

Two Relations between Thinking and Truth
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Abstract

The relation between thinking and truth in philosophy is explored in terms of this question: which one serves the other? The essay argues that a conception of philosophy as truth serving thought can be perceived in the work of French Nietzschean philosophers.

Keywords

Deleuze, Derrida, Foucault, Nietzsche, Decadence

Introduction

Nietzsche proposed that philosophers aggressively examine truth; that meant studying where truths could be located, how they may be formed, what their durability may be, and what they might be good for. Nietzsche's most commonly cited French readers worked hard on these questions, their answers form the core of what we mean when we talk about the New Nietzsche or the French Nietzsche. As the books gathered under these headings have continued to attract thoughtful attention, they have also and inevitably stimulated backlashing claims that the French labor, if it has not neared its completion, is at least burdened with exhaustion or frivolity or both.

- Renaut and Ferry *French Philosophy of the Sixties*
- David Lodge, "The Novel Now"
- Rosa Montegro

Nietzsche also proposed a very different study, one that works on a separate level; it leaves fundamental questions about truth aside by considering the relation between thinking and truth. I believe that this study has become increasingly pressing as Nietzsche's French allies have gained detractors. In this essay, I sketchily outline what the study is, how it twists through deconstruction and Gilles Deleuze, and finally why the question of thinking and truth may be important.

The relation between thinking and truth

The proposal that the relation between thinking and truth be considered can be implicitly discerned in an admission that is no small concession for a megalomaniac to the Nietzschean degree. In the fifth book of the *Gay Science*, Nietzsche concedes that, "even we seekers after knowledge today, we godless anti-metaphysicians still take our fire, too, from...the faith that God is the truth, that truth is divine."¹ Nietzsche's admission—which he generously applies to his adherents as well as to himself—does not mean that philosophers from Nietzsche to Deleuze have been quietly shepherding a secret belief that one day final truth will arrive. It means that Nietzsche and the rest of the godless anti-metaphysicians dedicated to hammering away at Platonic hopes for universality have been simultaneously maintaining a faith that the reason we think is for truth. Thinking exists to serve truth and is even infatuated with it. This infatuation is what Nietzsche calls piety.

Piety is a rule of attraction between thinking and truth. I use the word attraction because piety refuses any dialectical relationship that will ultimately confuse everything in a spiral of codependence; piety is as privileging as irreversible as an unrequited love. Further, because it is *between*, it can assure us that thinking serves truth without making any more than the most general commitment about what thinking and truth are. The discretion allows piety's survival through even the most tumultuous and aggressive philosophic work of the last century. The piety that directed Plato and Hegel survived to guide deconstructors and Deleuze. To put Nietzsche's point directly, it doesn't matter whether the truth we are talking about is a valiant metaphysical hope or the narrowest perspective of the sharpest postmodern. Either way, piety can still be found, either way, thinking can be devoted to truth.

Examples of piety

If this were a presentation about piety, I would go through and locate scenes of it in Plato. That would mean distinguishing when he wants perfect truth for some practical reason like that it infallibly guides the *Republic's* philosopher-King's, from those moments when his labors are in the name of truth because of a simple faith that truth is what thinking is for.

After repeating this study by distinguishing pragmatism from belief in central medieval and Modern philosophers, the next task would be to go through Nietzsche and his sympathetic readers looking for their submissions to piety. This project can begin with a general question: Why does thinking go on? We all know that for Nietzsche's French advocates thinking can no longer stop; we know that Derrida's last deconstruction will never come and that Foucault never finished historically mapping converging social forces and that Deleuze foresaw no end to concept production. What is curious about their situation is that thinking goes on interminably for the same reason that for Plato it will one day terminate, because thinking is oriented toward truth, because of a deference thinking has for truth. Plato's ultimate truth anesthetizes thinking with revelation. Postmodern truths aggravate thinking with the pressure of differences and the consequent suspicion that no truth can ever maintain its integrity because of its formation out of heterogeneous elements. Whichever it is, whether thinking struggles for its own end in stolid being or wrestles unceasingly in a world of becoming, what is important for our purposes is what determines the destiny of thinking. Thinking will end one day, or it won't, by reference to a prior idea about truth. This is piety.

My generalization can be particularized by briefly indicating a specific way that Derrida and Deleuze can both be read to sacrifice thinking for truth. For many of Derrida's promoters, deconstruction means revealing truths as the ironies underwriting philosophic arguments. Each one of these ironies may, even must be undercut in their turn, but that's not the point of deconstruction. You think deconstructively to locate ironies, you don't locate ironies so that you can go on deconstructing. This is what Gayatri Spivak means when she writes that, "The aspect of deconstructive practice that is best known in the United States is its tendency toward infinite regression. The aspect that interests *me*, however, is the recognition within deconstructive practice, of...its disclosure of *complicities*..."² Jonathan Culler repeats the idea: "if the formulations produced by [deconstructive] analyses are themselves open to question because of their involvement with the *forces and ruses they claim to understand*, this acknowledgement of inadequacy is also an opening to criticism, analyses and displacement."³ For both these readers—and others could be added to the list, J. Hillis Miller comes to mind—deconstructive thinking is in the name of tenuously gripping complicities and ruses. Thinking is in the name of truth, even if those truths inspire little confidence. Derrida himself is the most slippery case, and I won't be so rash as to claim it's one way or the other for him, but the piety is there, even if it's not all that's there.

The later Deleuze understood philosophy as the creation of the kind of truths he labeled concepts. A concept, he said, was a knot of experience with irrepressibly loose ends. Because the ends can't all be tied together, every concept is necessarily coming undone and

being retied into other combinations. Thus, the labor of philosophy, the creation of concepts, has the effect of constantly requiring more thinking. But that effect wasn't the reason Deleuze was doing philosophy. More customarily, he was seeking concepts for practical uses: they got him into literature, they let him modify accepted psychology, they helped him find political directions. The interminable coming undone of his own productions was only a result of the brand of truth he subscribed to, not the primary desire of his thinking mind. For that reason, Deleuze can claim that philosophers are always creating concepts with the only constraints being that "these should have a necessity, as well as an *unfamiliarity*, and they [should] have both to the extent that they're a response to *real problems*."⁴ The unfamiliarity (a direct reference to Nietzsche's *Gay Science* #355), which is the impossibility of tying all the strands of a concept together, results in a guarantee that thinking will go on, that it will always go on. But what it will be wanting along the way is truths cast as the solutions to "real problems." Sharp renditions of this adoration recur throughout the writings Deleuze was involved in. In *Kafka*, for example, we want the concept of a minor literature because it will help us grip popular, marginal and proletarian literatures.⁵ In other words, we think in order to get a truth, and when we get that one then we'll go get some more. Almost feverishly, truths are what thinking is about. Having said this, I note that it would be a rude error to configure Deleuze as exclusively a kind of French pragmatist. Nonetheless, it's difficult to avoid concluding that at least sometimes the reason Deleuze thinks is to get concepts that have value in the real (empirical) world.

What holds deconstructionists and Deleuze together are flashes of the antique belief that thinking is for truth, even if those flashes escape from between sentences claiming that each truth is only one more in an endless chain or line. This just repeats what I wrote above: the kinds of truths you are interested in—rigidly absolute or factiously perspectival—does not effect whether or not you are pious.

Putting thinking before truth: impiety

Now, what is impiety? Impiety means that truth is devoted to, and gets its reason for existence from thinking. Nietzsche elicits this idea with the following unorthodox assertion.

"If one were to prove this God of the Christians to us, we should be even less able to believe in him."⁶

There are two iconoclastic and incongruous claims in this sentence. The first is that Nietzsche does not believe in the universal truth God represents; this is the Nietzsche French readers concentrated on. The second claim is where I want to focus. Why be less likely to

believe if God is proven? Because after the proof, the thinking is done. And it was the *thinking*, not the hope of God that kept us involved. In other words, Nietzsche is no longer centered on whether or not there is an ultimate truth. He has moved over to the relation between thinking and truth and then impiously oriented truth toward thinking. Instead of articulating fundamental determinations about truth first, and then arranging any subsequent thinking around that, he has privileged thinking by evaluating a specific truth in terms of its value for his active mind. Whether God exists or not is losing relevance in the face of the more important question as to how God can be employed to generate the most demanding kind of philosophic work. For this reason, Nietzsche is willing to accept the idea of God *as long as* that God remains unproven. As long as God remains unproven He can fulfill His new philosophic responsibility which is not to end thought with the ultimate revelation but to spur it with the hope of proving that revelation.

If the claim that God exists has more value *before* its proof, God depends on thinking. I don't mean this in the sense that God depends on the quality of thinking that preceded Him, if it's rigorous or disorganized, valid or invalid and so on. And I don't mean that God depends on the kind of thinking that preceded Him, whether it's analytic or literary or something else. I mean the fact of thinking adds value to God. Instead of playing a role in debates about truth, God is being revered as a philosophic stimulant. This can be put symmetrically: it's not that we have thinking to reach God, it's that we have God to advance thinking.

The pious Nietzsche, who is also the French Nietzsche to an important degree, and the impious Nietzsche are irreconcilable. The pious Nietzsche doesn't believe in God at all simply because he doesn't accept universal truth. The impious Nietzsche doesn't believe in the *proven* God because that bottles up thinking. But he does believe in a perverted God whose value lies in the ability to trigger proving minds. And if the proof is impossible because the God is metaphysical, then we love Him even more. One of the things that impiety paradoxically allows, therefore, is believing in the divine. Though this doesn't mean, of course, that we believe our own belief. We only act on it.⁷

Another thing that impiety means is a vigorous twisting of deconstruction and Deleuze. For deconstruction, the twisting will occur in the midst of a now old but still more than lukewarm debate. On one side are those who assert that deconstruction, because it produces infinite meanings, pushes each of those meanings toward infinite irrelevance and therefore the whole theory follows on the route to nihilism. This argument is repeated in cruder form by anyone blithely claiming that deconstruction results in anything meaning everything or nothing meaning anything. These latter criticisms are manifestly misguided insofar as they miss the difference between what is infinite and what is unlimited; they can

safely be ignored. Still, the criticism that deconstruction yields infinite meanings and therefore that each one tends toward infinite irrelevance, that argument has bite. On the other side of the division we find those authors I have already referred to—Spivak, Culler, Hillis Miller—as well as others, who want to rescue deconstruction from bluntly infinite nihilism by concentrating on the discreet ironies, the shrewd complicities that signal every deconstructive turn. So, the debate is between the vulgarians of meaninglessness and the astute professionals of irony. The impious come down on the vulgarians' side; they are interested in accelerating deconstruction to the velocity of meaningless truths. They don't go on from there, though, to conclude that deconstruction is meaningless. Just the opposite. When truth is for thinking, the only thing a truth (a deconstructive irony) can possibly be good for is fueling thinking. And as the value of a truth diminishes, we can at least say that its potential to arrest thinking, even momentarily, diminishes with it. Even better, it diminishes infinitely.

As that happens, the alliance between the vulgar and the impious begins splintering on the question of nihilism. The infinite meaninglessness of any deconstructive truth, which is exactly what the impious venerate, does not consign them to nihilism because the word's meaning has been altered. Before, it was defined as the practice of debilitating truth, as the conviction that a truth hardly matters. This breed of nihilism takes place within the privilege of truth over thinking: when truth is what is important, those who claim that any particular truth is endlessly unimportant are nihilists. But the impious change the premise. For them, thinking is privileged over truth. Therefore, nihilists are those who suffocate thinking. Because even the astutest deconstructor concedes that their best, most insightful and decisive ironies are powerless to halt the flow of incongruencies between meaning and text, and because those incongruencies always carry the critic forward to the next reading, deconstruction, no matter how it's construed, cannot be nihilistic.⁸ On the other hand, the tradition's most wholesome figures can be. Plato and Augustine, for example, become exemplary nihilists when they prescribe thought-ending contemplation of universal truth. In their own defense, they can insist on the felicity of the city governed by reference to supreme justice, and we might even agree that we'd like to live there, but that just makes the situation worse because then not only have they stopped thinking but we have too.

The impious reconsideration of philosophy also applies to Deleuze and his writings about concepts. Because he is so often pious, Deleuze dedicated significant energy—and the first chapter of *What is Philosophy?*—to defining this kind of makeshift truth. The important question, however, is not what *is* a concept, but *why* create them? The question squeezes a little tighter when you formulate the task Deleuze set with greater accuracy; it's not just to create concepts but to always create *new* concepts.⁹ For this, Deleuze offered numerous

explanations. First, there are a few reactive ones he occasionally seemed incapable of resisting. One is that philosophers should create concepts because the ludicrous attempts of others drive real thinkers toward fresh ideas.¹⁰ There are also two more serious reasons; the one I have already cited is a kind of pragmatism. The reason pragmatism would constantly require *new* concepts is that there will be no end to the need for practical solutions to real problems. Even if we were to stumble upon the perfectly organized society and thus momentarily render at least the political philosopher barren of problems to solve, there is no reason to believe that social development will naturally stop there. More likely—even necessarily—it will go on and new practical problems will soon be churning out of ceaseless cultural and economic transformations. The reason historical development will *necessarily* go on leads to the more profound reason why Deleuze’s concept production cannot stop. Though it gets clouded over in the later writings, the reason is stated transparently in *Difference and Repetition*; it is the book’s guiding hypothesis that the world is founded on metaphysical difference. New concepts are necessary because the world will never stop being new on the ontological level. Doubtless I should elaborate this a little further, but even without doing that I can state the following. Impiety allows us to replace pragmatism and metaphysics and the rest with the conviction that we produce concepts as those truths that relentlessly come apart and thus demand more thinking precisely because the thinking is what we want. Truths that constantly come unraveled as insistence upon more thinking don’t need any justification beyond that fact that their unstable composition results in that insistence.

Converting Deleuze to impiety means asserting that his concepts don’t serve practical purposes and they don’t reflect a fundamental metaphysical condition. Concepts reflect the belief that thinking is more important than truth because they necessitate a return to thinking. It follows that a concept is better or worse depending *exclusively* on how forcefully it shoves thinking ahead. This method of evaluation can be contrasted with Deleuze who continuously insisted that a valuable concept be “incomparable”¹¹ with others. In other words, for Deleuze, a truth’s distance from other *truths* is part of the equation of its worth. It seems obvious that a truth fabricated to be incomparable with others will do quite a bit to stimulate thinking, but that’s a long way from saying that a truth will be evaluated solely by reference to thinking. One way to mark that distance is by noting that for the impious it doesn’t matter whether a truth is incomparable or a plagiarism of traditional theology.

Even though Deleuze despised plagiarism, that doesn’t mean that much of his quotidian philosophic activities need to be changed to make him impious. If we just get rid of those appeals to pragmatism, and forgo concerns about whether Deleuze’s motivating suspicion—that coherent experience is built from differences—is true or not, then concept

production can go on as before relentlessly chasing the unfamiliar, the rarest experiences. We only need to avoid *justifying* concepts on any grounds beyond those provided by thinking. In this way, Deleuzian practice parallels deconstruction. For both, the conversion from piety to impiety changes very little of what philosophers actually do from day-to-day, but it does change why they are doing it.¹²

Just before starting this brief discussion of deconstruction and Deleuze, I said that the idea of impiety will wrench their ideas violently. In fact, I don't believe that. It seems to me that the notion of impiety is already there, the pages of the French Nietzsche are even thick with it. I don't have time today, though, to show why I think that or to support the argument with textual references. I will move immediately to results.

Conclusion

If postmodernism is the suspicion of metanarratives, than the impious Nietzsche is not at all postmodern. For the impious Nietzsche, a divine metanarrative did not ignite suspicion, it stimulated thinking.

I can generalize this conclusion. After Nietzsche jeopardized hopes for a final truth at the end of history, his French readers have sought to move philosophy ahead with sharp interrogations: *whose* truth are we discussing, *how* was it made, where will it work and when might it fail. Maybe passing time and loud denunciations have cost this critical practice some of its edge, maybe they have contributed to its refinement. Regardless, they have made space for Nietzsche's proposal that we ask about the relation between thinking and truth.

The first decision that needs to be made: in which direction does the attraction go? If it goes from thinking to truth, then we know what philosophy should look like, a debate about Platonism and its reversal. First we argue about whether or not truth is universal. If it is, we try to attain it. If it isn't, we cut through every experience with postmodern interrogations. Leaving that aside, Nietzsche also proposed that we understand truth as attracted to thinking. That means devoting ourselves to truths that stimulate thinking. Nietzsche's clever example was the Christian God who still needs proving. Belief in the Christian God is better than, say, Richard Rorty's pragmatism because so many of the difficult questions about his philosophy are already answered by the label that encloses it. And even if they weren't, Rorty as well as Deleuze in his pragmatic moments are fabricating defective truths to the degree that as a simple practical necessity thinking must halt in order for pragmatic ideas to be employed in the real world. And even if that's not right, it at least seems that the better a pragmatic idea works, the more objectionable it is.

Much more needs to be said about this, of course, and I'm probably just causing trouble for myself by mixing up Rorty with Deleuze, but however that might be it won't

change the following. Arranging the intellectual hierarchy with respect to a theorist's ability to spur thinking cuts through and sets in motion general philosophical divisions that we have grown accustomed to. Now, Saint Augustine and Nietzsche are no longer adversaries. Even while they tug at each other over trivial concerns like whether there is a God, they work together on the more important front of stimulating thinking. In fact, possibly Augustine's *Confessions* which passionately recounts the path to beatitude while leaving the *proof* for the reader, possibly this book catalyzes thinking more rapidly than Nietzsche's philosophy, so, by Nietzsche's own impious reasoning Augustine is superior. However that may be, impiety means that it makes little difference whether truth is a universal representation or a localized practice. What makes a difference is whether truth stimulates thinking. A universal truth may do that well, it may do that poorly. The same for perspective truths.

If this is so, then it doesn't make sense to divide up the history of philosophy in *truth's* terms as running from Plato to Hegel on one side and from Nietzsche to Deleuze on the other. Instead, philosophers who set thinking in the service of truth should be segregated from those who understand truth as serving thinking.

Should we be impious?

Should we be impious, why should we be impious? Several positive reasons can be located. Begin with a straightforward hermeneutic one: impiety lets us explain the irregular Nietzschean passage I cited above. Beyond that, the idea of impiety allows us to revisit a number of philosophers we have put at the center of our profession. I have already begun to indicate what I mean. In the case of Derrida, his philosophy twists into an impious when the perilous condition of writing which is its vulnerability to deconstruction is not primarily about the production of ironies; it is about making thinking go on. We have a deconstructive reading in order to set in motion the next deconstruction. What we need to go back to Derrida for is to see if he can tell us how to speed the chain. In the case of Deleuze, impiety means understanding his concepts not as having a simultaneous double motion, on the one side solving real problems while on the other opening fresh ones. The solutions need to be abandoned, or at least the value of those solutions must be set firmly at zero regardless of what non-philosophers may make of them. What we need to go back to Deleuze for is to determine the rules for making truths fall apart productively. Then we can dedicate ourselves to their application.

Another reason to consider impiety is because it explains some of what is happening in contemporary literary theory. In his recent and plainly-spoken essay "The Novel Now," David Lodge points out how strange it is that, in his words, "forty years ago a reader of the book pages of the London *Observer* or the *New York Times Book Review* could pick up a

copy of *Scrutiny* or the *Sewanee Review* and be able to take an intelligent interest in most of what he found in those university-based journals. If such a reader were to pick up their equivalents today—*Critical Inquiry*, say, or the *Oxford Review*—he would in all probability be totally baffled and bewildered, unable to make any sense at all of what purports to be literary criticism.”¹³ The only thing more baffling, I think, than contemporary literary studies is how it came to this, how we got to the point where a leading theorist like Paul de Man can write an essay on Proust and when you’re done reading it you’ve haven’t learned the slightest thing about what happens in Proust’s novels. They could be whodunnits or Harlequin Romances for all de Man tells you. It should be obvious from what I’ve said so far that I’m not going to advocate a return to New Criticism. The opposite is more likely. I will keep my own views out of this, however, and simply note that literary theory naturally attracts the impious because it is there that truths descend toward minimum value, it is there that they are largely freed of ethical and political responsibilities and therefore liberated to devote themselves to thinking. More and more in literary theory, truth is about thinking, about stimulating it and pushing it forward, wherever that forward might be. In this field, it really doesn’t matter what’s next *as long as* it fuels thinking. At least that’s what Lodge presents as his diagnosis of the contemporary situation. After writing that a typical, educated reader would be “unable to make any sense of what purports to be literary criticism,” he adds this: “Nor would he find [in literary criticism] much comment on contemporary imaginative writing. Critics these days are too busy keeping up with each other’s work.” In literary theory, truth is almost nothing without thinking. When separated from thinking, truth’s value heads for zero; it’s already so close that critics don’t even bother referring to the creative writing their truths are supposed to help us read.

A few paragraphs back I said that I wouldn’t have time to evidence my belief that the authors we’re studying here write pages laced with impiety. That’s still true, but I will suggest the following; it’s not an accident that Derrida and Deleuze have found so many of their most enthusiastic readers in literature departments.

There is a further reason to consider impiety, for its suggestion about why we do philosophy. Impiety can explain why we try to work out Kant’s theory of ethical imperatives or exercise convoluted postmodern routines. Start with this: is there anybody in the room who, when faced with a difficult moral decision in the real world, seeks guidance from Kant’s second *Critique*? Or from the *Genealogy of Morals*? Or from Derrida or Deleuze? When alone in our offices, when the truths don’t matter much, we rush into the most intricate and challenging possibilities. But when the truths do matter, our professional capacities frequently get left behind. Not always, but it happens. And if they’re left behind, then isn’t it really the case that we read and practice philosophy for the thinking? To put this differently,

don't we look for philosophic truths most fervently when they aren't good for anything? If so, then shouldn't we just say that, shouldn't we just acknowledge that the reason we want truths, whether Kantian or Deleuzean or whatever, is to drive our own working minds.

This can be put graphically. When we read a philosophy book, are we always sincerely interested in the ideas we find enclosed there; isn't it the case that what really interests us at least sometimes is whether the ideas will let us write our own book? By this, I don't mean write our own book to get a CV item, though that's there too, of course. What I mean is that we write our own book and then use that to go on and write again. In philosophy, truths are like books and writing is like thinking, we want the books because they accelerate writing.

About this acceleration, I suppose we can all agree that truths are like books in this way at least: the best ones provoke the most others. The disagreement would be about whether it's the best ones that provoke the others or the number of others that make one the best. The impious Nietzsche believes the second. But Nietzsche doesn't finally tell us whether we should be impious. I'm not sure either, but I am certain that no answer will satisfy both those attracted to truth and those attracted to thinking because what is between truth and thinking is a non-dialectical allure one uses to control the other; the relation is fixed in its imbalance and therefore every justification only repeats the infatuation it means to justify. So, Nietzsche's question—which do we want more, truth or to think—is not only pressing because of increasing and frequently spiteful assaults on postmodernism, but also vertiginous because it's difficult to see where a neutral, sober response might come from. It can be said that the existence of this difficulty does not somehow conceal and therefore indicate the path to be taken.

The decision

I'm assuming that the decision about impiety is ours to make. However, the evidence indicates the contrary. Take this conclusion of a letter to the editor published last year in the APA proceedings. It concerns the Association's collective determination that the death penalty is ethically unjustifiable. "Nonphilosophers, if they have the sense God gave geese, will regard our action as irrelevant if they agree with us and ridiculous if they do not."¹⁴ In other words, the best we can hope for our truths when left to fend for themselves in the world outside thinking is that they be considered irrelevant.

Further, if what happens in United States culture spreads pervasively, then irrelevance is beyond any doubt the destiny of philosophic truths that want to do more than provoke academic minds. Anyone who reads a variety of the world's newspapers can't help but be struck by how absent philosophers are from real-life ethical discussions in the U.S.

The events in Kosovo, for example, have generated whole sections of transcribed debates between writers and philosophers in Spain's *El Pais* and Mexico's *La Jornada*. I know of nothing comparable in any major U.S. daily.

End

¹ Nietzsche, Friedrich, *The Gay Science*, tr. Kaufmann, (New York: Vintage, 1974), Book V, section 344.

² Spivak, Gayatri, "Draupadi." *Critical Inquiry* 8 (1981), pp. 382-83. My italics.

³ Culler, Jonathan, *On Deconstruction*, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1982), p. 225. My italics.

⁴ Deleuze, Gilles, *Negotiations*, tr. Joughin, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995), p. 171. My italics.

⁵ Deleuze, Gilles and Guattari, Félix, *Kafka*, tr. Polan (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1986), p. 18.

⁶ Nietzsche, Friedrich, *The Antichrist*, tr. Kaufmann, section 47. Taken from: *The Portable Nietzsche* (New York: Penguin Books, 1976).

⁷ Augustine and Huysmans

⁸ This may not be quite right. In *Ariadne's Thread*, J. Hillis Miller virtually quotes Paul de Man in asserting that deconstruction is not something the critic does but something that the text does. If that's the case, it seems like an argument could be made that deconstruction doesn't require anyone to think since the text is off doing these things on its own. This argument could probably be refuted on theoretical grounds, but it's not necessary to delve into those complexities. All that is necessary is to look at the rhetoric Hillis Miller uses. From there, the conclusion that deconstruction is intellectual work that *he* has done becomes inescapable. At the very end of *Ariadne's Thread*, after having performed a number of acrobatic deconstructions, Hillis Miller predictably concludes that there is no foreseeable end to this work. But, he goes on, since reading is like being caught in a labyrinth, "I have at least mapped part of the maze." [Miller, J. Hillis, *Ariadne's Thread* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992.) p. 257. My italic.

⁹ Deleuze, Gilles and Guattari, Félix, *What is Philosophy*, tr. Tomlinson and Burchell (New York: Columbia University, 1994), p. 5.

¹⁰ Deleuze, Gilles and Guattari, Félix, *What is Philosophy*, tr. Tomlinson and Burchell (New York: Columbia University, 1994), p. 11.

¹¹ Deleuze, Gilles and Guattari, Félix, *What is Philosophy*, tr. Tomlinson and Burchell (New York: Columbia University, 1994), p. 31.

¹² The same point could be made with respect to the most traditional philosophers. A pious philosopher and an impious one both trying to prove God will be indistinguishable in terms of what they are doing. They will only be separated on the question of *why* they are doing it.

¹³ Lodge, David, "The Novel Now" in *Metafiction* ed. Currie (Essex: Longman Group, 1995), pp. 148-49.

¹⁴ "Proceedings and Addresses of the American Philosophical Association," Vol. 70, No. 5, May 1977, p. 168.

