Chapter Five

Conclusion

Although the first idea that comes to the mind of the reader, after reading this study, is that it is a thesis on the thought of Friedrich Nietzsche and its consequent influences, it should be also mentioned that it elaborates not only on some important questions of a major branch of contemporary philosophy, known as Post-Structuralism, but also provides a practical reading of one of the classical works of philosophy based on such applied theories. That is why the title of the thesis, *The Manifestation of the Thought of Friedrich Nietzsche in Post-Structuralism*, is followed by the subtitle, *Form Critical Philosophy to Applied Theory*.

What is important here is not just to introduce Nietzsche’s philosophy or to provide a reading of Post-Structuralist theory and philosophy. Moreover, by the influence of Nietzsche’s thought on contemporary philosophy, throughout the thesis, we do not mean those general aspects of Nietzsche’s thought that had inevitable impact on the emergence of Post-Modernism. Such a discussion has been the subject of several researches in recent years.

What is considered as the main objective behind this study is to show how Nietzsche’s critical philosophy, especially in his last works, influenced those applied theories presented by Post-Structuralist thinkers. If the validity of such an argument is counted for, the theories, therefore, might be applied on philosophical works and schools. Thus, one of the main issues here is not just demonstrating
what an applied theory in philosophy is. The question of application of that theory rather gains significance here that is about exploring how a philosophical theory works.

Furthermore, the result of taking both of these approaches, Nietzsche’s critical philosophy and Post-Structuralist applied theories, are supposed to be thematically the same. They are, however, different in manner, form and the used terminology. If shown properly, this similarity would pave the way for a practical application of a given philosophical text.

The first approach, here Nietzsche’s critical philosophy, has already been examined by the philosopher in his works. The second one, which is the application of a theory on a philosophical work, is what to be done in order to come to at least two main conclusions: the authenticity and originality of that critical thought provided by the philosopher, and the practicality of that applied theory presented by contemporary thinkers.

Therefore, one of the conclusions of the present research is the authenticity and originality of the thought of Friedrich Nietzsche not merely because of being manifested in Post-Structuralism. It is, however, original because of the critique for the first time of some philosophical traditions and concepts. Nietzsche’s originality of thought becomes more obvious when one faces the same treatment in different critical issues of the twentieth century. As Alan D. Schrift, in his ‘introduction’ to Why Nietzsche Still?, writes: “there are important perspectives to draw from Nietzsche as we struggle to frame these critical issues for a new millennium.” (1)

It should also be noted that the discussions of the first chapter of this research study are in direct relation to the other ideas developed later throughout the thesis. In other words, having presented Nietzsche’s
framework of thought in a systematic way based on his last major works, the first chapter is also illuminating in pointing to those aspects of his philosophy that were later to be expressed, employed and referred to by Post-Structuralism.

Nietzsche’s critical philosophy is in direct relationship with some other concepts of his philosophy such as his concept of man and the morals, which have been discussed in the thesis. Nietzsche criticizes Christianity on the basis of this fact that it degrades man and does not believe in man’s inventive ability and creative potentiality. Thus, Nietzsche’s concept of man is contradictory to that definition of man presented and imposed by the Church and Christianity. Moreover, in order to investigate Nietzsche’s concept of man the present study provides a reading of his concept of “ubermensch,” that is the Superman. Therefore, attempt is done to describe the characteristics of the Superman based on Nietzsche’s last writings.

Furthermore, to explain Nietzsche’s concept of “will to power” the study elaborates on Schopenhauer’s influences on him as well as his differences with Schopenhauer. In other words, Although Nietzsche criticizes Schopenhauer’s concept of will, Schopenhauer’s return to eastern wisdom, and especially Buddhism, was influential in Nietzsche’s invention of the Anti-Christ figure that is, in several respects, close to the character of both Buddha and Zarathustra. Towards the end of the first chapter Nietzsche’s critical views on Socrates and modernity have been demonstrated in order to pave the way for discussing Post-Structuralist criticism of these terms and figures.

Because of the novelty of the philosophical tradition of Post-Structuralism and its consequent misunderstandings and even misuses the second chapter begins first with the theoretical and philosophical
backgrounds of Post-Structuralism. Hence, Russian Formalism, Prague School an Structuralism are discussed in order to both avoid general misconceptions and have a thorough and detailed presentation of Post-Structuralism. Pointing to the thought of the main thinkers behind this movement, the second thesis here provides a discussion on Jacques Derrida’s concept of deconstruction and Michel Foucault concept of discourse, both in close relation to the arguments made in the coming chapter.

Derrida's critique of Structuralism is here mentioned that, according to him, goes back to the beginning of western metaphysical philosophy in that it considers any system to have necessarily a center. This means that the existence of a center in the structure of different systems has been traditionally taken to be granted. Moreover, Derrida’s criticism of Plato and Claude Lévi-Strauss are here explained. Identifying the binary oppositions of the western metaphysics, deconstruction wants to show the preconceived assumptions upon which western philosophy has established its interpretation of the world.

Michel Foucault’s preliminary standpoints are also discussed in the same chapter. Attention is here paid to his ideas on discourse and episteme have been analyzed here. Thus, the way is now paved to discuss the main argument of the thesis, presented in the third chapter.

Chapter three is the core of the present study. Its argument is to show and prove the influence of Nietzsche’s critical philosophy on Post-Structuralist philosophy and theory. Therefore, first the influence on Nietzsche’s stylistics and mode of argumentation on Derrida is demonstrated. Then, his treatment of one of the main binary oppositions in his framework of thought, especially in his last works, is discussed that is Christ/Anti-Christ.
This dual pair is so significant in Nietzsche’s thought that he chooses *The Anti-Christ* for the title of one of his books. *The Anti-Christ* is a work in which the reader faces a radical revolutionary criticism on Christ and Christianity. After that Nietzsche’s criticism of Christianity and his admiration for Buddhism are explained as a major part of his critical philosophy of the reversal of binary oppositions.

One of the main arguments of the present research is presented here. It wants to explore how Jacques Derrida’s Post-Structuralist critical theory on western traditional ideas on speech/writing binary opposition is both in parallel with and under the influence of Nietzsche’s critical philosophy.

Thus, attempt is made here to introduce Derrida’s theory on speech/writing binary opposition on one hand, and the influence of Nietzsche’s critical philosophy on Derrida’s Post-Structural theory on the other hand. Subsequently, a detailed account of the following terms is presented: phocentrism, logocentrism, the centered, the de-centered, transcendental signified and Heideggerean term of the metaphysics of presence.

The argument made here is that it is the existence of the centers and their superiority to the other de-centered element of the different binary opposition that has ever been the cause of considering their meaning as unchangeable and fixed. Therefore, there are always some essential and fundamental entities and truths in the history of western philosophy.

It is here that the thesis comes to another conclusion that is: “This deconstructive theory, applied in different fields of humanities, is exactly what Nietzsche does in his *The Anti-Christ* by reversing Christ/Anti-Christ binary opposition.” (2) In other words, Nietzsche’s critical philosophy is transformed into an applied theory by Derrida.
They are the two sides of one coin. Furthermore, they have the same approach towards such figures and concepts as Socrates, rationalism, and Modernity.

The second part of the third chapter is concerned with the influence of Friedrich Nietzsche on another main Post-Structural thinker, Michel Foucault. Therefore, first there is here an attempt to read Nietzsche’s approach towards different discourses of the nineteenth century. Rejecting epistemes and the consequent de-centering institutions by both Nietzsche and Foucault are observed as both Foucault’s reading of Nietzsche and Nietzsche’s influence on Foucault. The terms discussed here are: Power, knowledge, discourse, episteme and institution.

In this part of the thesis Nietzsche’s criticism of modernity as long as a discussion on the origins modernity in the philosophy of Descartes are presented. The reason for such a discussion is to pave the way for presenting another main argument of the thesis that how Foucault’s criticism of modernity that, according to him, ignores and even suppresses minority discourses, is under the influence of Nietzsche’s criticism of the philosophy of modernity.

That is why Michel Foucault’s theory on both the mechanism of modernity discourses and its ignorance of the discourse of the minority groups is the subject of last part of the third chapter. The main discourses of modernity, he believes, were thought of as the centered discourses because of a special mechanism produced by the same discourses. Having analyzed Foucault’s views on the mechanism and function of modernity discourses, the thesis here focuses on Foucault’s criticism of modernity for centralizing some discourses and marginalizing some other.
Accordingly, minority groups of different social, medical, religious, and philosophical discourses of modernity have been forgotten in the historiography of the west. That is why Foucault decided to write a “new history” of modernity without attention to historical books but based on a close reading of the power relations and discursive formation and practice of the period under consideration.

Finally, having compared Michel Foucault’s theories on modernity discourses with Friedrich Nietzsche’s critical philosophy on modernity and its principles, the thesis comes to this conclusion that: “They both rejected the principles of modernity based on which man was deprived of his individuality and independence.” (3) That is to say that Nietzsche was one of the first western philosophers who dared to criticize modernity, and Foucault, influence by Nietzsche, attempted to theorize the mechanism of modernity discourses and mentioned its negative aspects.

Chapter four seeks to apply a Post-Structuralist theory on one of the classical works of philosophy, which is Plato’s *The Republic*. The last conclusion the present thesis comes to happens here, where the practicability of such an application is both shown and concluded. Although this approach would ultimately be in parallel with Nietzsche’s criticism of Socrates, it is different from that of Nietzsche in that it is, first of all, based on a Post-Structuralist methodology, and, secondly, it contains a new and specific set of theoretical terms used in contemporary critical theory.

Such a reading reveals that “Morality,” for example, acts as a transcendental signified for Plato. Plato’s moralism and his views on man’s commitment to moral rules as well as the principles of ethics mentioned by Socrates at the time of his death are all reasons for considering morality as a transcendental signifies in the works of
Plato. The other transcendental signified of the first part of *The Republic* is “justice,” that is defined and advocated by Socrates in his dialogue with Thrasymachus. And finally, as shown in the thesis, God is the most important for Socrates.

Thus, Plato established his moralist philosophy based on these transcendental signifieds, and projected them on the whole tradition of western metaphysical philosophy. There is a similarity between Christianity’s set of moral values on one hand and Plato’s moralist philosophy on the other hand. Thus, it is believed that transcendental signified were emphasized, privileged, and ultimately projected on the western philosophy by both Plato and Christianity.

The second example of reading Plato’s *The Republic* from a Post-Structuralist approach is demonstrated in the thesis as Plato’s desire for logocentrism in Part XII of the book, which begins with a differentiation between the Idea and the Actual. Here Socrates is discussing the positive characteristics of his Ideal State, and the logocentristic preference of The Ideal to the Actual is present explicitly in the work. The superiority of soul to body in soul/body binary opposition is another example of logocentrism in this book.

As a conclusion, Plato’s desire for logocentrism in such binary oppositions as soul/body and the consequent immortality/mortality was projected on the western metaphysics. It is interesting to mention that Socrates himself constituted one part of an important binary opposition in the philosophical discourse of Ancient Greece, which was Socrates/Sophists binary opposition. The dialogues of the book resulted in the superiority of Socrates to the Sophists. Therefore, the discourse of Socrates became the centered in Plato’s works, and his desire for logocentrism appears here too.
The last example of such a reading in the thesis is a deconstructive approach to Plato’s views on arts and poetry. Having quoted Socrates’ ideas on mimesis, and the relation between art and truth, the present study shows his ideas on the position of the artists and poets in the State. This part of the thesis deconstructs Plato’s view on art and poetry that ultimately turns out to be against them.

Plato was the first writer in whose works the poets and artists were sent on exile. He was also the first writer who believed in the advantages of censorship. In his *Laws* he argues that only those who are politically approved are allowed to write poetry. Even the works of such poets should be first approved by the authorities.

The study here deconstructs such ideas by asserting and proving the opposite. Correspondingly, art and poetry are not considered by the thesis as dangerous to the society; they are, on the contrary, useful and true. The truth in art and poetry is different from the truth in logic and mathematics. Plato’s was afraid of the destruction of his Ideal State, so he sacrificed every thing for it. Concluding this part, one can say that Plato’s Republic was not a means for man’s happiness; it was rather an end for the sake of which every thing was to be sacrificed.

Concluding the above-mentioned discussions, one comes to this conclusion that Nietzsche’s critical philosophy is highly influential in the emergence of the applied theories of Post-Structuralism. The analysis of the transformation of a critical philosophy into an applied theory is indeed the exploration of two systems of thought that are, though different in form and manner, identical in theme and content. Therefore, in order to evaluate one of the contemporary schools of western philosophy, that is Post-Structuralism, Nietzsche’s philosophy should be explored and such an exploration seems almost inevitable.
Notes:

3. Ibid., p. 212.