

Sarah A. Mattice. *Metaphor and Metaphilosophy: Philosophy as Combat, Play, and Aesthetic Experience.* Rowman & Littlefield 2014. 166 pp. \$92.00 USD (Hardcover ISBN 9780739192207); \$42.99 USD (Paperback ISBN 9781498505727).

The use of metaphors and other non-literal forms of language for the expression of philosophical concepts has roots that extend far back into the history of philosophy. We have for example Plato's charioteer and two horses as a representation of the soul, Aristotle's proverbial door of truth, Boethius' *rota fortunae*, the list goes on. For sure, not all philosophers have been keen on the use of metaphor, the analytic schools of thought serving perhaps as an example. Yet even here it seems that the non-literal is employed, for instance in John Searle's Chinese Room Argument and Frank Jackson's Knowledge Argument. Although the language may not be metaphorical, the thought-experiments are doubtless to be 'read' in a non-literal sense. In other instances, non-literal language appears not only warranted, but even necessary. For instance, in the philosophy of religion it is evident that some form of metaphor or analogy is required if we are to speak intelligibly about God. In any case, although non-literal language is certainly not required for all forms of philosophical discourse, it seems desirable for at least some forms.

In particular, metaphor appears useful in the discussion of philosophy to the extent that philosophy itself is a puzzling matter. But why is this the case? Here Sarah A. Mattice's *Metaphor and Metaphilosophy* is of particular interest. Philosophy is puzzling for the reason that, as she suggests, 'thinking involves metaphor, and as a kind of thinking about thinking, philosophical activity must involve metaphor as well' (1). Personally, I hesitate to commit to the two premises of her argument. Although *some* thinking certainly involves metaphor it is far from evident that *all* thinking involves metaphor. Further still, the idea that philosophy is a kind of thinking about thinking is far too indefinite a description and does little to elucidate the matter. At the same time, I find the concluding thesis compelling. The idea seems to be not so much that philosophers employ metaphors, but rather that philosophical activity, as noted, involves metaphor. Stated otherwise, metaphors are in some sense embedded in the very act of thinking philosophically.

In the book that follows, Mattice focuses on the kinds of metaphors commonly employed in the description of philosophical activity. Three kinds are identified, viz., philosophical activity as combat (chapter 2), as play (chapter 3), and as aesthetic experience (chapter 4). It is to be noted that illustrations of these metaphors are drawn not only from typical sources within Western philosophical literature, but from classical Chinese sources as well. In what follows, I summarize the basic argument that Mattice gives for each of the above-mentioned metaphors.

I. The Combat Metaphor. Following a general description in chapter 1 of the nature of metaphor as a kind of 'mapping' and 'conceptual correspondence' (*à la* Lakoff) in which the abstract is represented through the concrete (3), Mattice turns in chapter 2 to the discussion of the combat metaphor. Taken simply, the combat metaphor represents philosophical activity through the image of conflict: 'sparring over ideas, grappling with an intricate argument, jousting with theories, and trying to capture the truth' (21). Here the primary aim is victory and the two debaters stand as competitors in the dispute.

Examples of this metaphor are given within the history of philosophy from Socrates ('be my comrade in arms') to Wittgenstein ('Philosophy is a battle'). (21) Mattice likewise notes that whereas ancient Greek philosophy is rife with such metaphors, Chinese philosophy tends to avoid them, preferring instead metaphors 'associated with traveling, agriculture, and the natural world' (27).

Of course, just as the victor in war is not necessarily the just victor, so too the victor in debate is not necessarily the one who possesses truth. In this, we see the inadequacies of the combat metaphor. After all, an argument can be sound and yet very badly argued. A consequence of the combat metaphor as applied to philosophizing is that insofar as the aim is victory, to that extent, the truth of one's position is often equated with besting one's opponent. But such a view is based upon a mistaken assumption, viz., that 'aggressive behavior' is linked to 'successful behavior' (31). In fact, there is no necessary connection between the two.

II. The Play Metaphor. Chapter 3 is divided into two parts. In the first part, Mattice examines the metaphor of play, which is to say, the idea that, 'philosophers play with ideas, play with language, and play with thought' (47). Examples are again given from the history of philosophy, including classical Chinese thought. The primary distinction between combat and play is further identified. Whereas combat focuses upon both conflict and the resolution of conflict by way of overcoming one's opponent, play seeks to continue its enjoyments.

The example of games is given (Wittgenstein), which are said to be rule-bound. Games can likewise be divided into finite and infinite games. The former kind of games are played for the purpose of winning and from this perspective approximate more closely to something like combat. On the other hand, infinite games are played solely for the sake of play itself and have the object, as James Carse notes in his *Finite and Infinite Games*, 'to prevent it from coming to an end, to keep everyone in play' (49).

Following discussion of a number of other notions tied to play, including its sociological context and related concepts developed in classical Chinese philosophy, Mattice summarizes in the second part of this chapter the attributes of play according to three distinct but related characteristics. *First*, the participants (here being philosophical) are akin to playmates as opposed to opponents. *Second*, their exchange involves the Chinese concept of *hua*, that is, 'a to-and-fro renewing repetition' (70) which involves undetermined possibilities and an unfixed goal. *Third* and finally, the purpose of the activity is the activity itself, which is to say, playing the game.

III. The Metaphor of Aesthetic Experience. As in the previous chapter, chapter 4 is divided into two parts. Within the first part, the metaphor of aesthetic experience is developed, albeit negatively, following Gadamer's description of experience in *Truth and Method*. Experience arises by way of absence in the sense of 'something not previously understood or not what we expected it to be beforehand' (87). Alternatively, aesthetic experience involves the addition of wonder that leads to a 'not-yet-known or understood' (87) question in relation to the work of art. This concept of aesthetic experience is further developed and points are again drawn from both Western as well as classical Chinese philosophy.

In the second part, Mattice then applies the metaphor of aesthetic experience to philosophy proper. Here, we can immediately see what direction this will take. Just as aesthetic experience serves to awaken wonder and a question, so does philosophical activity, which ultimately has 'a question—as its core' (109). From this perspective, the philosopher becomes a kind of artist, and philosophy itself a kind of art historically expressed in the form of various philosophical styles and movements. Philosophical discourse will in turn take on the characteristic neither of a conflict and debate (the combat metaphor) nor that of engagement in a game (the metaphor of play) but rather as an attempt—as one might do while standing before a work of art—to develop a deeper understanding and appreciation of the question.

In all, I found Mattice's *Metaphor and Metaphilosophy* to be an interesting text. There are, however, some critical points to note. First, although I did enjoy the examination of classical Chinese thought in relation to the theme, at times it felt out of place, so that two separate texts were being

somewhat artificially interwoven together. Of course, part of the difficulty has to do perhaps with the fact that the Western and Eastern philosophical traditions have in many ways developed independently of one another. So while I do laud Mattice's effort to bring unison to these traditions, the above-mentioned difficulties nonetheless (as I see it) remain. Second, while the metaphor of aesthetic experience doubtless describes a particular approach to philosophy (as developed within the continental hermeneutic tradition), the Gadamerian concept of experience nonetheless remains a questionable starting point. For it omits the plenitude of experience in favor of the famine. For what seems to define experience is not so much what it is not and only expected to be, but rather what it is and the lived encounter that we have of it. The third and final point follows from the second. In omitting the plenitude of experience, it seems that Mattice has passed over perhaps the most significant metaphor that philosophy has and employs, which is precisely the metaphor of love.

To conclude, I should like to note that apart from the above criticisms, I consider Mattice's *Metaphor and Metaphilosophy* recommended reading and likewise a beneficial contribution to metaphilosophical research.

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