



Proust as Philosopher: The Art of Metaphor

Miguel de Beistegui

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Marcel Proust's *In Search of Lost Time* has long fascinated philosophers for its complex accounts of time, personal identity and narrative, amongst many other themes. *Proust as Philosopher: The Art of Metaphor* is the first book to try and connect Proust's implicit ontology of experience with the question of style, and of metaphor in particular.

Miguel de Beistegui begins with an observation: throughout *In Search of Lost Time*, the two main characters seem prone to chronic dissatisfaction in matters of love, friendship and even art. Reality always falls short of expectation. At the same time, the narrator experiences unexpected bouts of intense elation, the cause and meaning of which remain elusive. Beistegui argues we should understand these experiences as acts of artistic creation, and that this is why Proust himself wrote that true life is the life of art.

He goes on to explore the nature of these joyful and pleasurable experiences and the transformation required of art, and particularly literature, if it is to incorporate them. He concludes that Proust revolutionises the idea of metaphor, extending beyond the confines of language to understand the nature of lived, bodily experience.

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