

Overview

Decadence in philosophy is truths dedicated to the intensification of thought. For decadents the best truths don't describe experience accurately, they incite the most subsequent thinking. This doesn't imply wanting truths that are wrong but it does mean right and wrong lose relevance because every philosophic conclusion is valued purely in terms of its ability to generate more philosophizing. It's valued that way since thought no longer exists to pursue truth; truths exist to serve and accelerate thinking.

French Nietzscheanism in this book runs from Nietzsche through his appropriation by Gilles Deleuze, then it spreads to include those participating in their shared convictions and desires. It's not a group of individuals though, it's the convictions and desires as they've taken hold of contemporary theory.

French Nietzscheanism becomes decadent when it contorts into philosophy as only wanting to instigate thought. This book shows how the contorting happens, why, and, in sweeping terms, what it means to raise thinking above any stolid truth.

Decadence of the French Nietzsche's first chapter establishes that our discipline is fundamentally ruled by thinking and truth's relation, by the determination about which exists for the other. Going in the prosaic direction, truth gets privileged. The second chapter goes the other way into decadence where all philosophic claims are ordered into the unrestricted service of more thought; they're devoted to thought and reduced to an offering for it. Philosophy's principal studies it follows are no longer about forming truths and then deciding which are most persuasive but about provoking thinking and determining which truths do that more effectively than others. With decadence defined, the third chapter demonstrates how and where the decadent realignment has been happening in French Nietzscheanism, and not accidentally. The realignment has been happening from the movement's beginning and through its primary, motivating elements because they provide the theoretical material necessary for reconstructing philosophy as truths serving thought; the premises, habitual practices and defining attitudes of contemporary philosophy,

the argument is, are carriers of decadence, they make and explain it. The last chapter considers our time's most controversial philosophic current under pressure from its adversaries. It reviews several of the powerful criticisms leveled against recent theory and responds by showing that while they usher French Nietzscheanism into its late stages they don't lead the movement to abrupt termination, instead, they provoke French Nietzscheanism's particular decadence.

Finally, a note about reading this book. Because it's composed from a lengthy argument (concerning the condition of French Nietzscheanism in the history of philosophy) and a compact idea (what philosophy looks like when the relation between thinking and truth are reversed), there are two ways to begin. If you're interested in the longer argument then starting on the first page is recommendable. If you want to go straight to the decadent idea, though, the second chapter becomes the book's center and reading should start there.