronto, Paul Ricoeur went on to publish his magisterial work on metaphor in dialogue with contemporary theoretical work on the topic. Beginning with an analysis of the tension between poetic and rhetorical theories of metaphor inaugurated by Aristotle, Ricoeur suggests mid-way through the book that metaphor must be understood on three levels, as a *trope* on the word level, as a *tension* at the sentence level, and as a source of truly *innovative* thought on the level of discourse. In the chapter 'The Work of Resemblance', Ricoeur returns to Aristotle's vindication of metaphor: a metaphoric description need not be false at all – it can be the discovery of a yet unnoticed belonging to sets of items that are 'kindred'

(συγγενών) or 'of like form' (ὁμοειδών). While Ricoeur's examples mainly derive from theology (the final study discusses Aquinas' *analogia entis*), we can imagine someone noticing a similarity in the play behavior of dogs and jackals, only later to discover adequate empirical justification for grouping them in the same genus, *canis*. While not identical, such arguments support Blumenberg's view that metaphors are not the mere heuristics or ornaments that the tradition makes them out to be; rather, metaphors 'have a history in a more radical sense than concepts, for the historical transformation of a metaphor brings to light the metakinetics of the historical horizons of meaning and ways of seeing within which concepts undergo their modifications' (Blumenberg, 2010: 5). Compare this to Ricoeur: 'Why symbols? Why these symbols? But, beginning from this contingency and restrictedness of a culture that has hit upon these symbols rather than others, philosophy endeavors, through reflection and speculation, to disclose the rationality of its foundation' (1986: 357).

While Ricoeur considers Stephen Ullman (and several French neo-classically inspired rhetoricians) to have best articulated word-level analysis of metaphor, he finds that Anglo-American theorists (I.A. Richards, Max Black, and Monroe Beardsley) have gone farthest in articulating sentence-level ones. Ricoeur considers himself, however, the first proponent of discourse-level theory that accounts for the historical effects of metaphor. Like Blumenberg, he calls his historical approach 'hermeneutics'. Unlike Blumenberg, he has carefully distinguished this approach from others (especially structuralism) since his earliest writings.

From a relatively similar thesis in 1960, Ricoeur continued to refine his theory of metaphor while Blumenberg was performing the historical studies of metaphor use that both claimed were necessary.[1] Ricoeur accounts plausibly for the semantic mechanisms that enable metaphors to lose their effect (lexicalize) only to re-emerge as metaphors (de-lexicalize) later in the course of history of philosophy, but offers few examples. Blumenberg, by contrast, provides long-term histories of those shifts at their most subtle – but the sheer volume of his examples interfere with his attempts to articulate the theoretical value of his contribution.

The two philosophers thus show key similarities and differences: they both regard metaphor as a bridge by which the world of discourse could intervene in the change-resistant world of working assumptions, what Husserl calls 'the lifeworld' (see Philipp Stoellger's thorough treatise on Blumenberg's phenomenology of metaphor).[2] Anselm Haverkamp even claims that Ricoeur's *Conflict of Interpretations* (1969) was more influential on the *Poetik und Hermeneutik* group than Gadamer's *Truth and Method* (1960) (Haverkamp, 2016: 1224). Archival documents corroborate Haverkamp's claim as Blumenberg and Jacob Taubes complain about the German Research Council's Senate Commission for Conceptual History, which Gadamer ran with excessive displays of authority, like dividing participants into 'members' and 'additional participants', giving minimal information about the proceedings, and then demanding extensive preparation from participants at the last minute.[3] Blumenberg and Taubes both derided the Commission meetings as 'Gadamer Festivals' (*Gadamer-Festspiele*), and Blumenberg wrote to Taubes on 22 March 1965: 'I don't know which of us would win if we were competing in our antipathy towards this Richard Wagner enthusiast' (Blumenberg and Taubes, 2013: 47). Blumenberg successfully distanced himself from 'the great thinker

from Cologne' – as Blumenberg ironically referred to his Heideggerian rival – without clearly establishing his affinities for the great Husserlian thinker from Paris.

Against Heideggerian generalizations about metaphor's complicity in metaphysical dualism, Blumenberg and Ricoeur shared a commitment to differentiating between the variety of functions that metaphor fulfills. Blumenberg's studies observe a range of metaphoric effects; metaphor sometimes passes as truth (*absolute Metapher*), sometimes as beautifying ornament, but sometimes it powerfully shapes truth in the background without claiming to be true (*Hintergrundmetaphorik*). By rating the duplicitous uses of metaphor as episodes, not constants, within intellectual history, Blumenberg defies Heidegger's claim from the 1955–6 lecture *The Principle of Reason* that 'The metaphorical exists only within metaphysics', and that all metaphor use entails a form of false consciousness (1996: 48). All the while Heidegger himself performs exactly what Ricoeur calls 'living metaphor', the kind of 'semantic innovation' whose intensely poetic effect banishes false consciousness. Ricoeur thus makes a similar claim to Blumenberg in *The Rule of Metaphor* in an explicit polemic against Heidegger's questionable claim that metaphor always demonstrates false consciousness with regard to metaphysical ideas.

Both philosophers treat well-known metaphors as historical objects, that is, as historical artifacts whose effects vary across history. In Ricoeur's words: 'The efficacy of dead metaphor takes on its full meaning, however, only when one establishes the connection between the *wearing away* that affects metaphor and the ascending movement that constitutes the formation of the concept' (1977: 285). Blumenberg too sees the circulation of metaphor and concept as bidirectional: 'The realm of the imagination [might be] a catalytic sphere from which the universe of concepts continually renews itself, without thereby converting and exhausting its founding reserve' (2010: 4). Ricoeur emphasizes the creative function of 'living metaphors', where writers bring new meaning to familiar metaphors, for instance, by evoking etymologies. But, after *The Symbolism of Evil*, Ricoeur's examples are few and decontextualized; Ricoeur briefly notes in *The Rule of Metaphor*, for instance, that 'Hegel hears taking-true in *Wahrnehmung*' but gives no historical context for Hegel's use of that word (1977: 292). Blumenberg, by contrast, narrates in detail how metaphors acquire dogmatizing force when they move from metaphoricity to literality, and the innovative force they acquire in the opposing movement. When the Neo-Platonist Porphyry makes cave dwelling into *the* image for insight, for instance, this not only reverses the valence of Plato's cave allegory but also cements its status as a philosophical metaphor for insight (Blumenberg, 2010: 80).

Of greatest value for contemporary criticism, the two thinkers identify qualitative shifts in metaphoric effects that make metaphors more or less visible in their effects. This contemporary utility of Blumenberg's metaphor studies emerges far more clearly if we put him in dialogue with Ricoeur's systematic work on metaphor. During the 1960s, Ricoeur's work spelled out distinctions between hermeneutics from structuralism, and this work provided orientation for the early phases of the interdisciplinary *Poetik und Hermeneutik* group, founded by Blumenberg and Hans Robert Jauß. Yet dialogue between French and West German philosophy was rare and thus often indirect. *Poetik and Hermeneutik* sessions rarely included non-German scholars. On 28 October 1967, Manfred Fuhrmann wrote to Blumenberg about their upcoming 1968 session, *Terror und Spiel*, on the function of 'myth in a no longer mythic era', and suggested that they invite some French scholars:

Jean Pépin, Jean Daniélou, and Roland Barthes, whose *Mythologies* Fuhrmann confesses to not having read yet. Ultimately, Jean Bollack of Lille University was the only attendant not affiliated with a German university.

The lack of participation by international scholars is unfortunate considering how well such collaboration would have served the passion among many for *Weltoffenheit* (that is, broadening cultural horizons) as a deliberate method for weakening the power of national ideologies in Germany. Peter Gente and Heidi Paris founded Merve Verlag in the 1960s, which gave West Berlin access to the international world of theory (see Flesch, 2015). Dieter Henrich, a participant in several *Poetik und Hermeneutik* sessions, describes his encounter with the *Amerikahäuser*, cultural centers established by the occupying American government: 'there was the world as none of us had experienced it' (Boden and Zill, 2016: 51). The Nazi government had suppressed ways of knowing the world, including whole disciplines, such as art history, which showed any appreciation for visual aesthetics outside of the Nazis' own monumental neo-classical painting, sculpture, and architecture. Fuhrmann's planning correspondence notes the dearth of art historians in Germany; however, collaborating internationally was easier said than done.

French scholars had reasons to resent German academics since many of them held relatively privileged positions within the Third Reich. Hans-Robert Jauss, who co-founded the *Poetik und Hermeneutik* group with Blumenberg, had fought in the Waffen-SS on the Eastern Front. Meanwhile, the powerful Heideggerian influence in postwar French philosophy alienated many German philosophers, many of whom rejected or at least downplayed such a nationalistic thinker's influence after the war.[4] This Franco-German intellectual isolationism might have contributed to the marginalization of Blumenberg's work on metaphor, which was not only Germanic, but in some regards Hanseatic – that is, rooted in the region of Germany just south of Denmark, where Blumenberg not only grew up (Lübeck) and spent a large portion of his academic career (Kiel), but also from where his major intellectual influences hailed (Hamburg). Blumenberg's approach to the problem of the entry of image into language stands in an intellectual lineage with Cassirer's anthropological work, which developed through contact with art historian Aby Warburg's Hamburg-based collection of narratives and artefacts from colonial ethnographers in Africa and the New World. There is a well-documented lineage from Warburg's visual 'pathos formulae' to Cassirer's 'mythic thinking' to Blumenberg's 'absolute metaphors'; each of these concepts is the basis for a claim that thought requires persistently available images, which become ambiguous when translated into language (Johnson, 2012: 110–69). Blumenberg dubs this ambiguity 'metaphor', and his insights are powerful, but it takes a hermeneutic theory of metaphor (like Ricoeur's) to bring out its full force.

Blumenberg's idiosyncratic research methods

The title of Anselm Haverkamp's and Dirk Mende's *Metaphorologie: Zur Praxis einer Theorie* voices a similar intuition to this article's title. That essay collection ventures answers for many questions that Blumenberg left unanswered about the metaphoric function. Thomas Rentsch, for instance, tries to enumerate the topic areas for which absolute metaphor steps in: language, world, self and other, freedom, time, and God (2009: 143–5). Even readers who cherish Blumenberg's work acknowledge that his

refusal to present a systematic theory of metaphor creates frustrating interpretive difficulties (Gehring, 2014: 201). From the 1950s onward, Blumenberg's prominent rival Hans-Georg Gadamer repeatedly aired his views to students and colleagues that Blumenberg lacked philosophical rigor. To the extent that these comments came back to Blumenberg, they must increased his ire at the parochialism of German philosophy departments. Whether or not Blumenberg would have seen a philosophical ally in Paul Ricoeur, his legacy would benefit from the discovery of kinships with thinkers whose theoretical orientation helps us understand how to interpret Blumenberg's rich insights.

Conspicuously, Blumenberg's metaphor studies suffer from sample bias when they claim that a few specific metaphoric constellations represent a constraint on the imagination over a whole epoch or even over millennia. For instance, Blumenberg claims in *Die Lesbarkeit der Welt* that the Book of Nature metaphor set the terms of late medieval and early modern writers' understanding of the accessibility of absolute truth. Lodi Nauta counters that other metaphors, such as the Voice or Hand of God, were just as important for describing God's mode of contact with humanity (Nauta, 2005). A weaker version of Blumenberg's claim would simply state that the Book was not the only metaphor, but just the one most suited to reinterpretation (as when Galileo describes mathematics as the language in the Book of Nature). The trouble, however, as Rüdiger Zill notes, is that Blumenberg is at a loss for a method by which to make a claim that 'absolute metaphors' (like the Book of Nature) have any foundational or causal force in generating new conceptual developments within intellectual history (Zill, 2013). Although *Of Grammatology* exhibits similar methodological problems, Jacques Derrida makes an easier to grasp structural claim about the metaphor of the Book of Nature, namely that it stands as a supplemental exception (reserved for the divine) to the phonocentric prejudice of metaphors that favor voice over text: 'There is therefore a good and a bad writing: the good and natural, divine inscription in the heart and soul; the perverse and deceitful, technique exiled in the exteriority of the body' (Derrida, 2016: 18–19).[5] Less polemical than Derrida's interrogation of the distinction between 'good and bad writing' is Blumenberg's, for instance, that 'Schrödinger's metaphorical epiphany' of calling chromosomes a 'law book' represents an extension of the medieval Book of Nature metaphor (Blumenberg, 1981: 377). Derrida has evidence and common sense on his side when he argues that metaphors generally undergo historical attenuation (*l'usure*): we no longer respond to many metaphors as such. By contrast, Blumenberg's claim – that latent and overt metaphors endure across epochs as a way of structuring our thought – is surprisingly hard to prove since it is hard enough to explicate any metaphor adequately (see Davidson, 1978). It is thus even harder to claim that several particular metaphors have structured intellectual history over the millennia.

It would be hard to accept a strong version of Blumenberg's claim that 'the imagination [*always*] preempts itself in its images', because intuitively we should be able to think new thoughts without referring to old images (Blumenberg, 2010: 5). It is untenable to suppose that every time we reevaluate the function of pure theory, we need to picture Thales falling into a well during a nocturnal perambulation. Certainly, Blumenberg has seen correlations between the new versions of what he calls 'the Thales anecdote' and reevaluations of curiosity as something blessed (Plato), sacrilegious (Church Fathers), prurient (medieval Christianity), useful (scientific modernity), and finally as the curse of genius (romantic

modernity). If metaphors do not have a significant conceptual content, then they would be the ideal ground for such radical rethinkings, but it seems that only thinkers steeped in classical *Bildung* would need a classical image to spur their imagination. The specialization of the sciences may have rendered absolute metaphors irrelevant to the cognitive work of innovative postmodern thinkers: any 'modern Prometheus' need not first qualify herself for the role by imagining her mythic prototype. Yet if we want to understand the history of European letters leading up to contemporary globalized 'Western' culture, we should pay attention to Blumenberg's methods.

Hans Blumenberg's foreign reception has suffered from his thoroughgoing aversion to systematic philosophy. His American translator Robert Wallace recognized this problem and asked, in a letter dated 22 July 1984, to translate Blumenberg's 1960 work *Paradigms for a Metaphorology*, whose introduction presents his thesis that metaphors can express ideas that we can never justifiably hope to grasp conceptually (which he explicitly relates to Kantian *Vernunftideen*). To make this thesis more ambitious, he claims that the waxing and waning of the expressive function of particular metaphors constitutes a forgotten intellectual history. Blumenberg denied Wallace's request on 2 May 1985 on the grounds that *Paradigms* was 'not only long outdated, it is also bad'. He promised that he would write a replacement before he died. It is disputable whether he fulfilled his goal. The letter suggests that the posthumous *Die Nackte Wahrheit* was intended to replace *Paradigms*, and while that work still takes the form of a case study, it contains the programmatic claim that nudity is the metaphor through which philosophers discuss 'absolute metaphor' itself. Many of his colleagues and students anticipated a late work that would present a comprehensive theory of anthropology and were disappointed with the fragmentary nature of his last major published work, *Höhlenausgänge* (Gerhardt, 2011). However, it is possible to isolate a theory of metaphor operative in Blumenberg's writings and to evaluate it separately from his historical claims about specific metaphors.

Ricoeur's multidisciplinary theory of metaphor

Ricoeur's metaphor book discusses an enormous range of theories of metaphor – dating from antiquity to his own day, drawing from rhetorical, philosophical, and literary theory. He considers problems of definition, description, and evaluation. His central evaluative problem is: does metaphor sometimes, always, or never have a place in rational thought? If it ever does, what place does it have? He aligns himself with Aristotle's argument that metaphor may enhance an argument without leading to sophistical fallacy. He also describes Thomas Aquinas as having rationalized metaphor when putting analogic thinking at the heart of a correct understanding of divinity. At stake in many literary theories of metaphor is the degree of deviance that a metaphor exhibits from norms of use. In his 1978 *Critical Inquiry* article on the cognitive functions of metaphor, several years after publishing *The Rule of Metaphor*, Ricoeur continues affirmatively citing Jean Cohen's model whereby metaphors need not be false, but must be disturbing, committing 'semantic impertinence' in order to work (Ricoeur, 1978: 145). While Ricoeur claims to find English-language theories of metaphor even more descriptive than Cohen's in the fifth Study of *The Rule of Metaphor* on 'Metaphor and the new rhetoric', he cites Cohen more often and more favorably than Black, Richards, and Beardsley (Ricoeur, 1977: 154). The

Anglophone focus/frame and tenor/vehicle models have one key utility for Ricoeur's arguments: they draw attention to the fact that metaphor disrupts semantic norms within intelligible syntax, rather than on a single word level, a key prerequisite for understanding the 'predicative' aspect of metaphor (that he finds in Cohen).

Beyond just defining metaphor, Ricoeur sought an explanation for some metaphors' historical longevity. Shortly before leaving the Sorbonne, Ricoeur published a collection of essays, *Le Conflit des interprétations* (1969). One of these, based on a paper presented to the International Congress of Philosophy in Rome in 1963, argued that structuralism misses more than the role of historical change in its positing of historically stable systems of exchange (e.g. the language of kinship analyzed by Claude Levi-Strauss) – it misses the difference between symbolic meaning and meaning in general. Ricoeur then differentiates the effect of symbols from the economy of structural relations. Citing medieval theologian Hugues de Saint-Victor on symbol's effect as 'harmonizing of visible forms for the purpose of demonstrating things that have been stated about what is invisible', Ricoeur expands on the thesis: 'We see that this demonstration is incompatible with a logic of propositions, which supposes definite concepts (concepts bounded by a notional and univocal contour)' (1974: 59). In 1971, Ricoeur would begin calling this nonconceptual form of demonstration 'metaphor'.

Ricoeur demonstrates the variable power of more or less 'living' metaphors much as Blumenberg studies metaphors that move from the 'background' to the foreground, occasionally demanding literal interpretation, not as 'dead metaphors', which all but suppress their own image content under their clichéd meaning, but as 'absolute metaphors', which insist that the image is the closest we can come to understanding a thing itself. The role of repetition (the historical catchiness of metaphors) places Blumenberg's metaphor studies in the abeyance that Ricoeur opens up between two types of symbols. According to Ricoeur, hermeneutic theory must hold open two interpretive possibilities regarding the function of symbols; they can either be 'oriented towards the emergence of figures that are always "behind" us', or their fulfillment can lie completely 'ahead' of us (1974: 326). Backwards orientation depends on the psychoanalytic notion that the repressed past continues to haunt present consciousness, whereas orientation towards symbols in the future relies on a phenomenological model of fulfilling the anticipation that consciousness resolves around unified concepts (even in cases like 'the sacred'). While many absolute metaphors reach their apex in Hellenistic Gnosticism (a thesis inspired by his colleagues Jakob Taubes and Hans Jonas), Blumenberg shows the ongoing rediscovery of the images that captivated ancient writers.

Blumenberg's hermeneutics of metaphor

Blumenberg's theory of metaphor requires some reconstruction based on readings of his metaphor histories, but enough hands have contributed to the project to make it a manageable task (for representative works, see Fliethmann, 2011; Gehring, 2014; Haverkamp, 2007; Haverkamp and Mende, 2009; Ross, 2011; Stoellger, 2000). On the one hand, any image presented in language appears to qualify for Blumenberg's metaphorological interest. His chapter on confinement imagery in Wittgenstein's writings, diaries, and biography from *Höhlenausgänge* raises the questions of whether any

sensory image described in language qualifies as metaphor for Blumenberg – even when semantically pertinent.[6] One of Blumenberg's most cited claims concerns a special class of metaphors, which he calls 'absolute metaphors' and describes as '*foundational elements* of philosophical language, "translations" that resist being converted back into authenticity and logicality' (2010: 3). Later in that programmatic text, however, we learn that an image must become an absolute metaphor in the course of the history of philosophy. Under what conditions then does a widely received, ancient image, such as Porphyry's cave or Heraclitus' river, function as an absolute metaphor?

Unlike Aristotelian metaphors, which compare two objects, absolute metaphors stand for conceptually indeterminate objects, and therefore cannot be similar to what they describe. Absolute metaphors in Blumenberg's work have two identifying criteria and – more importantly for the analysis at hand – one epistemic function. A hypothetical definition of absolute metaphors could include three differentiae: (1) *recurrent* images or anecdotes (2) used by thinkers with *opposing philosophical commitments*,[7] and (3) these metaphors function to mark the *perplexed* incapacity to conceive of a thought, idea, or topic within the logic of conceptual language. Blumenberg's most ambitious argument is (3), because it requires him to find a logical failure wherever an absolute metaphor occurs (a task that his writings do not always bother to perform), yet (3) is the only criterion that he explicitly names: 'Our analysis must be concerned with detecting the logical "perplexity" for which metaphor steps in' (2010: 3). However, the evidence of his published analyses suggests that criteria (1) and (2) are indispensable working criteria for detecting the occurrence of absolute metaphors. When a metaphor is taken up repeatedly but serves opposing arguments, then it suggests that it may not express one consistent meaning, but rather a shared moment of perplexity relating to topics that challenge simple conceptuality.

That last, most controversial *differentia* (3) is the one Blumenberg theorizes and retheorizes. For example, in his earliest exposition on absolute metaphors, he writes that absolute metaphors perplex us because they express unconscious existential intuitions: 'Metaphor, as the theme of a metaphorology in the sense that will concern us here, is an essentially *historical* object whose testimonial value presupposes that the witnesses did not possess, and could not have possessed, a metaphorology of their own' (2010: 14). They are historical non-answers that respond to unanswerable questions, but their phenomenological value was less emphasized in his 1960 treatise than was the practice of detecting them – and the insistence that they will always recur.

While Blumenberg develops no argument for the importance of repetition in demonstrating the function of metaphor, he does indicate that 'absolute metaphors' *endure* across history:

> That these metaphors are called 'absolute' means only that they prove resistant to terminological claims and cannot be dissolved into conceptuality, not that one metaphor could not be replaced or represented by another, or corrected through a more precise one. Even absolute metaphors therefore have a *history*. (2010: 5)

And repetition is the form that this endurance must take. Blumenberg makes a similar claim about myth, and gives childhood behavior as an analogy. Blumenberg compares successful myths to stories that a child wants to hear again and again: engaging stories

beg for repetition whether or not we can say 'where they came from and what they meant' (1985: 179).

Blumenberg reads the history of philosophy with an eye for metaphors that represent indeterminate, or in his word, 'nonconceptual', notions. An illustrative image can work as a metaphor for a long time before it is taken for truth in an often unannounced moment where imagery takes the place of explanation. For instance, Blumenberg claims that Plato's 'background metaphor' of the cave as representative site of ignorance was not 'fully taken' as an 'absolute metaphor' until it was taken up by Neo-Platonist authors. For Plato, cave-like conditions of limited visibility illustrate ignorant manners of thinking. For Porphyry, the cave illustrates the mental state of the seeker, who shuts out the visible world for the sake of attaining transcendent, divine truth (Blumenberg, 2010: 79). Not only did the cave's valence reverse but the cave came to be the best expression for the ineffable, not just a heuristic device. An 'absolute metaphor' can be an achievement or an obfuscation depending on the context, and Blumenberg is more generous towards older thinkers than towards recent ones – perhaps because we can learn about the otherwise unstated perplexities of historical thought from past metaphors. Thus he finds great value for metaphorology in Heraclitus' famous aphorism that a person cannot step into the same river twice. 'It is an absolute metaphor and as such is one of philosophy's earliest successes: that no one can grasp reality, because it is not what appears when it appears to us' (Blumenberg, 2002: 12). An absolute metaphor facilitates thought – and even if it obscures its own metaphoricity, it gives expression to thoughts that would otherwise exceed linguistic expression.

Over Blumenberg's career, he would examine diverse metaphors that he found relevant to philosophers' understanding of their world. Leaving the cave, losing one's footing while stargazing, and embarking on a dangerous sea voyage belong to the treasury of anecdotes that emerge in foundational Greek and Roman philosophical works and become proving grounds over the millennia in the historical rivalry to name criteria for true and justified knowledge. While the miniature scenes above dramatize humanity's relationships to persistent ideas that refuse satisfactory definition (Truth, God, The Lifeworld, and Fate respectively), simpler metaphors tend to go unnoticed as figurative language and thus get taken literally. Light, the force of truth acting in the world, and Heidegger's 'being-there' (*Dasein*) got taken literally, according to Blumenberg, when they served as metaphors at certain points in the history of philosophy for ideas that contain a highly subjective element. The above examples could correspond, for instance, to absolute knowledge, Providence, and existential human nature respectively. Such simple metaphors are especially sensitive to technological or cultural changes that radically change a metaphor's valence. For instance, divine 'light' symbolized divinely inspired absolute knowledge for millennia, but since the advent of artificial lighting, we have mastered light, nature has gone 'dark', and while the metaphor of light for truth still works, it is influenced by the experience of lighting in public spaces, which signals an object or area marked by humans for human attention (Blumenberg, 1993). The familiarity of images lends an air of plausibility to philosophical statements about topics too abstruse for any discipline or individual to claim legitimate authority over. Metaphors and anecdotes help us to grapple with the world well enough to get by in it. Blumenberg's metaphorology tends against deciphering the metaphors it interprets;

instead of a code it offers a powerful technique for theorizing the gap between philosophical curiosity and philosophical language.

Being, for example

Both Blumenberg and Ricoeur give pride of place to 'being' as a concept that cannot be addressed without metaphoric mediation. Ricoeur begins his history of metaphor theory with a long chapter on Aristotle, who inaugurates the central ambivalence about metaphoric language as split between ingenious (*Poetics*) and merely useful (*Rhetoric*) functions. While metaphors can merely adorn an argument, they can also represent the highest accomplishment of insight. However, the great clue to the foundational nature of metaphor comes in Aristotle's *Categories*. Most uses of the copula cannot be said to be literally true statements; the Greek verb 'to be' (εἶναι) is itself an analogy when used in contexts outside of designating the existence of primary substances: 'Aristotle is', or 'Aristotle exists', as we would say in English. The predicative senses of 'to be' immediately begin to be *less* true when 'being' takes on meanings other than merely existing, since for Aristotle, conceptual categories are already less real than individual members. Thus, 'Aristotle is a man' is less true than 'Aristotle is'. Other types of predication are even less true: 'Aristotle has ten fingers' describes an accidental property since Aristotle would not cease to be himself with nine fingers, and 'Aristotle is lying down' would be the most 'analogous' use since it describes a transient predicament. It bespeaks the truth of Aristotle's differentiation (if not his hierarchy of proximity to primary substance) that languages other than Greek use different verbs for 'to be'. The 'Romance copula' reserves verbs from the Latin *esse* (to be) for inherent traits whereas it differentiates transient *predicamenta* like happiness or lying down with verbs derived from the Latin *stare* (to stand). And many languages do not favor intransitive uses of 'to be' to describe existence. Latin diction thus translates the Greek εἶναι differentially with three words: *esse*, *stare*, and *existere*.[8]

Blumenberg sees ontology as metaphorically mediated through and through. As Blumenberg says about *Being and Time*, 'Here, nonconceptuality consists in our thoroughly learning what kind of thing being is *not*' (1997: 99). Heidegger's ontological difference ultimately yields a concept of "Being" that Blumenberg considers to exceed the Kantian definitions of mathematical or empirical conceptuality, and that thus requires can only be spoken about in (negated) metaphors. More unites him and Ricoeur than a suspicion about Heidegger's ontology; they both understand 'being' as something figurative, which requires metaphor to gain articulation. They thus both explore how such limits of conceptual thought require a turn to metaphor. On the one hand, both Ricoeur and Blumenberg undermine 'being [something]' and '[absolute] being' as merely constructed via metaphor, not as the concept at the core of philosophical intuition that Kant took them for when he describes the sense of a thing's reality as the 'anticipation of perception'. Hermeneutic philosophy had to reckon with the seeming givenness of being, and to this end Blumenberg and Ricoeur turned to a similar source: Husserlian phenomenology.

Husserlian reflection as a model for interpretation

Unlike many postmodern theories born of the 'School of Suspicion' (Ricoeur's name for the critiques of false consciousness associated with Freud, Nietzsche, and Marx),

Blumenberg and Ricoeur regard thought mainly as an autonomous process and thus understand language primarily as an expression of thought, rather than a participatory action or a sign of belonging to the ideologically beholden collective of language users. Ricoeur and Blumenberg both endorsed Husserl's claims about individualized intentionality for similar reasons. Ricoeur's interest in Husserl extends back to his early commentary on Husserl's *Ideas* (Ricoeur, 1967). In Ricoeur's words, 'Husserl's phenomenological analysis based on the concept of intentionality is completely justified: language is intentional *par excellence*; it aims beyond itself' (1977: 74). This unfashionable view opens up avenues for understanding metaphor (even borrowed metaphor) as an expression of spontaneous thought, not just ideological interpellation.

Ricoeur and Blumenberg also both explicitly prefer Husserl's phenomenology to Heidegger's. Blumenberg adopts much Husserlian terminology ('lifeworld', 'intentionality', 'reduction') although he criticizes Husserl's language when it suggests the possibility of apodictic revelation from experience, such as 'crisis', 'original foundation', and 'adumbration'. Most importantly, though, Husserl's lifeworld concept describes the sphere from which 'absolute metaphors' derive. Husserl understood consciousness to orient itself in the world through the awareness of what is exterior to itself; Heidegger, by contrast, considered humanity to only experience its exteriority from phenomena across time, when it projects itself into the future. The function of time in constituting consciousness is no less important to Husserl; the difference is that he considers intentional-phenomenal consciousness as a prerequisite, which provides content for inner-time-consciousness, rather than occurring as a by-product of it. Husserl's approach seems *prima facie* more compatible with Blumenberg's tendency to discuss particular metaphoric statements' *meanings* rather than its peculiar *form*.

Like Husserl, Blumenberg elevates 'reflection' above logical 'analysis', regarding the latter as the activity that generates new philosophical insights. Blumenberg's most enduring historical argument from *Legitimacy of the Modern Age* is that Scholastic theology sets up the conditions for its demise by promoting reflection on questions for which theology was irrelevant (Flasch, 2017: 594). In Ricoeur's essay, 'Structure and Hermeneutics', reflection defines the task of hermeneutics. For both post-war thinkers, reflection is well represented in Husserlian genetic phenomenology (in spite of other faults the thinkers find in Husserl), but it is more or less occluded by Heideggerian Being-In-the-World, which does not theorize the experience of philosophical reflection on experience. Blumenberg discusses this failing in the posthumous essay 'Zeitbewußtsein und humane Reflexion' (2014): Heidegger's account of experience, as always already pre-given, fails to explain how it is possible to carry out the kind of individual philosophical reflection that Heidegger himself carries out.

Ricoeur's and Blumenberg's similar Husserlian view of individual hermeneutic intentionality might explain their agreement about metaphor: both endow metaphor with the potential to designate intentional objects. This is different than many French theorists' use of the concept of metaphor; structuralism 'too speaks of metaphor, but in order to formalize it into a conjunction by complementarity' (Lévi-Strauss, 1966: 57). Metaphor's potential, according to Ricoeur, is that it reveals how the creativity of particular language users has the potential to disrupt the deterministic aspects of linguistic denotation; in Blumenberg's metaphorology, innovative metaphors reveal imagined but

unexperienced (perhaps unexperiencable) totalities, such as 'the world'. For both thinkers, metaphors point beyond ordinary denotative language, and indicate that such designations will remain possible as long as metaphors remain metaphorical (and do not 'die', that is, become lexicalized as terms or idioms). This vitality of metaphor, which Blumenberg studies empirically in his case studies and which Ricoeur theorizes in *The Rule of Metaphor*, provides a philosophical alternative to reducing metaphor's potential, the way late Heidegger does, to the source of artificial and misleading metaphysical claims. While Ricoeur has fended off some potential objections to a semantic theory of metaphor, Blumenberg has begun the extensive research work of garnering the evidence for metaphor's epistemic function, so that if we want to judge the hypothesis that metaphors provide insight into obscure aspects of consciousness, Blumenberg's prodigious studies may help us come to the right conclusion.

Both Blumenberg and Ricoeur engage extensively with Edmund Husserl's conceptual framework, and they express clear preference for his phenomenology over Heidegger's. In Ricoeur's main work on the subject of metaphor, he examines metaphor under several lenses: first as the rhetorical trope *par excellence*, the figure of *epiphora*, or movement, movement away from a word's anticipated 'effect'. Then, as a semiotic matter of indeterminacy (the structuralist paradigm where Haverkamp sees Blumenberg stuck outside of history), and finally, as a semantic function, where metaphor reveals human ingenuity to be the source of meaning. The idea that metaphors spring from the creative imagination sounds more like Cassirer's view of myth than Blumenberg's metaphorology, but making this claim required Ricoeur to develop a theory of metaphor's functional uniqueness, and for that he had to take on the same skeptical arguments that Blumenberg chose to ignore.

Ricoeur's claim that metaphors best embody the human imagination required him to develop a view of language liberated from structural analysis. To liberate semantics from semiotics, as Ricoeur puts it, means admitting that language corresponds to mental states: language is an event of utterance, not just as statement; it identifies speaking subjects, and does not just administer predicates; it has referents, not just meanings; and, finally, it refers to the speaker, not to reality proper. Ricoeur spends many pages working to liberate metaphor from semiotics in order to do semantics. And it is in this effort that Husserl's phenomenology is useful: 'Husserl's phenomenological analysis based on the concept of intentionality is completely justified: language is intentional *par excellence*; it aims beyond itself' (Ricoeur, 1977: 74).

The antithetical point of view within phenomenology is Martin Heidegger's, who quotes Novalis in 'The Way to Language' to say that language does not depend on humanity for its existence: 'The peculiar property of language, namely that language is concerned exclusively with itself – precisely that is known to no one' (in Heidegger, 1971: 111). Language, we learn in the essay, is indeed an event, but not an individual event conducted in the speaker's mind. Instead, Heidegger defines language in a way that encompasses meaningful events outside of human communicative activity. Perhaps this amounts to nothing more than a more provocative statement of Husserl's observation that we experience 'natural signs', like an infant taking a mother's breast as a sign that feeding will commence, long before we experience 'artificial signs', like referring to a person with the word 'mama'. For Husserl, natural signs do not have the intentional structure of language at all, but for Heidegger language encompasses those

non-communicative signs that have simply not yet been 'appropriated' (*ereignet*) into human language: 'the way to language has been transformed along the way. From human activity it has shifted to the appropriating nature of language' (Heidegger, 1971: 130). Even more unintuitively, the mechanism for disowning language is none other than understanding the existential form of *Ereignis*, which Heidegger uses to mean both 'Appropriation' and 'Event'. With an existence separate from human existence, Appropriation/the Event itself 'constitutes the peculiar property of language' and 'Appropriation cannot be commandeered' (Heidegger, 1971: 133).

Ricoeur exposes the problem with Heidegger's view of language by critiquing the passage cited earlier from Heidegger's 1955–6 lecture *The Principle of Reason*: 'The metaphorical exists only within metaphysics' (1996: 48). Ricoeur reads this sentence as a statement 'not against metaphor, but against a manner of casting metaphors as particular philosophical statements' (Ricoeur, 1977: 282). Heidegger uses the term 'metaphysics' derisively to describe the naïve understanding of existence (*das Sein*) as something that can become discursive: that is, named, given a definition, and then opposed to other signifiers. Ricoeur points out that Heidegger may disavow metaphor, but his advocacy of a 'seen-heard-thought' discourse is just what Ricoeur himself would call 'true metaphor' (p. 283). In poetry, language creates 'words as flowers (*Wörter wie Blumen*)', as Heidegger writes, quoting Hölderlin with an example of how language only reveals Being by negating itself. Ricoeur ultimately concludes that similes like Hölderlin's, which Heidegger calls *non-metaphorical*, are precisely the kind of arresting, creative metaphors that Ricoeur calls *living metaphor*.

According to Blumenberg, Heidegger underestimates the metaphoricity of his own discussion of Being. Heidegger's own language-bound project 'had not defended itself in vain with the claim that his existential analytic did not intend to be another existential philosophy, but rather it was only the vestibule to the temple of inquiry into the meaning of Being (*die Vorhalle zum Tempel der Seinssinnbefragung*)' (Blumenberg, 1986: 19). But Blumenberg insists that the success of Heidegger's philosophy over Husserl's had to do with Heidegger's appropriation of the terminology made available by the life philosophy that preceded him as well as his fixation on death that resonated with a population moved by the traumas of the First World War (pp. 18, 93).

We can now see the philosophical stakes of Ricoeur's explicit (and Blumenberg's implicit) theories of metaphor: metaphor relates to these thinkers' views on the phenomenological dispute about whether time-consciousness or object-consciousness is a more fundamental experience. Husserl considered the awareness of the external world to precede time consciousness, that time required content in order to reach our consciousness, whereas Heidegger imagined that the activity-orientation of time-consciousness neither depended on object-consciousness nor reliably generated it. Metaphor can show how temporal consciousness grasps ideational objects whose denotative force changes depending on the experiences that subjects bring to interpretation. A verbal image thus attracts attention and meaning across history as writers revivify dead metaphors, and readers experience the power of old metaphors anew. 'Dead' metaphors can become the 'absolute metaphors' that shape history (Being, God, or the Unconscious – to name a few), especially when these metaphors are taken literally. Yet it is precisely when dead metaphors are exposed as 'mere' human ingenuity that their residual power can go most

overlooked. To give their insight a fittingly poetic formulation, we could revise Heraclitus' anti-theology of the co-construction of gods and mortals: metaphors, concepts, concepts, metaphors, living each others' deaths, dying each others' lives.

Author's note

Spencer Hawkins is now affiliated with Johannes Gutenberg University of Mainz, Germany.

Acknowledgements

I would like to take this occasion to express my deep gratitude to the many people whose input assisted me in preparing this essay. Thank you to all of the reviewers who offered valuable feedback on versions of this manuscript. Thank you, Julian Joseph Potter, for clear and prompt editorial correspondence. Thank you also, Frederick Amrine, Hannes Bajohr, and Eric Baker, my co-panelists on the 2012 German Studies Association panel, 'Hans Blumenberg and the Anthropology of Metaphor'. Thank you, Ulrich von Bülow, Anna Kinder, Dorit Krusche, and Manfred Sommer, and the other scholars who advised me at the German Literature Archive in Marbach in the summer of 2016. Thank you, Ines Huelsmann, for sharing insights into the Blumenberg archive. Finally, thank you, Bettina Blumenberg, for graciously permitting me the right to quote unpublished material from Blumenberg's literary estate.

Funding

The author(s) disclosed receipt of the following financial support for the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article: This work was supported by a Suhrkamp Grant administered by the Academic Council of the German Schiller Association (German Literature Archive, Marbach).

Notes

1. Neither manages to create a taxonomy of existential concepts to which indispensable symbols point – an ambition that Ricoeur posits, but does not return to: 'The task, then, is, starting from the symbols, to elaborate existential concepts – that is to say, not only structures of reflection but structures of existence, insofar as existence is the being of man' (Ricoeur, 1986: 357). However, Blumenberg agrees about the source of symbols: 'Absolute metaphors "answer" the supposedly naive, in principle unanswerable questions […] already *posed* in the ground of our existence' (Blumenberg, 2010: 14).
2. 'Ricoeur's narrative detour of refiguring the world of the reader is a way of understanding the narratological dimension of Blumenberg's metaphor histories, that is, how his configured text worlds work on the lifeworld of the reader [….] The textual world enables a momentary reprieve (*Distanznahme*) for readers from their lifeworlds' (Stoellger, 2000: 251; my translation).
3. Blumenberg expresses his distaste for Gadamer's leadership practices in a letter dated 14 March 1958 (Kranz, 2011: 164 f46).
4. I thank Bettina Blumenberg for drawing my attention to this context.
5. Blumenberg and Jacques Derrida discuss some of the same metaphors, but Derrida usually announces a transhistorical claim, where Blumenberg roots his theory of metaphor's transhistorical value in historical arguments. In Derrida's *Speech and Phenomenon*, he finds Husserl's description of streaming time consciousness as an inner voice to betray the inability to represent experience outside of the language of representation itself. Blumenberg, by contrast, treats Husserl's streaming metaphors as a stark contrast with Heidegger's static metaphors

of self-alienated Dasein in *Sources, Streams, Icebergs* (Quellen, Ströme, Eisberge). Generally, Derrida works to universalize à la Heidegger about the beholdenness of Western paradigms of thought to the metaphor of writing/speech, whereas Blumenberg shows that enduring metaphors only persist as they do because they serve highly specific and differentiated intellectual historical functions.

6. Blumenberg did not think of metaphor as necessarily even visual-sensory in his earliest formulations of metaphorology for the *DFG Senatkommission für Begriffsgeschichte*, but included mathematical figurations (see Kranz, 2011). And as Paul Fleming has elaborately shown, anecdotes appear to be the more refined metaphorological objects for the late Blumenberg (Fleming, 2012, 2011).
7. The inadequacy of such a criterion stood out to historian Alexander Demandt, who notes that Kant, Marx, and Hitler all relied on nature imagery to describe world history, but that this does not suggest a shared reference: '[B]ut what does this [reliance] bespeak? Linguistic indicators only rise to the level of symptoms in a totalizing theory, as shall not be achieved here [in Demandt's book on metaphor] and cannot be achieved. Within such a theory, these indices would simply never be lacking' (Demandt, 1978: 435).
8. Aquinas, however, writing in Latin, would discover a new way in which even forms of existence differ, namely in their degree of participation in divinity. In the famous *analogia entis*, the difference between a rock's mere existence, an animal's sentience, and a human being's intelligence offer earthly analogies for the difference between familiar qualities of being and God's more complete form of existence as an omniscient, omnipotent, and eternal being.

References

Blumenberg H (1981) *Die Lesbarkeit der Welt*. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp.

Blumenberg H (1985) *Work on Myth*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Blumenberg H (1986) *Lebenszeit und Weltzeit*. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp.

Blumenberg H (1993) Light as a metaphor for truth: At the preliminary stage of philosophical concept formation. In: Levin DM (ed.) *Modernity and the Hegemony of Vision*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 30–86.

Blumenberg H (1997) Prospect for a theory of nonconceptuality. In: *Shipwreck with Spectator: Paradigm of a Metaphor for Existence*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 81–102.

Blumenberg H (2002) *Zu den Sachen und zurück*. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp.

Blumenberg H (2010) *Paradigms for a Metaphorology*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.

Blumenberg H (2014) *Beschreibung des Menschen*. Berlin: Suhrkamp.

Blumenberg H and Taubes J (2013) *Briefwechsel 1961–1981 und weitere Materialien*. Berlin: Suhrkamp.

Boden P and Zill R (2016) *Poetik und Hermeneutik im Rückblick: Interviews mit Beteiligten*. Paderborn: Wilhelm Fink.

Davidson D (1978) What metaphors mean. *Critical Inquiry* 5(1): 31–47.

Demandt A (1978) *Metaphern für Geschichte: Sprachbilder und Gleichnisse im historisch-politischen Denken*. München: C.H. Beck.

Derrida J (2016) *Of Grammatology*. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press.

Flasch K (2017) *Hans Blumenberg: Philosoph in Deutschland: Die Jahre 1945 bis 1966*. Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann.

Fleming P (2011) The perfect story: Anecdote and exemplarity in Linnaeus and Blumenberg. *Thesis Eleven* 104: 72–86.

Fleming P (2012) On the edge of non-contingency: Anecdotes and the lifeworld. *Telos* 2012: 21–35.

Flesch P (2015) *Der lange Sommer der Theorie: Geschichte einer Revolte*. Munich: C. H. Beck.
Fliethmann A (2011) Blumen Berg: Topoi in Blumenberg's philosophy. *Thesis Eleven* 104: 59–71.
Gehring P (2014) Metapher. In: Buch R and Weidner D (eds) *Blumenberg Lesen: Ein Glossar*. Berlin: Suhrkamp, 201–213.
Gerhardt V (2011) Conversation. Berlin.
Haverkamp A (2007) *Metapher: die Ästhetik in der Rhetorik: Bilanz eines exemplarischen Begriffs*. Paderborn: Wilhelm Fink.
Haverkamp A (2016) Nothing fails like success: Poetics and hermeneutics – A postwar initiative by Hans Blumenberg. *MLN* 130: 1221–1241.
Haverkamp A and Mende D (eds) (2009) *Metaphorologie: Zur Praxis einer Theorie*. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp.
Heidegger M (1996) *The Principle of Reason*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
Heidegger M (1971) *On the Way to Language*. New York: Harper & Row.
Johnson C (2012) *Memory, Metaphor, and Aby Warburg's Atlas of Images*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.
Kranz M (2011) Begriffsgeschichte institutionell: Die Senatskommission für Begriffsgeschichte der Deutschen Forschungsgemeinschaft (1956–1966) Darstellung und Dokumente. *Arch. Für Begr.* 53: 153–226.
Lévi-Strauss C (1966) *The Savage Mind*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
Nauta L (2005) A weak chapter in the book of nature: Hans Blumenberg on medieval thought. In: *The Book of Nature in Antiquity and the Middle Ages*. Leuven: Peeters.
Reagan CE (1996) *Paul Ricoeur: His Life and His Work*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
Ricoeur P (1986) *The Symbolism of Evil*. Boston: Beacon Press.
Ricoeur P (1978) The metaphorical process as cognition, imagination, and feeling. *Critical Inquiry* 5(1): 143–159.
Ricoeur P (1977) *The rule of metaphor: Multi-disciplinary studies of the creation of meaning in language, La métaphore vive.English*. University of Toronto Press, Toronto; Buffalo.
Ricoeur P (1974) *The Conflict of Interpretations: Essays in Hermeneutics*. Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press.
Ricoeur P (1967) *Husserl: An Analysis of His Phenomenology*. Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press.
Ross A (2011) Moral metaphorics, or Kant after Blumenberg: Towards an analysis of the aesthetic settings of morality. *Thesis Eleven* 104: 40–58.
Stoellger P (2000) *Metapher und Lebenswelt: Hans Blumenbergs Metaphorologie als Lebensweltthermeneutik und ihr religionsphänomenologischer Horizont*. Mohr Siebeck.
Zill R (2013) Zwischen Affinität und Kritik: Hans Blumenberg liest Sigmund Freud. In: Borck C (ed.) *Hans Blumenberg beobachtet: Wissenschaft, Technik und Philosophie*.

Author biography

Spencer Hawkins is assistant professor in the Faculty of Translation Studies, Linguistics, and Cultural Studies at the Johannes Gutenberg University of Mainz. His monograph in progress deals with the translation of metaphor in German philosophical texts. He is the translator of Hans Blumenberg's *The Laughter of the Thracian Woman*.