

Short biographical note for Brayton Polka

Brayton Polka is Professor Emeritus of Humanities at York University in Toronto. He is the author of several books and numerous smaller studies in which he focuses on the issue of interpretation. He is concerned to show in his work that the hermeneutical relationship between text and reader is based on the golden rule of interpretation: that text and reader each bear the responsibility of interpreting the other as they want to be interpreted by the other. Interpretation is, consequently, he holds, the covenantal relationship par excellence. Professor Polka argues, then, that the values that underlie, that “upbuild” or edify, all hermeneutical effort--e.g., love, freedom, justice, and the dignity of all human beings--are at once biblical and modern. He argues, additionally, that it is only on the basis of understanding that our modern values are biblical from the beginning and that biblical values are modern unto the end that we can deconstruct and so overcome the opposition so prevalent today between theology and philosophy, between faith and reason, and between the religious and the secular. He has written both general studies, in which he applies his hermeneutical theory to thinking through the relationship between religion and philosophy, and more specialized, interpretive studies of, in particular, Freud, Spinoza (in two volumes), and Shakespeare. His most recent books are *Rethinking Philosophy in Light of the Bible: From Kant to Schopenhauer* and *Modernity between Wagner and Nietzsche*.