Q. Make an assessment of the contributions of Derrida and Foucault towards the development of Poststructuralism.

Answer:- Post-structuralism is a body of work that followed in the wake of structuralism, and sought to understand a world irrevocably dissected into parts of systems, as in deconstruction. Post-structuralists are most clearly distinct from their structuralism predecessors due to their rejection of structuralism's reductivist methodology. Instead, they pursue an infinite play of signifiers and the signified.

Derrida and Post structuralism:- Post structuralism evolved in the late 1960s as a critique of structuralism theory. The basis of post structuralism theories lies in the belief of the inadequacy of language. Jacques Derrida's theory of difference proposed that meaning is inherently unstable due to the play of signs within language. This is because that a signifier and a signified exist within language, which provides the meaning of the word or phrase. At its most basic level, the signifier may be the letters F-I-S-H, which provide the reader with the signified, the word FISH, which in turn provides a mental image of fish. However, the reader's image of fish may vary from a live goldfish or shark to a freshly caught trout or rows of John Dory in a fishmonger's window. Thus, the interpretation that the reader lends to the signifiers within the text is based upon the reader's experiences. These experiences may be derived from prior knowledge, which the reader has previously attained whether it is from a book, film, television or whatever. Thus, inter-textuality is viewed by the post-structuralist as essential to the interpretation of the text, and as such exists as strength rather than a weakness. Deconstruction, based on the work of Derrida aims to show that any and every text inevitably undermines its own claims to determine a definite meaning.

Thus, the lack of meaning sabotages any attempts to form a definite conclusion within a text. This raises the concept of the lack of closure within the text. This in turn emphasized the role of the reader in the process of determining meaning in text, which led Roland Barthes to propose the four main points that comprise The Death of the Author (1968).

Jacques Derrida (1930) used Saussure's insights to develop Deconstruction, a perspective that focuses on the lack of a truth "out there" or at the centre to provide meaning. He showed how all-western philosophical systems are dependent on a centre (God, the self, the unconscious). But structuralism had shown that the centre is a fiction, merely another signified that has no being beyond language. Furthermore, Derrida focused on the binary pairs that make meaning, arguing that rather than being polar opposites, each was dependent on the other for meaning and existence. He also showed how in all binaries, one of the terms was always subordinated to the other (man/woman, good/evil). To describe how meaning is produced, Derrida developed the term différance, meaning to differ and to defer. He focused in particular on the binary speech / writing, in which speech has been seen to provide a guarantee of subjectivity and presence in the history of philosophy and linguistics (someone has to do the speaking).

Like other post structuralist thinkers, Foucault is post-structuralist in his insistence that there is no great causal flow or plan or evolution of history that what happens is mainly by chance. In Foucault's terms, the production of discourse, the way we know our world, is controlled, selected, organized and distributed by a certain number of procedures. Discourse is regulated by rules of exclusion, by internal systems of control and delineation, by conditions under which discourses can be employed, and by philosophical themes, which elide the reality of discourse -

- the themes of the founding subject, originating experience, and universal mediation. Discourses are multiple, discontinuous, originating and disappearing through chance; they do not hide the truth but constitute its temporary face. Foucault agreed that language and society were shaped by rule- governed systems, but he disagreed with the structuralists from two points. Firstly, he did not think that there were definite fundamental structures that could explain the human condition and secondly he thought that it was impossible to step outside of discourse and survey the situation objectively.

Thus it is observed from the above discussion that Post-structuralism can be thought of as the attempt to free the powerful idea of a structure or system from so tightly controlled a grid. Like the great structuralists, poststructuralists also use the model of language as a metaphor of structure, only they seem more "honest" to the implications of that metaphor. Whatever be the differences of opinions, it can't be denied that almostball post-structuralists

including Foucault found their inspirations in the philosophy of Nietzsche. Nietzsche was a German philosopher, cultural critic, composer, poet and philologist whose work has exerted a profound influence on modern intellectual history. He began his career as a classical philologist before turning to philosophy. His philosophy of the "will to power" is the most basic human drive. He thought that this will to power is a creative force and that human beings will progress to a new level of being. Jacques Derrida, a philosopher who absorbed the literary, ideological, and psychoanalytic tributaries of mid-century French thought and reread the history of philosophy accordingly. He painted a picture of anthropology, philosophy, and culture in general over the long haul since the Greeks that his audience was unprepared for, and that

altered decisively how one could think about culture and individuals. Foucault, the eminent scholar illustrates how carrying out punishment is still barbaric—and further entrenched in institutions of knowledge and power or conversely scandal and light. According to him, power is based on knowledge and makes use of knowledge; on the other hand, power reproduces knowledge by shaping it in accordance with its anonymous intentions. Power (re-) creates its own fields of exercise through knowledge.