Deconstruction:

The text – words in the text – deconstructs itself

The text has irreconcilably contradictory meanings, rather than being a unified whole

- Words/texts don’t just have multiple meanings…. the meanings are contradictory and, as a result, very destabilizing

- Examine how a text deconstructs itself: ex. how the “lottery” in “The Lottery” deconstructs the tradition… and allows us to interpret theme: People often blindly follow traditions.

Ex. Treason: in Macbeth – at the beginning, Macbeth defends Duncan against the traitor, Macdonwald; traitor Cawdor whose title goes to Macbeth; Macbeth becomes the Thane of Cawdor; Macbeth becomes a traitor when he kills Duncan; Macduff is a traitor to the new King, Macbeth, when he rebels and goes to England to encourage the rightful King, Malcolm to be a traitor – “treason” flips meaning…. effect: Elizabethan audience is left with an unstable message re: treason (in light of Gunpowder Plot)

- Deconstruction destabilizes a linguistic hierarchy (“lottery” at beginning is “good”/and then it falls to the bottom when it’s associated with “bad”) – hierarchy is questioned as there is fundamental “gap” or “difference” between the sign (word) and its signification (meaning)

- Along with the destabilizing of the hierarchy, there is also a “web of signification” surrounding the word, “lottery” as it takes on multiple meanings within the story and for the reader

- The notion of “tradition” is also brought into question as multiple significations circulate within the story and for us as readers.

- in “The Lottery,” there is a horrid upheaval of normalcy that develops when the words and what they represent are destabilized to the point that they take on multiple meanings and even the opposite meanings….

Therefore: “Meaning” does not exist; “Truth” does not exist