Chapter Two
Post-structuralist Philosophy

Introductory Remarks
Post-structuralism is a major subdivision of contemporary western philosophy. Although it is historically the continuation of Structuralism, these two philosophical movements are, as to be explained in this chapter, epistemologically and methodologically different. In other words, whereas Structuralism was the dominant philosophical attitude of various cultural, critical and even linguistic analyses of the middle part of the twentieth century, the effects of Post-structuralism were to be felt only after the early 1970s.

On the other hand, Post-structuralism is often considered by some critics and readers as completely similar to the term 'deconstruction.' In the present research, however, these two terms are not used interchangeably. As it will be explained in the forthcoming pages of this study, Post-structuralism is an umbrella term which consists of several sub-categories, and one of these sub-categories is referred to as the 'deconstruction.' Hence, the deconstruction is a Post-structuralist method of analysis which is more known and applied than the other Post-structuralist concepts and notions.

Furthermore, Post-structuralism, like Structuralism, has been influential in other academic disciplines. If such terms as 'Structuralist Marxism,' 'Structuralist Anthropology,' and 'Structuralist Historiography' were familiar academic tendencies in the middle part
of the twentieth century, some other new terms like 'Post-structuralist Criticism' and 'Post-structuralist Semiotics' are nowadays used in the different fields of study. That is why it is sometimes said that Post-structuralism has had a major contribution to the interdisciplinary method of analysis in the contemporary human sciences.

Post-structuralism has, on the other hand, an interdisciplinary nature too. Discussing the main premises of Post-structuralism as a philosophical movement of the recent years, one is supposed to go back to the origin of Structuralism which played an effective role in the development of the other academic fields. Moreover, the present study attempts to focus on those schools that were influential in the development of Structuralism itself. For example, there are close links between Formalism and Structuralism or between Prague School and Structuralism.

This chapter first presents a vivid and complete introduction to the development of Post-structuralist philosophy and its different origins and backgrounds. Then, the thoughts of two main Post-structuralist philosophers, that is, Jacques Derrida and Michel Foucault, will be discussed regarding their special attention to the concepts of deconstruction and discourse respectively. The attempt to grasp the framework of thought of two other Post-structuralists, Roland Barthes and Paul de Man, constitutes the other part of this chapter.
A. An Introduction to Post-structuralism

a. General Backgrounds

I. Russian Formalism

Russian Formalism was an influential school of criticism in Russia in from 1910s to the early 1930s. Its philosophical principles were mostly based on anti-Platonic attitudes towards the form and the content. In other words, while Plato emphasized the significance of the content and its supremacy over the form in his Republic and Laws (1), the Russian formalists argued that it was the form and not the content of a text that determined its literary value.

The Formalists, as their name implies, approached the old and controversial theory of the form and the content in a radical way; that is, they advocated the form and neglected the content of the texts in their critical readings. Thus, the text itself became more important than the author, and this opinion can be metaphorically interpreted as the importance of 'the created' as compared to 'the creator.' Consequently, the form and the structure of the text were, in this view, more important than the 'intention' of the author. As a result, the often 'moral' themes of the texts are run out in this approach, and the especial usage of the language and the relation between the parts of the whole are fore-grounded instead.

Russian Formalists were anti-traditionalists in their readings since they tried to neglect the social, historical and political concerns around and about the work, and put their emphasis on the given text and its internal characteristics. Their approach first seemed somewhat mechanical because they treated the texts simply as an assembly of different rhetorical and literary devices. But, subsequently, they also
investigated the *interrelatedness* of the parts of the whole, and finally applied an organic approach.

The term Russian Formalism in fact describes two distinct movements: the OPAIAZ (Society for the Study of Poetic Language) in St. Petersburg, and the Linguistic Circle of Moscow. Although these movements included several outstanding critics, Victor Shklovsky and Roman Jacobson were the most influential figures.

Shklovsky's essay, *Art as Technique*, acted like the manifesto of Russian Formalism in which he presented for the first time the concept of 'defamiliarization.' This term, which means 'to make strange', has been used in different writings ever since. As Jeremy Hawthorn puts it, "Shklovsky argues that perception becomes automatic once it has become habitual, and the function of art is to challenge automatization and habitualization."(2) M.H. Abrams, too, believes that "by disrupting the modes of ordinary linguistic discourse, literature 'makes strange' the world of everyday perception."(3) Therefore, the function of art is to renew our perception and to de-automatize the manner in which objects are experienced.

Roman Jacobson, on the other hand, not only contributed to this movement by his essays but also acted as the bridge between Formalism, Prague School and Structuralism. The following quotation is one of his revolutionary remarks in which he, for the first time, talked of the *literariness* and 'autonomy' of the literary texts:

The object of study in literary science is not literature but literariness – that is, that which makes a given work a work of literature. Until now literary historians have preferred to act like the policeman who, intending to arrest a certain person, would at any opportunity, seize any and all persons who chanced into the apartment, as well as those passing along the street. The literary
historians used everything – anthropology, psychology, politics, philosophy. (4)

Considering the study of literature as a science, Russian Formalists tried to concentrate on general laws like true scientists. They began with the notion that literature has specific feature that differentiate it from other forms of human endeavor. This autonomy of the text leads to its analysis as a self-sufficient verbal entity. Hence there would be here no reference to the outside of the text (including the author's mind and intention).

The Formalists regarded literature first as a specialized mode of language, and argued that there was a basic distinction between the poetical use of language and the ordinary use of it. Whereas the main function of the ordinary language is to communicate a message or some information among the auditors by references to the external world, the poetical language is self-focused because its function is not to have extrinsic references. The poetical language, thus, refers to itself and draws the attention to its own linguistic signs.

One of the major concepts of in Formalism is this idea that the (literary) text cannot simply be regarded as a place that reflects the reality or a picture of life. It was this new idea that influenced some of the contemporary schools of thought and philosophy like Structuralism and Post-structuralism. In other words, these schools argue that the text is only a linguistic construction that does not present something like a window on the world.

To consider the text as a window which opens on the reality and the world was a traditional outlook that was rejected by Structuralist and Post-structuralist thinkers. The language, in this view, is taken as having a self-referential and self-reflective characteristic. Hence, the idea of the 'system', that is, to consider different cultural units as
independent and self-referential systems, plays a main role in Structuralism. One of these cultural units is literature, and its study can be referred to as a 'systematic science'.

Moreover, Russian Formalists insisted that literature should be studied by the means of scientific and objective methodology. Their emphasis on the scientific study of literature may be view in three ways. First, such a tendency can sometimes be taken as an effect of the nineteenth century west European turn towards classification and evolution in human sciences. Second, they sought to establish an independent and professional academic discipline regarding the study of literature and criticism. And finally, their shift towards science may also be taken as a response to the broader social, economic and political transformations that were increasingly accelerated by the influx of industry and the new technology.

Russian Formalists' lack of interest in the social aspect of language and the content of literary works, their belief in the autonomy of literature and its consequent separation from the felt realities of the society, and their tendency towards elitism and pure aesthetics made them an opposition group under the monopolistic and totalitarian regime of Stalin. The dictatorship and censorship under Stalinism, as well as the subsequent oppression of the opposite sides made the Formalists leave their homeland, be sentenced to work in concentration camps, or obliged to flee abroad.

On the other hand, the western countries and especially the United States of America, the enemies of the former Soviet Union, supported these liberal thinkers, and thus Formalism was transferred to the west and transformed as Structuralism. This transformation from Formalism to Structuralism – from Moscow, through Europe, to New
York – occurred first in Prague where Prague School was founded and promoted by Roman Jacobson in the 1920s and early 1930s.

II. Elementary Structuralism of Prague School

The elementary Structuralism of Prague School was in fact in continuity with Russian Formalism. Roman Jacobson arrived at Prague in 1919, and began to publicize his theories. One of his most celebrated essays, "The Dominant", was first delivered as a lecture in Czechoslovakia in 1935.

While early Formalism dealt with the differences between the ordinary and the poetical language, Roman Jacobson sought to focus on the formal and the linguistic aspects of the texts themselves in "The Dominant." In other words, such a treatment was to consider the text as self-contained entity. That is why the Formalists' lack of interest in the meaning of the texts was to be continued in Structuralism. Furthermore, they, Jacobson and his Czech colleague, Jan Mukarovsky, developed the idea that a literary text is a structure in which all the elements are interrelated. Each single element has a function, and the whole is indeed a structure that includes these single elements. Hans Bertens says in this regard:

> For the Structuralists, the text as a whole – not just the literary text – has a function too, and it is on the basis of the way a text functions as a whole that we can distinguish between various sorts of texts. A text’s function is determined by its orientation. (5)

The language in this approach is regarded as a coherent structure and not as embodying isolated entities. The other most important feature of such an attitude is the combination of this notion of language with the analysis of its different 'functions' in the society.
Thus, the recognition of these functions of language is considered as the basis of this structural mode of linguistic analysis.

The functions of language are *referential, expressive, conative, Phatic, metalingual* and *poetic*. For example, the referential function of language is used for the transition of information. The expressive function is activated when it is used for showing the mood of the speaker, and the conative function is used when we want to influence a person.

Analyzing the poetic function of language and also the process of child speech while exiled in Sweden in 1941, Jacobson came to this conclusion that the (poetic) language consists mostly of two vertical and horizontal aspects, namely metaphor and metonymy. He found that metaphor and metonymy are essentially different. Metaphor is the vertical axis of language where the words are selected, and metonymy is the horizontal axis in which the words are combined. (6)

The Prague School developed the basic premises of Formalism within the framework of a structural linguistic. However, the theory proposed by this school is rich and diverse. For example, Mukarovsky's attitudes towards semiology and the literary history acted as a powerful cultural force in Czechoslovakia in 1930s.

Although the Prague School contributed to the development of the Human Sciences, it was actually the Structuralism of the 1950s and 1960s in the western countries that became widespread and highly influential. Roman Jacobson played a major role in the latter one too when, in late 1940s, he began to establish his intellectual and academic career in America.
III. Structuralism

Structuralism was a continental European and North American movement in the human sciences that had a deep influence on literary theory, philosophy and man's attitude towards the world in the middle part of the twentieth century. It was factually an approach that ultimately became one of the most frequently applied methods of analyzing literature, philosophy and culture. Moreover, it was highly influential in the other fields of study such as criticism, anthropology, historiography and psychology.

The intellectual backgrounds of Structuralism the works of the members of the Prague School on one hand and the revolutionary theories of Ferdinand de Saussure (1857-1913) on the other hand. The work of Ferdinand de Saussure is generally considered as the starting point of Structuralism, which was promoted in the works of the members of the Prague School. Hence, although Roman Jacobson was a key figure in Structuralism, Saussure is regarded as the inspirational founder of this movement.

Ferdinand de Saussure was the professor of linguistics in Geneva where, between 1907 and 1911, he delivered three influential courses of lectures. These lectures were published posthumously by his students in 1915 under the title of Course in General linguistics. This book has been ever considered as the basis of Structuralism and most of the contemporary approaches to literature, philosophy and culture.

Language, in Saussure's view, is nothing but a system of signs that is governed by its internal rules. While the earlier linguists had been working only on the history and the characteristics of different languages, Saussure regarded language as a structure whose parts can only be understood in relation to each other. That is why he coined two terms, langue and parole, to point to two essentially different
notions of language: parole or speech is the individual utterance and the language used in performance, and langue or language system consists of the structure, internal rules and those principles that enable a language to function.

Concluding this part, one can say that while the earlier philologists focused on parole, Saussure, instead, put his emphasis mostly on langue. The other difference between him and the earlier philologists was that whereas they studied language through a diachronic approach, Saussure introduced the synchronic approach. In other words, the earlier philologists were concerned with the historical study of language, Saussure focused on how the elements of language are related to each other in the present. Moreover, he did not work on the use of language (i.e. parole, or speech), and was mostly concerned with the underlying structure of language (i.e. Langue). Therefore, any particular kind of parole is an expression of langue.

The last significant idea of Saussure in this regard is his especial attitude towards the 'words'. While the earlier philologists believed that the words are symbols for things in the world, Saussure argued that the words are only 'signs' that are made up of two parts: a written or spoken mark that is called signifier and the concept of and the thought behind this mark in the mind that is called signified. Whereas for the philologists the 'symbol' was equal to the 'thing', Saussure believed that the sign (i.e. the word) was nothing but a signifier that had a signified in the mind.

These new theories by Saussure met their climax when he asserted that the relation between the signifier and signified was arbitrary and conventional. Consequently, Saussure came to this revolutionary conclusion that meaning is relational and based on the difference between the signifiers. If the relation between the word and the
meaning of the word is arbitrary and conventional, the relation between the language and the reality becomes arbitrary and conventional too. Therefore, one of the philosophical implications of such an attitude is that there has always been a hidden wall between the language and the reality.

On the other hand, 'meaning', in its general sense, is neglected in Structuralism because it is believed that 'meaning' is produced by the means of the difference between and among the words. As it is known, the words are phonetically and phonemically different. Terence Hawkes, in his *Structuralism and Semiotics*, points to this example:

> It is clear that what makes any single item ‘meaningful’ is not its own particular individual quality, but the difference between this quality and that of other sounds. In fact, the differences are systematized into ‘oppositions’ which are linked in crucial relationships. Thus, in English, such a established difference between the initial sound of *tin* and the initial sound of *kin* is what enables a different ‘meaning’ to be given to each word. (7)

Thus in English the words 'pat' and 'bat' are different because the /p/ and /p/ sounds are in contrast with each other. The difference between them is that the vocal chords vibrate when saying a /b/ sound while they do not when saying a /p/ sound. Although this approach is nowadays standard in linguistics, it was revolutionary at the beginning of the twentieth century. Such a simple example acts a basis for the structural analysis of literary and philosophical issues regarding our perception of the world, the objects and the relation between them.

Accordingly, instead of focusing on the meaning of the words, the attention is here paid to the difference and relation between them. Hence, two of the most important key words in structuralist thought are 'difference' and 'relation', which can provide a new and startling
understanding of the world and reality around us. Such a perception is
in deed the description of the structures, differences and relationships:

The ‘new’ perception involved the realization that despite
appearances to the contrary the world does not consist of
independently existing objects, whose concrete features can be
perceived clearly and individually, and whose nature can be
classified accordingly … In consequence, the true nature of things
may be said to lie not in things themselves, but in the relationships
which we construct, and then perceive, between them. (Italics
mine) (8)

As it seems from the above-mentioned discussion, Structuralism
might first be taken as a valid, but dull and technical attitude towards
the world and the objects around us. Structuralism does not focus on
the life beyond or the backgrounds of different cultural units and
productions. It, rather, prefers to consider each one of them as a
structure that works by its own internal rules. Subsequently,
"Structuralism adopts a position of not seeing things from within the
cultural context of society". (9)

As a result, one can propose that Structuralism is a detached and
mechanical way of looking at the world without any attention to the
old and traditional conventions of such a looking. It is, however,
"interested rather in that which makes MEANING possible than in
meaning itself: even more crudely- in form rather than content". (10)
In other words, the Formalists' emphasis on the form of a text and
their neglect of its content is similar to the Structuralists' interest in the
structure of the system without regard for its meaning.

The structuralist thinker, after considering different cultural
products as different systems, looks at the different units of a system,
and analyzes the rules that make such a system work. This analysis
takes place without any attention to the content and meaning of those
units. In fact, it is the structure of that system, the *difference* and *relation* between its units, which is analyzed in a Structuralist perception of that system.

For example, considering language as a system, the structuralist thinker looks at the words as different units, and takes the rules between these units as the specific grammar of that language. As it is known, in different languages the grammar rules are different, as are the words, but the structure is the same in all languages. The structure of all languages is founded on those rules that put the words together, within a grammatical system, in order to make meaning.

From a Structuralist perspective, such structures that give order to the constituent units and rules of a system and make them meaningful are, in deed, produced by the human mind itself, and not by sense perception. Accordingly, a structuralist thinker agrees with this proposition that the order we perceive between the objects is not inherent in the world, but it is merely a product of our minds.

Therefore, Structuralism seeks to uncover all the structures that are found in whatever human beings feel, perceive and produce. To analyze the relations and differences between the units of a system, such as religion, philosophy and literature, is what a Structuralist critic does. Concluding this part, one can say that such systems, in a Structuralist thinker's view, are universal. In other words, the mind of man in different cultures and different historical phases has used a structuring principle in order to shape and perceive different cultural units and productions.

The structuralist thought has been applied on different cultural, philosophical and even religious activities. It has sought to study different activities as diverse as religious rites, games, literary and non-literary texts, philosophical approaches, and even the items of
popular cultures. The main objective behind these studies is to discover the deep structures through which meaning is generated within a culture.

One of the highlights of such studies is the work of the famous French anthropologist, Claude Lévi-Strauss, whose researches have been a powerful impetus to Structuralism. He analyzed different cultural phenomena including mythology, kinship between the members of a community and serving rituals in different cultures. M. H. Abrams writes:

In its early forms, as manifested by Levi-Strauss and other writers in the 1950s and 1960s, Structuralism cuts across the traditional disciplinary areas of the humanities and social sciences by undertaking to provide an objective account of all social and cultural phenomena, in a range that includes mythical narrative, literary and non-literary texts, advertisements, fashions in clothes, and patterns of social decorum. (11)

The structuralist reading of culture made by Claude Lévi-Strauss was directly influenced by Ferdinand de Saussure's structural linguistics. As a result, culture, in such a view, is a self-contained system of signification whose different items and elements are in direct relationship with each other. If the language, in a Saussurean idea, was a self-sufficient system operating by its own internal rules, Lévi-Strauss applies the same theory on culture; that is, a specific culture has a deep structure that organizes the norms of that culture through its constituent units and internal rules.

On the other hand, while the Structuralist linguistics believes in the universality of the deep structure of all languages, the Structuralist anthropology of Lévi-Strauss argues that the deep structure of all cultures is universal. Therefore, whereas the languages differ from each other only in their surface structure, the cultures, too, are
different only in their surface structure. In other words, the constituent parts of different cultures are not the same, but their internal rules are universal.

Consequently, Lévi-Strauss, as Hans Bertens says, attempted to show "how the most diverse myths, recorded in cultures that seemingly have no connection with each other, can be seen as variations upon one and the same basic pattern." (12) The different and numerous parts of a culture constitute a sign system that has a structure functioning in two levels: surface and deep structure. The surface structure is the *signifier*, and the deep structure is the *signified* behind it.

The surface structure of a specific culture includes, for example, eating customs, kinship relations, food preparations and the taboos of that culture. Each one of these cultural activities is taken as a sign. This sign is meaningful and functional only in that specific culture, which is itself a sign system. These signs also become meaningful through their *difference* from the other signs of that system.

The meaning of these different signs is nothing but the deep structure of that culture. It should also be mentioned that these signs lose their meaning outside of this sign system. That is why the cultural activity of a culture seems meaningless and loses its function in another culture.

Furthermore, the relationship between a specific cultural phenomenon and its meaning is arbitrary. This statement shows the other direct impact of Saussure's theories on Structuralist anthropology. As it was mentioned earlier in this study, Saussure believed that the relationship between the signifier and signified was arbitrary. In different cultures, this relationship is arbitrary since such a cultural activity is shaped and determined by convention.
Such and attitude when applied on myths is actually what Lévi-Strauss has ventured to discuss in his "The Structural Study of Myth." Here he is concerned with why myths from different cultures of the world seem so familiar. He attempts to give an answer to this question by emphasizing the form and structure of myths, rather than their content and meaning. He ultimately comes to this conclusion that myth itself is a language not because it has to be told in order to exist, but because it includes the same structures that a language has.

One of the revolutionary influences of the ideas of Lévi-Strauss on Structuralism was that he believed that the "binary oppositions" exists at the basis of different social structures and cultures. Lévi-Strauss, in his most popular book, *The Raw and the Cooked*, described how the primitive man built his world based on the binary oppositions, and how the structures of myths provided basic structures of understanding cultural relations. These relations appear as binary pairs or opposites, as the title of his book implies: what is 'raw' is opposed to what is 'cooked'. The raw is in association with nature, while the cooked is associated with culture.

Such oppositions form the basic structure for all ideas in a culture. They are basic to all cultural phenomena from language to cooking. In this view, meaning itself becomes relational. That is to say that the meaning of the word 'left' is known only because of its contrast with the word 'right'.

For the primitive man some creatures were dangerous, and some were not; some things were edible, and some were not; some natural phenomena were pleasant, and some were not. Moreover, man's body itself consists of binary oppositions such as right and left hand, right and left eye, right and left ear and so on. Man and woman also constitute a binary opposition biologically.
Thus, the culture of the primitive man and the language produced in such a culture are founded on binary oppositions. In other words, the structure of culture, language, myth and other sign systems is binary. Subsequently, these binary oppositions have entered religion, philosophy and literature.

On the other hand, Roman Jacobson, who met Lévi-Strauss in New York in 1940s and with whom collaborated in some intellectual Structuralist projects, had already been dealing with such binary oppositions as the vertical/horizontal axes, the vowel/consonant sounds, and the selection/combination principles of language.

Concluding this part, one can propose this point that Structuralism was trying to do for culture what grammar does for language. This new attitude towards culture, world, objects, reality and perception, which dominant in 1950s and 1960s, had its roots in Formalism and Prague School on one hand, and Saussurian linguistics on the other hand. Being influential in different academic fields in its early phase, Structuralism began to affect contemporary philosophy more than any other area.

The influence of Structuralism on contemporary philosophy was so deep that it became a distinct and independent branch of philosophical discourse, later to be challenged by Post-structuralist philosophy of the recent years. Furthermore, the highly important role played by language in contemporary philosophy has resulted in considering the "philosophy of language" as one of the main branches of contemporary philosophy.

Finally, summarizing the above-mentioned discussions, one can take the following characteristic features as the major premises of Structuralism (the bolds are the key words):
1. It emphasizes the form and structure of the object of study.
2. There is organized relation among the elements of a system.
3. The idea of the system is felt everywhere in the studies.
4. A system is a self-regulated and self-sufficient entity.
5. Each specific cultural and social activity is a sign system.
6. Signifier and signified are two different aspects of a sign.
7. All systems include codes of signification.
8. Relationship between signifier and signified is arbitrary.
9. Difference among the units of a system produces meaning.
10. The concern is with the synchronic, not the diachronic.
11. Perception of reality is formed by structure of language.
12. The structure of systems is based on binary oppositions.
13. The structure is the center of meaning, not the individual.
14. Each system consists of surface and deep structure.
15. Deep structure of the systems of one group is universal.
16. The idea of the work is replaced by the idea of the text.
17. The reader becomes more important than the author.

b. Post-structuralist Theory in Philosophy

I. Misconceptions

If one reviews the last decades of the twentieth century regarding the intellectual and academic life of the western countries, he will immediately encounters one of the most controversial philosophical movements, that is, Post-structuralist philosophy. This movement was pioneered and predominantly led by the French philosopher, Jacques
Derrida (1930-2004), who criticized the whole Structuralist bunch of works severely and in a radical way. Correspondingly, there has been an obvious change in contemporary approaches to philosophical problems because of the decisive influence of Post-structuralism.

Post-structuralism is not only one of the major branches of contemporary philosophy but also embodies a group of theories widely applied on different cultural, philosophical and literary issues. This characteristic reminds us of its interdisciplinary nature and application. As a result, Post-structuralism is not limited only to philosophy departments of the western universities; it is rather used both as a method and an approach in most of the departments of the human sciences.

Post-structuralism always tend to ask questions instead of answering them. Furthermore, it wants to show the gap between what the text claims it says and what it really says. Post-structuralism has also a doubtful look on most of the previous theories, and seeks to demonstrate that a text can have several meanings instead of one universally accepted meaning.

The other significant point in dealing with Post-structuralism is that there are several coinages and new jargons in such an approach. The reason for this complex terminology is twofold: first, there are several newly established doctrines and ideas in Post-structuralism, and, secondly, there are often attempts to redefine the previously defined terms from a new and different attitude. By using such new terms and redefining the old ones, Post-structuralism wants to challenge those beliefs that have been followed and taken as 'truth" by the western philosophy for a long period of time.
Discussing Post-structuralist philosophy, one should avoid several misunderstandings, which might have been followed in some of the sources. Since Post-structuralism refers to a wide variety of philosophical theories, there might appear several misconceptions. On the other hand, there has always been a controversy over the exact definition of the terms used in a Post-structuralist work. Hence, the first step here is to mention those misunderstandings that usually happen in such occasions.

First, sometimes and in some of the specialized books the two terms Post-structuralism and *deconstruction* are used interchangeably. In the present research, however, such an approach is not followed since it is believed that these two terms are methodologically different. Moreover, they are different regarding their usage.

While Post-structuralism is both a school of philosophy and an all-including movement in all fields of the Human Sciences, deconstruction is considered as a specific approach to the texts, motifs, and problems. In other words, Post-structuralism is an 'umbrella term' that includes several other developments, approaches and sub-categories in other field of the Humanities whereas deconstruction remains only as a strategy in approaching different texts.

The cause of such an interchangeable usage of these two terms is in this simple fact that both were, for the first time, introduced by Jacques Derrida. In other words, Derrida's Post-structuralist thought emerged simultaneously with his introduction of the term deconstruction. There are, on the other hand, some critics that believe that Post-structuralism was not introduced by Derrida for the first time, and other figures, Roland Barthes for example, were among the
pioneers of the Posy-structuralist thought (this proposition is to be more explained later in this part).

The second misunderstanding that is avoided in this study is that Post-structuralism is considered by some immature writers as to be based on Structuralism. The authentic proposition here is that Post-structuralism is not only based on Structuralism but also it is a radical critique and rejection of its main principles. Although Post-structuralism, historically, emerged after Structuralism, it is philosophically and methodologically different from, and even against to, Structuralism.

The third misunderstanding is that the term Post-structuralism nowadays is sometimes used to refer to some other theories that have been presented only after Structuralism. On the other hand, the present research does not consider all contemporary philosophical tendencies as 'Post-structuralist'. Although Post-structuralism is one of the dominant and widespread philosophical attitudes in the western universities, there are still some other movements that are opposed to it.

Finally, the last misconception in this regard is that most of the present writers and readers suppose that Post-structuralism is exactly similar to the more familiar term 'Post-modernism'. That is why sometimes Jacques Derrida, for example, is called a Post-modernist rather than a Post-structuralist. While Post-structuralism is a school of philosophy and an influential movement in the Human Sciences, Post-modernism refers to either a specific kind of contemporary arts and literature or a historical phase in some parts of the west that are experiencing a post-technological condition of life.
II. The Theory

There are two starting dates to show the onset of Post-structuralism as a main school of contemporary philosophy. The first one is the year 1970 when Roland Barthes, who was a famous Structuralist critic at that time, published his controversial book called *S/Z*. The second date is the year 1966 when Jacques Derrida delivered his revolutionary lecture, "Structure, sign and play in the discourse of the human sciences", at Johns Hopkins University in America.

As John Peck and Martin Coyle argue, "Post-structuralism begins at the point where Structuralists start to doubt the adequacy of the comprehensive theory they are imposing on culture."(13) That is to say that if Roland Barthes, for example, was a famous Structuralist critic of the 1960s, he would now call on for the limitations of Structuralism in his book, *S/Z* (to be discussed later in this chapter). On the other hand, Jacques Derrida criticizes radically the Structuralist thought in his mentioned essay. Thus, Post-structuralism, especially in the revolutionary hands of Derrida, began to emerge as a radical critique of Structuralism.

However, it should also be mentioned that the Post-structuralist thought is not limited only to these two thinkers. There are several classifications done by different scholars on this subject. For the sake of convenience it is better to refer to and accept the classification done by Richard Harland in his classic *The Philosophy of Structuralism and Post-structuralism*. Jeremy Hawthorn, the author of *Contemporary Literary Theory*, refers to this classification in this way:
The Post-Structuralists fall into three main groups: the Tel Quel (a French journal) group of Jacques Derrida, Julia Kristeva and the later Roland Barthes; Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari (authors of the influential Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia [published in French in 1972] and the later Michel Foucault; and (on his own) Jean Baudrillard. Whether Jacques Lacan is a Structuralist or a Post-Structuralist (or both) is a matter of continuing debate. (14)

The members of the first group of the above classification, that is the Tel Quel group, are discussed in the forthcoming parts of this study while also referring to an important member of the second group, Michel Foucault. The ideas presented by Jacques Lacan, too, will be explained at the end of this chapter. The Rationale for such a selection is that the main influences on the Post-structuralist thought have been the works of Jacques Derrida, Michel Faucault and Jacques Lacan.

Jacques Derrida's highly influential essay, as David Lodge says, "marks the moment at which 'Post-structuralism' as a movement begins, opposing itself to classical Structuralism as well as to traditional humanism and empiricism." (15) This essay has been considered by many writers as one of the most startling phases in the history of the thought of man. It made us aware of some truths that we have never thought of before. It was about the truth of the truth. As David Lodge puts it:

‘Structure, sign, and play in the discourse of human sciences’ in fact belongs to a historic moment in the traffic of ideas between Europe and America. It was originally a paper contributed to a conference entitled ‘The Languages of Criticism and the Sciences of Man,’ held at John Hopkins University, Baltimore, in 1966 at which the American academic world experienced at first hand the challenge of the new ideas and methodologies generated by European Structuralism. (16)
One can propose this hypothesis that different attitudes towards 'structure' and different definitions of this term play the most important role in the controversy between Structuralism and Post-structuralism. In other words, while the Structuralist consider the 'structure' to be an inseparable feature of a 'system', the Post-structuralists attempt to ask questions about the 'structurality' of structure. As Derrida alludes to Montaigne in the beginning of his essay, "we need to interpret interpretations more than to interpret things."(17) That is why he begins his essay with an ironic tone concerning the usage and definition of 'structure' by Structuralist thinkers:

Perhaps something has occurred in the history of the concept of structure that could be called an ‘event,’ if this loaded word did not entail a meaning which it is precisely the function of structural – or structuralist – thought to reduce or to suspect. Let us speak of an ‘event,’ nevertheless, and let us use quotation marks to serve as precaution. (18)

The other startling point in Derrida's critique of Structuralism that goes back to the beginning of western metaphysical philosophy is that any system necessarily posits a center. That is to say that the existence of a center in the structure of different systems has been traditionally taken to be granted. This center is a point from which everything comes, and to which everything refers or returns.

Having an objective view towards a 'system' or a 'structure' (such as culture, language, mythology, etc.), one can take them to have a conventional center. This imaginary center might be replaced by another one in different systems and from time to time. Sometimes it is the human self; sometimes it is the mind; sometimes it is the unconscious mind, and so on. The special kind of this center is
dependent on what philosophical system (or beliefs) one is dealing with:

Thus it has always been thought that the center, which is by definition unique, constituted that very thing within a structure which while governing the structure, escapes structurality. This is why classical thought concerning structure could say that the center is, paradoxically, within the structure and outside it. The center is the center of the totality, and yet, since the center does not belong to the totality (is not part of the totality), the totality has its center elsewhere. The center is not the center. The concept of centered structure – although it represents coherence itself, the condition of of the episteme as philosophy or science – is contradictorily coherent. (19)

Subsequently, it is the system that has created the center, but human beings, paradoxically, have always thought that it is the center that has created the system. Therefore, the concept of 'centered structure', as Derrida shows in his essay, loses its factuality, and from now on it is better to write "decenterd structure." Thus, the project of decentrization in Post-structuralist thought began to be applied on different systems. Hence, decentrization, as a Post-structuralist strategy, is today used not only in the human sciences but also in arts and literature.

To decentrize old systems of thought, as Derrida refers to in his essay, was a project undertaken by such revolutionary figures of the humanities as Nietzsche, Freud and Heidegger. In the following extract by the word "occurrence" Derrida means the "decentering" or "thinking the structurality of structure":

Nevertheless, if we wished to choose several ‘names,’ as indications only, and to recall those authors in whose discourse this occurrence has kept most closely to its radical formulation, we doubtless would have to cite the Nietzschean critique of metaphysics, the critique of the concepts of Being and truth, for
which were substituted the concepts of play, interpretation, and sign (sign without present truth); the Freudian critique of self-presence, that is, the critique of consciousness, of the subject, of self-identity and self-proximity or self-possession; and, more radically, the Heideggerean destruction of metaphysics, onto-theology, and the determination of Being as presence. (20)

Therefore, besides Formalism and Structuralism, the thought of Friedrich Nietzsche, as a radical critique of the European culture and metaphysics, should also be taken as the other important philosophical background in the emergence of Post-structuralism. The first chapter of the present research study was an attempt to elaborate on Nietzsche's framework of thought especially concerning his harsh criticism of the western philosophy. The next chapter of this dissertation, chapter three, aims at showing the influences of the thought of Nietzsche on the emergence of the Post-structuralist thought.

The other characteristic of the structure of different systems, as Structuralists maintained and, was the existence of binary oppositions that are of high importance for the Post-Structuralists. This means that all systems or structures are created of binary oppositions, which are opposite terms in relation to each other. Derrida argues that within these systems one part of that binary opposition is always more important than the other. In other words, one part has been always "marked" as positive, and the other part as negative. Hence, a major part of his essay is dedicated to criticize the base on which Claude Lévi-Strauss has presented his ideas.
In order to bring some obvious examples, one can point to the frequently used binary opposition, good/evil. 'Good' is what the western philosophy glorifies and it is valuable, and 'evil' has always been subordinated to 'good'. The other binary oppositions function in this way. For example, in binary oppositions such as right/left, man/woman, white/black and light/dark the first term is always valued over the second one.

As a result, one part of the binary oppositions has been always 'privileged', and the other part has been regarded as inferior to it. In other words, the privileged part of the binary oppositions has played the role of a center. According to Derrida, western metaphysics has created some various terms that function as centers. Some of these often used centers are, for example, essence, truth, beginning, end, reason and self.

The interesting remark about the above-mentioned imaginary centers is that they are considered to be self-sufficient and self-originating. This means that not only their existence but also their positive designations have been taken for granted. That is why in the western classical philosophy and its present culture, the soul, for example, is superior to the body, or reason to emotion, man to animal, and Adam to Eve.

Post-structuralism attempts to neglect and undo the binary oppositions set up by Structuralism. The privileged part of different binary oppositions, which is considered traditionally as a center, is actually a signifier in language. The superiority of one part over the other is not found in the reality. For example, if the day is superior to night, and the white to black in different sign systems and cultures, this is not the case in reality. Therefore, the reality of language is different from reality in its general sense.
Accordingly, there are things in language that are not in reality. The language is a sign system that is self-regulated and independent. The western philosophy, instead of scrutinizing the reality of the objects and the world, has been concerned only with the reality depicted in language. As a result, in such a philosophy it has been always assumed that there are some privileged terms and centers while, just ironically, they do not exist in reality.

On the other hand, there is, paradoxically, no other way to discuss reality other than through language. Structuralism made us aware of this fact that the structure of language consists of binary oppositions, but it did not grasp this point that the privileged terms in such oppositions, which function as centers, do not exist in reality. The centers are in language not in reality, and in order to discuss reality we use language. This is one of the most frequent, and often mis-used, paradoxes that Post-structuralism is concerned with.

From Derrida's point of view, the mentioned "privileged" centers in language refer to those concepts in the mind of man that have been invented because of man's essential attitude towards, and his belief, in the centered structures of different sign systems. Therefore, these terms, which are available in language and, thus, are 'signifier', do actually refer to a concept in the mind and not an object in reality. Hence, Derrida calls them "transcendental signified".

A **transcendental signified** is "an external point of reference upon which one may build a concept or philosophy." (21) It is the ultimate source of meaning, which cannot be shown by a definite signifier. Derrida believes that the whole history of western metaphysics from Plato to the present time has been trying to search for these transcendental signifieds. These terms have always provided the ultimate meaning. They have been regarded as 'self-reflective'. They
refer to and reflect nothing but themselves while they do not exist in reality.

Post-structuralism refers to the works of those thinkers who, in a radical and revolutionary way, did not consider the *transcendental signifieds* as 'centers' of meaning. That is to say that the ideas of these thinkers were not part of the dominant system of their time. They did not follow the already existing centers of meaning. That is why Derrida talks about Nietzsche, Freud and Heidegger in the above extract of his essay.

A transcendental signified is not like the other signifieds since its meaning originates with itself. It creates a center of meaning, and makes those people who believe in them construct their opinion towards reality based on these centers of truth. As Derrida argues there has always been a tendency towards the centers.

The desire for the center in western philosophy is called *logocentrism* by Derrida. 'Logos,' originally Greek, means word, thought or concept; however, what Derrida is criticizing is the way in which western philosophy has sought to make 'meaning' seem unified, coherent and complete and fixed. *Logocentrism* is also defined as "the belief that there is an ultimate reality or center of truth that can serve as the basis for all our thoughts and actions". (22)

The logocentrist characteristic of western philosophy has led to consider the 'centered' part of a binary opposition seem always superior to the other part, which consequently becomes 'decentered'. Furthermore, there is an opposing center for each center. The centered part of a binary opposition is traditionally *privileged* whereas the decentered part has always been *unprivileged*. 
It is the kind of the system that determines which part to be the center and which one to be the margin. For example, *God* was the centered part in *God/man* binary opposition of the Catholicism of Middle Ages while *man* became the centered part in the Humanism of the Renaissance. Moreover, if *reason* was the center in *reason/emotion* opposition of the philosophical Deism of the eighteenth century, *emotion* became the center of the same binary opposition in the Neo-Platonic ideas of the Romantic Age in the latter part of the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth century.

One the binary oppositions that plays a main role in Derrida's Post-structuralist theories is *speech/writing* opposition. In his famous book, *Of Grammatology* (1967), Derrida believes that speech is always seen as more important than writing. Although this example is not as clear as the *good/evil* instance, it really happens in linguistic theories where speech is considered as the primary form of language, and writing is taken only as the transcription of speech.

Such a doctrine, that is, the superiority of speech over writing, is called *phonocentrism* by Derrida. The speaker's words are supposed to be more important than his writing because the spoken words imply *presence* while writing, which is a copy of speech, implies *absence*. Phonocentrism, thus, leads to the creation of another binary opposition, *presence/absence*.

Phonocentrism has a logocentrist characteristic; in other words, the speech (implying presence) is superior to writing (implying absence) in western thought. Therefore, presence is considered to be superior to absence. Accordingly, Derrida, under the influence of Heidegger, uses the term *metaphysics of presence*. It is a term that embodies the previous terms and doctrines such as logocentrism, phonocentrism
and the conventional operation of the binary oppositions, which makes one part the 'center', and the other part the 'decentered'.

III. Characteristic Features and Influences

Post-structuralism, as a contemporary school of philosophy, has several characteristic features. These particularities have been so influential that they are nowadays inseparable parts of the other fields of study in the humanities. In other words, one can argue that most of the human sciences of the present time follow the Post-structuralist approach in their methodology.

One of the main features of Post-structuralism is its interest in a process of reading that results in a new interpretation. If we change the position of the two constituent parts of an opposition, the set of meaning of that system changes too. While the meaning of some certain texts seems to be fixed, Post-structuralism is interested in different meanings of a text or a sign system.

Post-structuralism is, thus, in close affinity with Hermeneutics, the science of interpretation. Contemporary Hermeneutics, under the direct influence of Post-structuralism, does not consider meaning to be fixed and absolute because if we take the unprivileged part of a binary opposition to be privileged, the meaning of the text changes.

Furthermore, the major role played by the reader as compared to the role of the text results in a different interpretation of the text. In other words, the traditional text/reader opposition meant that there was one text and several readers of this text would interpret it in one way. In Post-structuralism, however, each reader has his/her way of understanding the text. Therefore, the meaning of the text is no longer
fixed. Therefore, instead of the traditional motif of 'one interpretation for all,' it is the new motif of 'different interpretations for one man' that now works in Hermeneutics.

The reader-response approach of contemporary literary criticism is another good example to show the influence of Post-structuralism in other fields of study. This approach, which has its roots in the phenomenology of Edmund Husserl, takes the text to be a dead object that is supposed to become alive by the reader. The reader's response to the text is here regarded to be more important of the author's intention of writing the text.

On the other hand, the superiority of the reader to the text in Post-structuralism makes this school of philosophy a fore-runner of democracy in the political discourses. Whereas Structuralism believed that it was language that spoke us, Post-structuralism maintains that it is 'we' that speak language. In other words, man can have his own spectacular way of reading different phenomena while, previously, the centers have been imposed on him by the system.

As a result, Post-structuralism has become highly influential in the departments of politics in the western universities. For example, the west/east or subject/object oppositions that were once widespread in the western academies tend to lose their reliability in contemporary political discourses. The work of Edward Said (1935-2003) concerning post-colonial literature, imperialism and western Orientalism is a good example in this regard. While Orientalism was considered traditionally as the western man's love to know the East, it was redefined by Said as a "western style for dominating, restructuring, and having authority over the Orient." (23)
In Post-structuralist view, the traditional centered part of a binary opposition is itself a transcendental signified, and its decentrization leads to different results. For example, the minorities have always been unprivileged in the history, and the history has been often narrated from the viewpoint of the majority groups. Based on a Post-structuralist approach, a new historiography that places the minority groups of a nation as the 'center,' has emerged in recent years that criticizes the old majority/minority opposition. The works by Michel Foucault, especially *Madness and Civilization* (1965) and *History of Sexuality* (1984), are good examples in this regard.

The other felt and current influence of the Post-structuralist thought is in the field of women studies. Here, as it is known, the conventional man/woman opposition is radically rejected by the Feminist critics. Hence, Feminism is one of those movements that owes much to the Post-structuralists' interest in making the traditional hierarchy of binary oppositions reversed. The birth of women studies, as a new academic field, has been almost simultaneous with the rise of Post-structuralism.

Another characteristic feature of Post-structuralism is, as M.H. Abrams says, "the primacy of theory." (24) The theory is the central and dominant issue in Post-structuralism, and it becomes increasingly felt in the other human sciences too. This feature and its corresponding influence have led the human sciences to enjoy a large number of theories as compared to the first half of the previous century.

An important point about these theories is that they avoid being 'general' and 'mechanical' in the sense that they attempt not to be positivistic. Criticizing Positivism harshly, Post-structuralism tries to be descriptive rather than prescriptive. That is why Post-structuralism
has become truly 'specialized' at the present time. The complexity of a number of Post-structuralist theories in different human sciences shocks even the mature readers of these texts.

The other salient feature in the works of Post-structuralists is that they are against to those attitudes towards man, the author or, generally, the 'subject' that were usually presented by what they call "humanism". According to this traditional view, the author was regarded as having a coherent and fixed identity whose purposefulness and intention determined the meaning and theme of his work. Man, in this view, was regarded as the true subject of his deeds; a man who knows what he is doing and why; a man who determines his own way of life.

The rejection of this idea on the human subject is also called the decentering of the subject. In other words, man is not here conceived of as having a unified and fixed identity. His identity is, on the contrary, 'subject' to many other factors (this characteristic is discussed fully at the end of this chapter).

Another feature of Post-structuralist thought is its interest in and concern with the term 'discourse'. It has become a prominent term in Post-structuralism, and its meaning is not limited only to a conversational passage or a speech. The term discourse, in Post-structuralism, shows "the superficiality of the boundaries between literary and non-literary modes of signification." (25) This term is of far significance in the works of Michel Foucault, who has dealt with different social discourses in relation to 'power'(to be explained in details in the forthcoming pages).
B. Jacques Derrida and Deconstruction

Algerian-born French philosopher and critic, Jacques Derrida (1930-2004), has had a powerful influence on both academic and intellectual life of the last decades of the twentieth century. A large number of books, essays and dissertations has been written on his revolutionary ideas and controversial works. The name Jacques Derrida reminds almost each academician of the humanities of the terms Post-structuralism and deconstruction.

Deconstruction, better defined as a strategy or approach rather than a school of philosophy, is itself one of the sub-categories of a much broader philosophical school, that is, Post-structuralism. It is also in close affinity between Post-modernism, which can be taken as a rejection of, and challenge to, the truth and the pragmatism of the modern systems of social, political and political discourses of the first half of the twentieth century. It is also a radical critique of those ways and doctrines through which we have tried to know, describe and understand ourselves.

Derrida taught philosophy in the Ecole Normale du Superieure in Paris for more than twenty years, published several philosophical essays in Tel Quel in 1960s, and finally became the Professor of Philosophy, French and Comparative Literature at the University of California. He was also awarded several honorary doctoral degrees of philosophy by different universities, Cambridge University being one of them.

Jacque Derrida was also apolitical activist-theorist. Especially in the last decades of his life he supported a large number of political cases. Being an active anti-apartheid regarding the rights of South African people, he also fought for the rights of Algerian immigrants in France and the Czhech dissidents. His political sympathies, however, were in
accordance with his approach of encountering any other systems and texts, that is to say, his deconstructive approach. (26)

Perhaps one of the best definitions of Deconstruction is that it is a theory of reading that aims at deconstructing the binary logic of different texts and systems. Such logic, as explained fully earlier in the present study, believes in the centrality of some transcendental signifieds on one hand and the superiority of one part of the binary oppositions on the other hand. Thus, deconstruction is best seen as a strategy for textual analysis, which has been also applied in other disciplines.

Derrida has criticized Plato, Jean Jacques Rousseau, Kant and Claude Lévi-Strauss from his deconstructive approach. He also argues that every sign system that follows the accepted hierarchy of the binary oppositions can be deconstructed. Thus, as he has also mentioned in one of his interviews, his own philosophical method can also be re-deconstructed merely because he, too, uses a sign system, that is French language, which is based on the accepted and old logic of the function of binary oppositions.

Deconstruction was mainly presented in Derrida's highly influential books that were published in the late 1960s and early 1970s. These books were Of Grammatology, Writing and Difference, Speech and Phenomena, Margins of Philosophy and Dissemination. As far this new approach or theory of analysis is concerned, the first three titles, which were all published in the same year, that is 1967, are considered to embody the first ideas that introduced deconstruction to the intellectual and academic audience of the west.

Derrida began to present his ideas on deconstruction by criticizing severely the structural linguistics of Ferdinand De Saussure and the structural theories of Claude Lévi-Strauss. In other words, although
Derrida's favorite terms are here such terms as structure, sign system, language, binary oppositions and difference (the form of the last one, that is difference, is to change in Derrida's thought), his theory appears to criticize the function and operation of these term. Therefore, although they have been explained fully earlier in the present research study, a quick hint to them seems necessary:

1. The structurally-based and systematized nature of language
2. The existence of binary pairs in different systems
3. The arbitrariness and conventionality of signs
4. The universality of the rules in systems of one group
5. The existence of transcendent signifieds in language
6. A part of the pairs being privileged, the other unprivileged
7. The centered parts of oppositions that act as centers
8. Reason, truth, essence and self being some frequent centers
9. The logocentrism and phonocentrism of western philosophy
10. Dominant metaphysics of presence in western philosophy

Deconstruction first put its emphasis on this fact that 'speech' has always been privileged over 'writing' from Platonic and Aristotelian philosophy onwards to the present day. Such a phonocentrism is based on the old and accepted hierarchy that speech is superior to writing. Derrida, on the other hand, wants to show how fragile the basis for establishment of such hierarchies is.

If we consider the privileged part of some of the binary oppositions to be a transcendental signified, it has been subject to several changes throughout the history of the west. Subsequently, the privileged part has become marginalized and unprivileged in some historical phases.
For example, if the city was the privileged part in the city/village opposition of the Neo-classical literature of the eighteenth century, the village became the centered in the same opposition in the Romantic literature of the nineteenth century. In other words, the city/village opposition is reversed and becomes village/city opposition.

The relationship between the elements in the accepted hierarchy of all the binary oppositions can become unstable like the above example. Derrida uses the term *supplement* in order to show such an unstable relationship between the two parts of a binary opposition. The English translator of Derrida's essay, 'Structure, sign and play in the discourse of the human sciences', believes that Derrida intentionally uses the term supplement. Alan Bass argues that "this double sense of supplement – to supply something which is missing, or to supply something additional – is at the center of Derrida's deconstruction of traditional linguistics in *De la grammatologie.*" (27)

As it was mentioned earlier in this study, one of the highly significant binary oppositions for Derrida is the speech/writing opposition. There is a detailed and persuasive discussion on the possibility and necessity of the reversal of hierarchy of speech/writing opposition in his *Of Grammatology* (1967). Consequently, he introduces the tem 'arch-writing' in order to point to that kind of writing which includes both spoken language and writing.

In the next step, Derrida elaborates on the similarities between the spoken language and writing. While Saussure, in his *Course in General Linguistics* (1915), argued that the relationship between the signifier (here the written sign) and the signified was arbitrary and conventional, Derrida now asks about the kind of relationship between, for instance, the spoken word *dog* and concept in the mind.
of man. He comes to this conclusion that this relationship is arbitrary too.

Because of this hidden similarity between the written sign (i.e. the written word) and the spoken voice (i.e. the spoken word) speech has, and should have, no superiority over writing. That is why, writing becomes privileged in Derrida's arch-writing formula, and speech becomes decentered, marginal and accordingly unprivileged. Thus, in speech/writing opposition, writing supplements speech and ultimately takes the place of speech, that is, arch-writing. Moreover, in other binary oppositions this supplementation can occur, and the result of such a reversal seems new, interesting, and sometimes threatening to most people.

One of the implications of this attitude is that no term can be absolute, and the seemingly absolute terms can become decentered. Absolutism in all its senses is, therefore, rejected by deconstruction. If absolutism is taken as a basic feature of fundamentalism, deconstruction thus becomes an anti-fundamentalist activity. The absolutism found in some philosophical, religious and political systems is replaced by its contrast, which is relativism. Hence, relativity becomes one of the key words of deconstruction.

As mentioned above, deconstruction is against Absolutism, and each seemingly absolute term can be decentered because of the belief in relativism. Subsequently, the meaning of a word is not fixed and stable. That is why deconstruction comes close to an approach in which there are different meanings for a given text.

Relativity is found in a system that its constituent parts have only a 'relational' relationship with each other. The concept of 'relational' immediately brings to mind our earlier discussion of the Structuralism as a school that believes in the organized relation among the different
units of a sign system. Furthermore, as mentioned earlier in this research, Structuralists argued that it was only the *differenc* among the parts of a system that ultimate produce meaning.

Jacques Derrida, on the other hand, uses the Structuralist concept of difference in a new way. He has coined a new term, *differance*, in order to point to several characteristics of both this new term and deconstruction. To discuss the several implications of and reasons for this coinage can pave the way for a better understanding of deconstruction.

First, this word is derived from the French word, *differer*, which means both *to differ* and *to defer*. This means that, firstly, a signifier, that is a word, is *different* from the other one, and this characteristic produces meaning, and, secondly, the meaning of each word always *defers*. Whereas the first connotation of this new term, *to differ*, is familiar since it is a Structuralist concept that has been explained earlier in this chapter, the second connotation, *to defer*, needs more explanation.

The second connotation of *differance* means that the meaning of a word is always deferred because, firstly, there is no fixed meaning, and, secondly, the meaning of a word is defined through other words, and these other different words are also defined by some other words, and so the chain continues. Thus, the meaning is always deferred.

Accordingly, Derrida talks about the 'free play of signifiers'. Through this phase he wants to show that meaning is nothing but a long chain the rings of which are the words. In other words, the meaning of each signifier is understood through another signifier, and this play continues. As a result, the production of meaning is a "free play of signifiers."
The other reason for coining the term *differance* is that the French pronunciation of the two terms, the French *difference* and the newly coined *differance*, is the same. In other words, *differance*, exists in writing, but, just ironically, is not found in speech. This last statement once more supports Derrida's attitude that writing can be privileged over speech.

Therefore, because of the *different* and *deferred* characteristic of meaning as well as the relativism in the air it becomes useless to search for the fixed meaning of a 'text'. Moreover, the intention of the author of having written the 'work' loses its importance in this kind of analysis. The focus here is on the system itself and not our traditional perception of it.

Post-structuralism in general and deconstruction in particular tend to use the word *text* frequently and as a substitute for the more conventional *work*. The reason is that *work* implies the ideas of an author and his authorial control while, as mentioned before, deconstruction does not focus on the intention of the author. Roland Barthes' "The Death of the Author," and Michel Foucault's "What Is an Author?" are good examples to show Post-structuralists's rejection of this term.

Furthermore, whereas the meaning of *work* is usually limited to *literary work*, the word *text*, in contemporary theoretical writing, is used to designate not only all forms of writing but also other sign systems like melodies, paintings, advertisements and rituals. Thus, the world itself, as a system, is considered as a text.

Such a proposition leads to another Post-structural motif, which is called *linguistic world*. This means that the structure of the world is taken to be like the structure of language. As a result, deconstruction
is not only a theory of textual analysis but also a philosophical theory for understanding the world.

Correspondingly, deconstruction can also be defined as a new philosophical approach that criticizes the previous philosophical approaches, especially the ways they have tried to understand the world, the man and the concepts. The originally criticized philosophical school by deconstruction was western metaphysics.

Identifying the binary oppositions of the western metaphysics, a deconstructive philosopher shows the preconceived assumptions upon which western philosophy has established its interpretation of the world. While the hierarchy upon which western metaphysics has based its interpretations is reversed, other levels of meaning come to existence that were never thought of before. It is by the means of such an approach that man can experience other new levels of interpretation.

Finally, although there is no definite methodology to apply deconstructive approach on different texts, the major principles are clear in such readings. However, one should be careful while applying a deconstructive approach because he might ultimately come up with some conclusions and terms that deconstruction is basically against to.

One of the widely accepted methods for having a deconstructive analysis has been used by Charles E. Bressler:

On first glance, a deconstructionist reading strategy may appear to be linear – that is, having a clearly delineated beginning, middle, and end. If this is so, then to apply this strategy to a text, we must (1) discover the binary operations that govern a text, (2) comment on the values, concepts, and ideas behind these operations, (3) reverse these present binary operations, (4) dismantle previously held worldviews, (5) accept the possibility of various levels of a text based on the new binary inversions, and (6) allow the meaning to be undecidable … In addition, we may never declare such a reading to be complete or finished, for the process of meaning is ongoing. (28)
C. Michel Foucault and *Discourse*

Michel Foucault (1926-1984) has been called by different writers and critics as philosopher, historiographer, theorist, historian of ideas, and social scientist. Such a wide range of descriptions shows his new and interdisciplinary areas of research. When he died in 1984, he was Professor of the Systems of Thought at College de France in Paris, a title that better displays his unique achievements in the human sciences.

Michel Foucault was initially considered as a Structuralist, but his later works are usually characterized as Post-structuralistic. Rejecting such labels, he has said: "I am not a Structuralist, I have never been so." (29) One of the reasons for such complexity is that he was simultaneously influenced by opposing philosophical ideas, and often attempted to mingle different fields of study.

A good example to show the above characteristic in his works is to point to his readings of both Marx and Nietzsche. "Though Foucault's focus on the historical and institutional contexts of discourse has inspired many critics on the intellectual left," says David Lodge, "his Nietzschean insistence on the struggle for power as the ultimate determinant of all human action is not encouraging to progressive political philosophies.'(30) Therefore, he is a Structuralist in the sense that he treats different systems of thought in the Saussurean way of approaching 'langue,' and a Post-structuralist who applies a Nietzschean way of interpreting those systems. Moreover, on the contrary, he is a Leftist both because he is under the impact of Marx, and he has "inspired many critics on the intellectual left."
One can propose this point that Foucault was equally under the influence of Marx, Freud and Nietzsche. Although he was influenced by Marx, but this impact was not in a way to cover his whole intellectual project. In other words, Foucault did not take the road taken by, for example, Louis Althusser who dedicated his entire life to Marxism.

Furthermore, although he was interested in Freudian psychology, he never put his most emphasis on the psychological theories. That is to say that he was not like, for example, Jacques Lacan who established his psychoanalytical worldview on Freudian theories. Foucault, however, refers to Freudian theories only as a complement to his own ideas.

On the other hand, while creating a link between himself and Nietzsche, Foucault has some anti-Nietzschean attitudes. For example, whereas Nietzsche referred to the death of God, Foucault comes to a contradictory conclusion since he believes that the enemy of God, who is man, is dead. Hence, this last example can be called a 'deconstructive' approach to Nietzsche's 'elementary deconstructive' attitudes.

As it was mentioned above, Foucault's different fields of interest includes a wide variety of subjects. 'Episteme,' 'discourse,' 'power,' 'new history,' 'genealogy,' 'archaeology,' and even 'sexuality' and 'madness' are among those apparently distinct terms and subjects that Foucault is concerned with. In the present study, however, attempt is made to elaborate on only some of the above terms such as 'episteme,' 'discourse,' and 'power.' The rationale for this selection is that one of the main objectives behind this research is to show the influence of the thought of Fredrich Nietzsche on Michel Foucault.
Although the term 'episteme' may seem a familiar term that brings to mind the concept of 'epistemology,' it has a somewhat new definition on contemporary philosophical and theoretical writing. This term was coined by Foucault based on the form of a term coined by Claude Lévi-Strauss. Strauss coined the term 'mytheme' to point to the smallest constituent part of a myth. One of the reasons for such a coinage by Lévi-Strauss was that he attempted to look at 'myth' as a system whose constituent units can be called 'mytheme.'

Accordingly, Foucault coined the term 'episteme' to refer to the smallest unit of knowledge and thought of man. In other words, Foucault considered different thoughts of man as different sign systems that should be interpreted in relation to each other. That is why he was the Professor of the Systems of Thought, a rather new field of study. This title is a Structuralist usage of the more familiar term 'historian of ideas.'

It is interesting to mention that some other new coinages based on the same form have nowadays emerged in different theoretical discussions. For example, 'grapheme,' is one of these new terms that means the smallest unit of a writing system. The other example is 'ideologeme,' which is the smallest unit of an ideology.

Therefore, working on the history, functions and characteristics of different thought systems of the west in a new way, Foucault is obliged to coin, and sometimes redefine, such terms as episteme, discourse and power. These terms are in close relationship with each other. Moreover, dealing with one of these terms is not possible without referring to the other one.

For example, the following definition of the term 'episteme' shows that it is directly related to another term, 'discursive practice,' which is a practice created and supervised by a certain 'discourse': " It is a
term[...] to indicate the totality of relations and laws of transformation uniting all discursive practices at any moment of time." (31) Thus, to define the term 'discourse' in its new sense and application seems here almost inevitable.

The term *discourse* has particular meanings which are not usually associated with writing or language. (32) Whereas the word *language* contains assumptions about the world and meaning that can be described as 'commonsensical,' the term *discourse* represents a radical alternative to our general and ordinary ideas on such issues as the world and meaning. In other words, we never explore or question the relationships between language, meaning and the world because we assume they just 'exist.' The term discourse, however, locates meaning and our knowledge of the world *in* language.

In Foucault's work, discourse refers to systems of values, statements and texts that define the conditions of possibility for an object of study, and which form a kind of official language. If we take a discourse to a 'system of value,' its constituent parts are called 'episteme.' Thus, another definition of 'episteme' is that it is the smallest unit of a discourse.

In order to clarify Foucault's concept of discourse in a more understandable way a tangible example is provided here. Psychiatry is an official language or discourse in the sense that it consists of a number of texts, statements, relationships and authorities. All of these parts work together in to form the system of psychiatric practice. The texts that form such a discourse are limited only to psychiatric books; that is to say, the discourse of psychiatry may be formed by other disciplines and genres like literature, science and other medical institutions. Hence, "what defines the discourse as a discourse is the extent of their regularity and dispersion through society." (33)
Considering the large number of discourses in a society and the consequent large number of centers and truths, one can say that language is no longer a form of social control in which 'truth' becomes absolute. On the contrary, it is within language that 'truth' becomes relative and unstable. As Foucault writes:

Western history cannot be dissociated from the way ‘truth’ is produced and inscribes its effects. We live in a society which to a large extent marches in time with truth – what I mean by that is that ours is a society which produces and circulates discourse with a truth function, discourse which passes for the truth and holds specific powers. (34)

The above quotation draws our attention not only to the wide range of discourses in a society, but also to the high influences of such discourses. We may be able to identify the discourses of the medical, scientific and legal institutions, but we are unaware of the power they have in our live.

Discourse function in alliance with or in opposition to each other. A good example to demonstrate this phenomenon is the nineteenth century conflict between the religious and scientific discourses. The church was the formal institution for the religious discourse, and the scientific departments of the universities, especially geology and biology, were the official institutions for the scientific discourse.

Moreover, there are some kinds of discourses that are not formally institutionalized. The obvious examples here are the discourses of race and gender that, throughout history, have operated in a way that privilege some groups and neglect other groups. Patriarchism, for example, was a discourse without a formal and official institution that Feminism, at the present time, as a discourse with a formal institution, such as various women studied centers, stands opposing to it.
Discourse is directly related to the power relations it generates or governs. Thus, discussing the relationship between discourse and power is an important step in understanding Foucault's theories. The term power plays a major role in Foucault's attempts to construct some neglected parts of the history of the west in the past four centuries.

As one of the followers of Foucault argues, power usually refers to "the relations of domination and resistance which saturate our social, political and cultural relations". (35) Power is felt concretely in the different relations among the different members of a society. Thus, the term ‘power relations’ is frequently used in Foucault's works.

Although Foucault borrowed the term power from Nietzsche, he uses it in a different context. In Nietzsche's idea, the noble have the capacity to overcome and to rise above the circumstances determined for them. While such an admiration for the "will to power" centers on a particular class or particular individuals in Nietzsche's thought, Foucault argues that power is not at the control of individual 'subjects' or groups.

Foucault's reaction to the structural division of the political discourse after 1968 into Right and Left caused him to refer to power in this way:

What makes power hold good, what makes it accepted is simply the fact it doesn’t only weigh on us a force that says no, but that it traverses and produces things, it induces pleasure, forms, knowledge, produces discourse. (36)

Foucault's analysis of power relations is different from that of Marxist historians. In Foucault's opinion, no one individual, group, class or sex is responsible for the repressions within a society. The
Marxist historians, on the other hand, the repressions in a society are conducted in the interests of the bourgeois order.

"Power," Foucault writes, "is everywhere; not because it embraces everything, but because it comes from everywhere." (37) Accordingly, Stephan Greenblatt, the American New Historian and follower of Foucault, believes that "the production of subversion is the very condition of power." (38) Therefore, power needs to have subversion otherwise it would be without opportunity to justify itself, and to make itself visible as 'power'.

Discourse, thus, becomes both the generator and governor of power. The generator of power in a discourse is its rules and centers, and the governor of power is its epistemes. To react to the epistemes of a discourse in a radical and revolutionary way is actually to react against that discourse. Such a system of thought that acts in this way is marginalized and neglected in that specific period of time. However, it may become central and effective once it comes out of its historical phase.

Foucault wrote book-length histories of madness, clinical medicine, human sciences, prison, and sexuality. If we have a keen eye regarding these areas, we can see a similarity among them: all are minority discourses. Foucault was much interested in the analysis of the 'condition' of the minority discourses.

Minority groups, in different medical, social, and philosophical discourses, have been neglected in the historiography of the west. They have been marginalized by the dominant and major discourses. On the contrary, they become central in Foucault's focus on history.

Foucault re-reads the last four centuries of the west based on such a new methodology. This "new history" that Foucault mentions in the 'introduction' to his *The Archaeology of Knowledge* (1972) emerges
from the history of ideas, the history of science, of philosophy, of thought, and not from mere history. Such a new historiography is involved in difference, relation, and transformation.

Foucault's works on history can be divided into several parts. Like Nietzsche, he wrote some 'genealogies,' and had a deep concern for 'archaeologies.' The other part is what he called 'problematizations.' As Thomas Flynn points out:

All of Foucault’s major works are histories of a sort, which is enough to make him a historian of a sort … His early works, the ones that earned him his reputation, were called “archaeologies,” the subsequent ones “genealogies,” and the volumes on the history of sexuality that appeared at the time of his death he called “problematizations.” (39)

Genealogy, for Foucault, is different from history because it searches for the hidden structures of regulation and relation. In an essay on Nietzsche, Foucault argues that genealogy is "a method of modern social and cultural practices of events outside of any monotonous finality." (40) Such a method, according to him, discusses the differences and discrepancies within the hidden structures.

Whereas 'genealogy' is involved in the tracing of historical transformations, 'archaeology' is concerned with seeking out the origins. Archaeology, in Foucault's view, is the exploration into the ideological order of the systems of thought. Moreover, archaeology examines the 'archive' by which Foucault means "a system that establishes statements as events and as things." (41)

Finally, 'problematization' is the term Foucault chose for his last works which were published shortly before his death. This term, as Thomas Flynn writes, means "the ensemble of discourses and non-
discursive practices that makes something enter into the play of the true and the false, and constitutes it an object of thought." (42) It was in this last stage that Foucault's attention was paid to the question of 'subjectivation'. This is a process in and by which an individual becomes a subject of sexuality.

Summarizing this part, one can deduce this point that Foucault's viewpoint and methodology in the field of history of ideas are considered as one of the highlights of both Structuralist and Post-structuralist thought. His ideas are Structuralistic in the sense that he explains the systems of thought and knowledge. They are, however, Post-structuralistic because he reverses the accepted and conventional hierarchies of the dominant discourses.

The term discourse plays such a main role in Foucault's works that the 'individual' loses his importance and function in his theories. As mentioned earlier in the present study, he analyzes the position, condition and characteristics of the minority groups of different scientific, philosophical and social discourses. Hence, Emphasizing the discourses, institutions, and systems, he appears to be disinterested in the individual contributions or the authorial control.

Foucault's rejection of the doctrine of the 'authorial control' is evident in his essay "What is an author?" Instead of asking "who is an author?", Foucault here tries to shock his readers by implying that the old and powerful concept of 'the author' is now shattered. As David Lodge writes:

Foucault shows that the idea of the author, which we tend to take for granted, as a timeless, irreducible category, is, rather, a ‘function’ of discourse which has changed in the course of history. For example, whereas before the Renaissance the attribution of a text to an author was more important in science than in philosophy and literature, the reverse is true in the area of humanism and capitalism. (43)
D. Other Main Post-structuralist Figures

a. Roland Barthes (1915-1980)

Roland Barthes was the most influential thinker and critic of the intellectual scene of the 1960s in France. If Jean Paul Sartre was the most brilliant thinker and writer of the France in the 1940s and 1950s, it was Roland Barthes who was at times referred to, in the 1960s and 1970s, as the most famous thinker and critic. His spectacular ideas and intellectual projects made him a serious practitioner of Structuralism, and ultimately a fore-runner of the Post-structuralist thought.

Roland Barthes, first an instructor in the Practical School of High Studies, was, at the time of his death, Professor of Literary Semiology at College de France in Paris. His title of teaching in university shows both his inventive theories and his high influence on French academies. He was also a practical theorist who tended towards philosophical theorizing when writing practical literary criticism on the works of famous French writers.

Although the influence of the philosophical ideas of Jean Paul Sartre is evident in his first publications such as Writing Degree Zero (1953), he immediately freed himself from such influence. He began to publish some books that were new and inventive. Mythologies (1957) is a good example to show Barthes's creative mind.

He refers to the everyday events and the popular culture of French people in the above-mentioned book. But, what is appealing concerning this book is its especial look at different manifestations of the popular culture, which have become the mythologies of the present time. In other words, he, keenly, analyzes that process in which a modern myth is produced, and how it is respected.
The seemingly important phenomena of the everyday life of a modern man as well as the ordinary, symbolic, but respected objects in such a life are described and analyzed. Barthes attempts to show how a very ordinary object or material can take the form of a symbolic and respected object in modern times. Hence, the title of his book really means modern mythologies, which is an attempt to analyze modern culture. That is why he is usually referred to as a thinker whose works paved the way for the emergence of what is nowadays called 'Cultural Studies'. (44)

The original approach of the mentioned book is structuralistic. Barthes applies a structural approach to the analysis of culture as a sign system. Then, he tries to identify the differences between different cultural activities. These cultural events are taken apart from each other in order to recognize the constituent units, or, better to say, the different signs of their structure.

Accordingly, the next step is to know how such units become meaningful by the way of their difference from the other signs of the system. For example, a boxer does not make personal statements about different symbolic acts he goes through. These acts are really some certain signs that become meaningful in the underlying structure of such activities.

*Semiology*, a term first coined by Saussure, and the more familiar semiotics are the terms used for such analyses that are based on cultural structuralism. This field of study is now highly influential in our attitudes on the function of culture. Thus, one encounters various cultural theories with different bases and methods in "Cultural Studies".
One of the interesting and new cultural phenomena of the west, which is also discussed by Barthes in his book, is fashion in its general sense. This means that set of conventional and contextually meaningful signs of eating, dressing, food preparation and even speaking on different occasions and by different people. Each one of our cultural activities is a sign that takes it meaning from its difference from the other signs of that system, and it is meaningful only in a certain context.

Although this book was a success, it was another phenomenon that made Barthes famous in the academic, literary and even political discourses of the late 1960s and early 1970s. He had a quarrel with a traditional professor at Sorbonne University named Raymond Picard. This quarrel first introduced him as the pioneer of the 'new criticism' of those days. This mode of criticism immediately became a widespread movement against the traditional professors. It was also supported by the prominent man of letters of that time. This movement became ultimately associated with the radical left-wing politics of the early 1970s.

Being first a Structuralist as manifested in his *Mythologies*, he began to shift his interest from the analysis of the signs and rules of the system to some Post-structural concerns such as the process of the production of meaning and the role of the reader in producing meaning. This characteristic is evident in two of his revolutionary works (revolutionary in the sense that they helped Structuralism move towards Post-structuralism). The essay entitled "The death of the author," written in 1968, and the book called *S/Z (1970)* are considered to be Roland Barthes's first Post-structuralist works.
S/Z, which is Barthes's unique work of theory and criticism, was published when Structuralism began to criticize itself, and became Post-structuralism. As John Peck and Martin Coyle have mentioned, this book is the border between these two schools of thought:

Reading everything as a construct and order system, Structuralism thus eventually turns itself as yet another artificial ordering system. This is the point at which Structuralism becomes Post-Structuralism, a line probably first crossed in 1970 by Roland Barthes in his S/Z. (45)

It was for the first time in this book the highly influential terms of writerly and readerly texts were presented. He wanted to draw a distinction between two different kinds of texts. The readerly text is one that we passively consume it seems to offer us a real world of characters and events. The writerly text, however, forces us to produce its meaning rather than consume it. Nietzsche's works, for example, are considered as writerly texts from this point of view because they are active and rich texts that the reader can re-create their meanings.

Barthes's essay, "The death of the author," was also an attempt to focus on the production of meaning as well as to criticize the old concept of the author. As David Lodge has argued, "Barthes proclaimed that 'the birth of the reader must be at the cost of the death of the Author' – an assertion [...] that has remained one of the most controversial tenets of Post-structuralism." (46) Furthermore, the title of the essay reminds us of another influential essay by Michel Foucault, "What is an author?"

Both essays seek to criticize the traditional belief in the idea of the 'author' and the authorial control. Such an old belief has always confined the role and ability of the reader. That is why man has not
been able to be inventive and creative often times. The relatively small numbers of creative thinkers in western nations have tried to free themselves from such authorial control, especially in Middle Ages.

b. Paul de Man (1919-1983)
Paul de Man was the most famous follower of Jacques Derrida at Yale University in New York, where it was a center for deconstruction in the 1970s. Being born in Belgium and educated in Europe, de Man began to teach in most of the North American universities. At the time of his untimely death, he was Sterling Professor of the Humanities at Yale University.

In the first stages of deconstruction, from 1966 to the early 1980s, the Yale critics had a high impact on the development of deconstructive thought. Subsequently, their works played a major role in making deconstruction a less academic and more popularized mode of thinking. It was mostly from this university that deconstruction began to exert its influences in the other fields of science.

The group called 'Yale Critics' includes some other famous deconstructive thinkers such as Geoffrey Hartman, J. Hillis Miller and Harold Bloom. Miller, for example, is considered as the spokesman of the group, and Bloom has contributed to deconstructive thought by his controversial essays. Although each one of them is universally known, Paul de man is "widely regarded as the most powerful and profound mind in the group of critics and theorists who, inspired by the work of Jacques Derrida, made Yale a center of deconstruction." (47)
Paul de Man's most important book is entitled *Blindness and Insight: Essays in the Rhetoric of Contemporary Criticism* (1971). It is a collection of long essays on the most basic problems in contemporary philosophy and criticism. Some of the subjects referred to in this book are the theoretical aspects of philosophy, the philosophical base of criticism and the interrelationship between different philosophical and linguistic theories. He believes that our sense history.

Several new and mostly neglected issues were introduced for the first time in this book. For example, de Man discusses the similarities between 'criticism' and 'crisis,' which are often neglected in the human sciences. These two words, he argues, are not only etymologically from the same origin, but also thematically from the same function. (48)

In other words, a real criticism in different fields of science, especially in philosophy and theory, is that which creates a crisis in the previous thoughts. As a result, criticism has originally a deconstructive aspect. That is why Post-structuralism is concerned with critical philosophy more than other fields.

A good example to show such a philosophy is the thought of Friedrich Nietzsche. As discussed fully in the first chapter of this research, a major part of Nietzsche's philosophy is a criticism of the western philosophical tradition. Correspondingly, Nietzsche's criticism of western philosophy created a crisis in that philosophical tradition.

On the other hand, Paul de Man deals with some certain aspects of language in his book, which can also be found in the works of Nietzsche. As it is known, Nietzsche's works are highly poetical and
figurative. Nietzsche's works are one of the most poetical in the long history of the western philosophy.

Rhetorical figures, for example, are discussed by de Man regarding their operations in the text. He believes that the rhetorical or the figural aspect of language makes language an unreliable medium for expressing truth (as in the case of Nietzsche). Rhetoric, de Man argues, always undermines the abstract system of logic. That is why the Post-Structuralists in general and Paul de Man in particular are greatly indebted to Nietzsche's philosophy on one hand and his especial use of language on the other hand.

Paul de Man's other significant book is called Allegories of Reading: Figural Language in Rousseau, Nietzsche, Rilke, and Proust (1979). The term allegory of meaning is defined as the text's reflexive awareness of itself as a system of rhetorical figures. Hence, there is a close relationship between rhetorical figures and allegory. Allegory, de Man says, is "rhetoric of temporality." (49) That is to say that the signs repeat other signs in an allegory, and they signify their difference in such a repetition.

Therefore, Paul de Man is less concerned with the logic and structure of language than to the figural and rhetoric aspects of both philosophical and literary language. As far as philosophy is concerned, de Man discusses this feature in the works of Nietzsche and Rousseau. As it is known, both philosophers deliberately used a rhetorical language that was different from the simple and realistic language often employed in the most of the philosophical works of the western thought. K. M. Newton says in this regard:
De Man argues that there is a radical division in some philosophical and literary texts between the grammatical or logical structure of language and its rhetorical aspects. This creates a play of signification in those texts which is finally undecidable. De Man argues that such texts are constituted by this undecidable play between the grammatical and the rhetorical. (50)

According to de Man, whenever the questions of epistemology are suspended within rhetoric, the above-mentioned characteristic of "undecidability" happens in that moment. This moment occurs when what a text says may seem at odds with the rhetoric in which it says it. A classical example of this kind of rhetoric is 'aporia,' which was used by Socrates in ancient Greek philosophy (this subject is discussed in details in the fourth chapter of this dissertation).

Paul de Man's method of analysis is similar to that of Derrida because both attempt to uncover the hierarchical oppositions within texts in order to reveal the philosophical ground upon which these hierarchies are established. Such a critical and philosophical theory aims at making explicit what is implicit, assumed or repressed. It wants to reveal the shaky foundations of what is generally assumed to be the stable essence of a system of thought.

Hence, those philosophical works that are far from Absolutism and Fundamentalism are favored in Post-structuralism. Moreover, those figures of thought and speech that convey to mind a sense of doubt, uncertainty and multi-meaningfulness are of high importance in this mode of critical philosophy. Irony, metaphor, aporia, paradox, ambiguity and aphorism, mostly used by Nietzsche (see the introductory note to the first chapter), are among those figures and tropes that are emphasized and frequently used in Post-structuralist critical philosophy.
Notes:

1. Plato's ideas on the form and the content will be explained in details in the fourth chapter of this dissertation, where a Post-structuralistic reading, based on Nietzsche's thought, of Plato's major works is provided.
6. The new revolutionary ideas of Roman Jakobson played a main role in the development of continental Structuralism and, especially, in the works of Claude Lévi-Strauss and Jacques Lacan. This is fully explained later in this chapter.
8. Ibid., p.17.
16. Ibid.
17. This is a quotation from Montaige, sixteenth century French essayist, which Jacques Derrida refers to at the beginning of his essay.
19. Ibid., p.90.
20. Ibid., p.91.
22. Ibid., p.76.
25. Ibid., p.261.
26. For a detailed account of Derrida's Biography with a look on his political activities relevant to his philosophical ideas see Christopher Norris, Derrida, Cambridge, Massachusetts, Harvard University Press, 1987.
29. This quotation has been barrowed from Michel Foucault's interview with an Iranian writer, Bagher Parham in Persian Journal of Writers, No. 1. p.15, 1979.
32. "Discourse is taken from the Latin discursus, which in turn comes from the verb discursere, meaning 'to run hither and thither'. A discourse is an utterance, or a talk of some length...its everyday use is a long way from the definition which Habermas gives it, according to which discourse would have be be seen as the form of language in which claims to validity are founded." See Manfred Frank, "On Foucault's Concept of Discourse", in Michel Foucault, Philosopher, edited and translated by Timothy J. Armstrong, London, Harvester Wheatsheef, 1992, pp.105-6.
34. Michel Foucault, interview in The History of Sexuality, London, Allen Lane, 1979, p.27.
35. John Branningam, p. 15.
41. Gutting, p.29.
42. Ibid., p.37.
45. John Peck and Martin Coyle, p.194.
47. Ibid., p.331.