

REVIEWING METANARRATIVE FROM THE OUTLOOK OF LYOTARD'S POSTMODERN DISCOURSES

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ABSTRACT

Metanarrative or grand narrative is a term developed by Jean-François Lyotard to mean a theory that tries to give a totalizing, comprehensive account to various historical events, experiences, and social and cultural phenomena based upon the appeal to universal truth or universal values. In his book 'The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge', Lyotard analyzes the epistemology of postmodern culture as the end of 'grand narratives' or **metanarratives** which he considers a quintessential feature of modernity. According to Lyotard, reductionism and teleological notions of human history such as those of the Enlightenment and Marxism are among the metanarratives that have become untenable by technological progress in the areas of communication, mass media and computer science. Lyotard also professes a preference for the plurality of small narratives that compete with each other, replacing the totalitarianism of grand narratives. With the transition from modern to postmodern, Lyotard proposes that metanarratives should give way to 'petits récits', or more modest and "localized" narratives. Borrowing from the works of Wittgenstein and his theory of the "models of discourse", Lyotard constructs his vision of a progressive politics that is grounded in the cohabitation of a whole range of diverse and always locally legitimated language games.

Keywords: postmodern, metanarratives, grandnarratives, knowledge

POSTMODERNISM- A BRIEF INTRODUCTION

The term postmodernism may be described as a cultural configuration that is broadly continuous with modernism, which is as not significantly different. One implication of which is the superficiality, if not redundancy of the term, for it simply attempts to fabricate differences within the same. As Featherstone argues many of the features considered to be intrinsic to modernism, 'aesthetic self consciousness and reflexiveness; a rejection of narrative structure in favour of simultaneity and montage; an exploration of the paradoxical, ambiguous and uncertain open-

ended nature of reality; and a rejection of the notion of an integrated personality in favour of an emphasis upon the destructured, dehumanized subject are appropriated into various definitions of postmodernism'. An understandable response to which is scepticism concerning the claims made that postmodernism identifies something significantly different from modernism. In contrast to the notion that postmodernism is in important respects continuous with modernism, a second position favoured by some analysts suggests more of a radical rupture between the two. Postmodernism is said to be a 'culture increasingly dominated by space and spatial logic', a cultural configuration which is constituted in and through complex relationships with a new generation of technologies, which themselves are articulated with the emergence of a new global economic formation. Although the philosophical roots of postmodernism may be traced to the late nineteenth century the term itself really only began to be employed from the 1930s. An early reference occurs in the contribution to literary criticism of Federico de Onis who uses the term 'postmodernismo' to describe a kind of exhausted and mildly conservative modernismo'. A comparable use of the term occurs in the late 1950s in America to lament the exhaustion of the modern movement, to describe the growing signs of modernism's denouement and the emergence of a new sensibility. However, it was the mid-1970s before the term began to be more widely employed, in relation to architecture, dance, painting, film and music. Postmodernism became more prominent in America in the course of the 1960s, constituted as a potentially avantgardist cultural configuration distinguished by four key characteristics which are (i) future oriented, innovative temporal imagination, (ii) iconoclastic attack on the institution, organisation and ideology of art and (iii) technological optimism, bordering at times on euphoria; and (iv) promotion of 'popular culture' as a challenge to 'high art'. Huyssen describes these features of early American postmodernism as effectively 'the prehistory of the postmodern', ultimately because the avantgardist aims and ambitions could not be sustained. Not unlike the high modernism which it saw as incorporated and codified, avantgarde postmodernism had exhausted its potential by the 1970s, if not played out the endgame of international avantgardism'. It is in this context that we find disagreement developing around the idea of postmodernism, notably between analysts and critics who conceive of postmodernism as a culture of eclecticism which celebrates the status quo and those who argue that there is an alternative postmodernism 'which seeks to deconstruct modernism and resist the status quo'. If postmodernism first became an issue in America it is now very much a part of the European scene. And if there was an initial sense that perhaps Habermas was correct in conceiving of postmodernism as simply a 'neoconservative' tendency within art and philosophy, that no longer seems to be the way analysts interested in generating critical analyses and developing radical political strategies see things. For e.g, a number of analysts working out of a Marxist problematic and interested in developing forms of inquiry and political strategies relevant to current conditions have embraced a critical postmodernism, as have feminists who wish to avoid the problems which arise from

attempting to ‘oppose the discourses of male domination by appealing to a metanarrative of universal justice and freedom’. Of course there are still critics for whom postmodernism constitutes something like heresy and the term continues to both evade specification and attract controversy (Smart, 2013).

LYOTARD’S THEORETICAL ORIENTATION OF POSTMODERNISM

Postmodern theories are sometimes called “antitheories” because they eschew the very idea of “theory” that is grand narratives, metanarratives, or any kind of overarching theoretical framework or scaffolding. Postmodernism represents an era in which all knowledge has been reduced to particularized narratives such that it is difficult to make definitive truth claims about any of them. In other words, from a postmodern point of view, there are only multiple “truth claims” rather than definitive “truths” regarding the theoretical orientation of any theorist, but this position would especially hold true for postmodern theorists. Not surprisingly, then, there are multiple ways to portray postmodernism theoretically. On the one hand, the notion that narratives are inescapably particular implies an individualistic approach to order, as does the idea that meaning is devoid of “structure”, that it is unfixed and fluid rather than determined by pre-given social structural or cultural conditions. In contrast to the Frankfurt School, which portrayed mass culture as homogenous and monolithic, and French structuralists and structural functionalists, who viewed culture as rooted in shared semiotic codes or values, Lyotard’s assertion that the postmodern condition is one devoid of transcendent values and narratives suggests an absence of shared, collective culture structures or intersubjectivity, and in that way can be said to be primarily individualistic. Lyotard portrays the postmodern condition as one of multivocality and pluralism, and he conceptualizes individuals as subverting and redeploying symbols in sometimes startling ways. So, too, the fluidity of symbols at the heart of postmodernism implies little space for strategic calculations of interests and, hence, a nonrationalistic approach to action. One might think from reading Lyotard that rational action is inherently impossible in postmodern society, since the games being played are multiple and the rules continually changing. In short, how can one determine and achieve one’s strategic interests when the playing field is forever in a state of flux? Rather than being motivated by a strategic calculation of interests, we are caught in a web of fluctuating illusions of truth as we move from one idea and meaning to the next, making the attempt to follow a strategic path useless in the midst of multivocality and continuous change. Yet Lyotard’s concepts of the mercantilization of knowledge and computerization of society clearly reflect his neo-Marxist notion that knowledge in postmodern society is circumscribed by economic forces, which reflects a more collectivistic approach to order and rationalistic approach to action. In keeping with the neo-Marxist tradition and particularly the Frankfurt School, Lyotard here emphasizes the strategic maximization of interests rather than transcendent values as the underlying motivation in the accumulation of

knowledge, as our example regarding the pharmaceutical companies makes clear. Here the patterns of social life are seen as a function of preexisting structures namely, the corporation or the state, rather than autonomous individuals. Nevertheless, Lyotard's concept of the mercantilization of knowledge can be understood in an individualistic economic sense as well. That knowledge is subject to the whims of the capitalist marketplace and sold piecemeal rather than reflecting totalizing cultural structures is more in keeping with the notion of laissez-faire capitalism than with the views of the Frankfurt school. From this more individualistic or rationalistic point of view, the nature of the postmodern era prevents knowledge from becoming fixed in a single ideology. For instance, while within the scientific metanarrative, Truth is based on objective inquiry and new discoveries, in fact, in the postmodern condition, science itself has become delegitimated. Scientific stories are just some of the many stories that are told (AppelRouth & Edles, 2016).

A REVIEW ON METANARRATIVE FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF LYOTARD'S POSTMODERN DISCOURSES

The beginning of the postmodern debate essentially began in 1979 with the publication of the essay 'The Postmodern Condition' by French literary theorist Jean-Francois Lyotard. Lyotard is widely regarded as one of the most influential postmodern theorists. Basically he conceives postmodernism as a war against cultural and theoretical agreement and ideological unity, as propounded by social theorist Jurgen Habermas in his defense of modernity: 'Modernity an Incomplete Project' (1980). In his essays, 'The Postmodern Condition' and 'What is Postmodernism?' (1982), Lyotard attacks the totalizing sensibilities of the Enlightenment which is the way of the modern movement according to Habermas. Lyotard targets the Enlightenment's authoritative explanations of the world and challenges Habermas's call for an end to "artistic experimentation" and for "order ... unity, for identity, for security". The unity which Habermas desires is discharged by Lyotard as an illusion which suppress the everincreasing plurality of contemporary culture. This dismissal is the basis for his theory of grand narratives, or metanarratives. Lyotard believes knowledge has become a commodity and consequently a means of empowerment. He sees knowledge as being communicated through narratives, or different ways of interpreting the world. Grand narratives are authoritative, establishing their political or cultural views as absolute truths beyond any means of criticism. They have a totalizing effect on the culture, reducing it to universal codes which usurp their local counterparts. Lyotard announces that "the grand narrative has lost its credibility" praising local and temporary knowledge instead. The French academia can be said to be the cradle of the postmodern movement as a theoretical discipline, with Lyotard having first established the significance of the postmodern condition in the late 1970s. Lyotard's 'The Postmodern Condition' is a short essay that consists of Lyotard's intellectual context regarding status of knowledge in the contemporary

world. As Lyotard tells us in his opening sentence, the book is concerned with ‘the condition of knowledge in the most highly developed societies.’ That is to distinguish the condition of knowledge from the general cultural condition of postmodernism, which he defines in the crudest sense as ‘incredulity toward metanarratives’ and reveals how knowledge has up until the end of the 1950’s been legitimated by the metanarratives of science. It contributed to human freedom and well-being. He examines developments in the nature and circulation of knowledge since the end of World War II, and persists that this has led to the dishonour of the Enlightenment narrative of emancipation and progress. Lyotard was commissioned by the Canadian government to submit a report on the status of knowledge in the most highly developed societies in the west. Lyotard uses the word ‘postmodern’ to describe the state of knowledge. He writes that: “The object of this study is the condition of knowledge in the most highly developed societies. I have decided to use the word ‘postmodern’ to describe that condition. The word is in current use on the American continent among sociologists and critics; it designates the state of our culture following the transformations which, since the end of the nineteenth century, have altered the game rule for science, literature, and the arts”. Lyotard further remarks: “Our working hypothesis is that the status of knowledge is altered as societies enter what is known as the post-industrial age and cultures enter what is known as the postmodern age”. Thus, according to Lyotard, postmodernism is a movement, a transition that has been under way. It has a reference to a vast field of activities ranging from dance, drama, art and architecture to culture, women’s movements, film and literary studies. In ‘The Postmodern Condition’, Lyotard has raised certain questions on the state of knowledge: How forms of knowledge come into being? Who controls knowledge? And, who has access to it? In culture and society, scientific disciplines no longer assume that time theories and discoveries have universal or timeless value. Lyotard dwells on scientific knowledge and knowledge related to human emancipation of the kind initiated by enlightenment and modernity. It is the urge to find out the nature and form of knowledge which enables him to criticize the metanarratives of social sciences. In other words, Lyotard’s concept of postmodernity lies in the rejection of metanarratives. Lyotard very strongly argues that postmodernity is a part of modernity. He says that we have had postmodern phases before modernism. Postmodernism is not modernism at its end, but a nascent state, and this state is recurrent. Postmodernity is a process and a movement. Basically, postmodernity is a kind of social movement. When there is any kind of disenchantment with modernity, the postmodernity emerges. The postmodern condition mainly focuses on science. Lyotard informs that the present society is in such a frightening state of despair that the only solution lies in the coming of postmodernity (Chougule, 2016).

According to Chougule (2016), Lyotard argues that there cannot be a universal or timeless body of knowledge. Lyotard rejects the metanarrative or meganarratives and their characteristics. He says that the underlying assumption of both scientific and cultural narratives is that all the

societies are uniform and their ethnicity, identity and problems are the same. This assumption of metaarratives is not acceptable to Lyotard. The societies and their kit of knowledge are in a damaging state of affairs. They have become unrepairable and degenerated and, on the other hand, the metanarratives and the theories propounded by their authors have failed to do justice to the mankind. The grand narratives are also called meta-narratives or meganarratives by Lyotard. The thing, which is told or narrated, is narrative. For instance, a story is narrated. There is a technical meaning of narratives in Lyotard's conceptualization. Marxism and functionalism are examples of metanarratives. Postmodernists reject such 'grand theories', arguing that is impossible to identify any fundamental truths underpinning human society. He sees the distinction between scientific knowledge and non-scientific narrative. He takes hold of science that has no 'metalegitimation' and it must have alternative to narrative for that legitimation, that is a non-scientific legitimation. Since both narrative and scientific knowledge have a common foundation of legitimation in narrative they are equally valid. The types of metanarratives include Emancipatory and scientific. Emancipatory metanarratives are associated with the notion of reason, experience, scepticism of religion and traditional authority. Lyotard argues that the Emancipatory metanarratives like functionalism and Marxism are responsible for creating possibility of war, totalitarianism and gap between the rich and the poor. The degeneration in education, environment and employment are all results of such metanarratives. Scientific narratives attract greater attention of Lyotard. Actually, these constitute the term of his enquiry. One very bold observation of Lyotard in this connection is that there is no truth in scientific knowledge. Science has no direct access to truth. "Scientific knowledge does not represent the totality of knowledge; it has always existed in addition to, and in competition and conflict with, another kind of knowledge which I will call narrative in the interests of simplicity". Thus truth is limited by the institutions in which it is created. Truth can never be universal, nor can it be timeless. Metanarratives are totalistic only. Lyotard considers the metatheories of conflict and functionalism as totalistic theories. Totalization means comprising or study of the whole or entirety. Functionalism is universal. It stands for an 'ordered' society. The history of all the societies is the history of class war. The totalistic theories exercised their dominance during the period of modernization. Functionalism preached the ideology of capitalism, elitism, totalitarianism, and in short, status quoism. Marxism, on the other hand, promised for a classless and stateless socialism. Lyotard declared a war on totalizing metanarratives. It is time to make 'war' on such totalistic perspectives and modernity is pre-eminent of grand narratives. He calls it wage a war on totality. He announced by saying that let they should wage a war on totality; let they should be witness to the unrepresentable; activate the differences and save the honor of the name. It is the kind of system that Lyotard describes and opposes in 'The Postmodern Condition'. When knowledge becomes hierarchical as it is in Springfield, only ideas from select groups will be admissible into the collective body of canonical knowledge. It is in authority's

best interest to encourage the consensus of ideas because this enables it to maintain its power, and with such consensus comes totalizing systems of knowledge or metanarratives. Metanarratives exclude those sectors of society that are not situated at the top of the knowledge hierarchy. In 'The Postmodern Condition', Lyotard proposes a different system of knowledge, wherein hierarchy is replaced by a flat network of areas of inquiry, which would include contributions from the society. Instead of the homogenizing metanarratives, there would be a series of local narratives, or mininarratives, which are temporary and contingent, unlike metanarratives. For Lyotard, that "consensus has become an outmoded and suspect value". Metanarratives have legitimization. The tragedy of the modern society is that it has given full legitimacy to the hegemony of metanarratives. Lyotard refers to the destruction of Jews by the Nazis. Their destruction is supported by the metanarrative theory of the superiority of Aryan race as claimed by Hitler.

Chougule (2016), states that Metanarratives are never neutral; they are invariably partial and prejudicial and these narratives have enjoyed the legitimacy of the society, the state, and above all, the intellectuals. The sublime feeling is neither moral universality nor aesthetic universalization, but is, rather, the destruction of one by the other in the violence of their differend. This differend cannot demand, even subjectively, to be communicated to all thought. The social subject itself seems to dissolve in this dissemination of language games. The social bond is linguistic, but it is not woven with a single thread. It is a fabric formed by the intersection of at least two and in reality an indeterminate number of language games obeying different rules. Scientific knowledge requires that one language game, denotative be retained and all others excluded. Scientific knowledge is in this way set apart from the language games that combine to form the social bond. Narratives are language games. Lyotard finds a subtle relationship between emancipator and scientific narratives. Wittgenstein for the first time argued that both these narratives are characterized by 'language games'. Lyotard says that social relationships are like games that require language in order to participate. Language games are the social bond. Narratives are forms of knowledge. Lyotard generally talks about emancipatory or cultural narratives and scientific narratives. These narratives are forms of knowledge. The cultural narratives include denotative statement. Denotative statements show know-how, knowing how to live, how to listen, how to eat. Normally, the cultural narratives give some pragmatic or down to earth rules to the people. The society is thus bound together by these cultural narratives. These narratives carry knowledge as they have legitimacy of the society. The idea of story is central to Lyotard's account. Enlightenment thinking has preserved itself by perpetuating what he calls 'metanarratives', which structures the discourses of modern religion, politics, philosophy and science. Metanarratives are a form of ideology which constrains and controls the individual subject. They are violent and tyrannous in the way that they falsely impose a sense of 'totality' and 'universality' on a set of disparate things, actions and events. Just

like narratives in literature, metanarratives, in other words, provide a form into which a series of discrete elements can be ordered. Their function is to legitimate political positions and courses of action; legitimation is always a matter of maintaining power and is inseparable from violence. It works in science, for example, when scientists make a discovery and legitimate it by telling a kind of 'epic' narrative about it. Science can thus preserve its transcendent quality because the state spends large amount of money to enable science to pass itself off as an epic: the state's own credibility is based on that epic. But the crucial point about Lyotard's analysis of this reliance on metanarratives is that postmodernity has thrown it into crisis. It is not just Lyotard himself who is suspicious of metanarratives but there exists a general disbelief in metanarratives. In crucial areas of contemporary life politics, for example metanarratives have begun to disappear and been replaced by what the philosopher Wittgenstein referred to as 'language games,' where truth is a matter of rhetoric and performativity. The question is therefore, 'Where, after the metanarratives can legitimacy reside?' Lyotard goes on to make clear that "what legitimates knowledge in the postmodern condition is how well it performs, or enables a person to perform, in particular roles'. At the end of the book Lyotard stresses the manipulation of industry upon research and causes it to be legitimated by 'performativity'. Science, in contrast, accepts only denotative statements. Unlike narratives, science is not a direct and shared component of the social bond. Although there are these and other difference between cultural narratives and science, the fact is that they are both language games and one is no more or less necessary than the other. Cultural grand narratives are fables, myths and legends. Lyotard is much critical of grand or metanarratives. The fact is that the present society has increasingly become plural in its culture and ethnicity. Lyotard writes about it that with the decline of the grand narratives, legitimacy becomes plural, local, and immanent. There will necessarily be many discourses of Legitimation. It moves down to the level of practice. Functionalism and conflict are forms of metanarratives and their advocates Simmel, Marx, Dahrendorf, Durkheim, Weber, and Parsons have come down as pack of cards. The narratives constructed by them as general theories of society have lost all their relevance. Describing the irrelevance of metanarratives, Lyotard writes: Narratives are fables, myths, legends; fit only for women and children. In other words, science questions the legitimacy of narratives and in process, helps to legitimate 'legitimation' as a problem. Science wants everyone to believe that it offers legitimate, 'true' knowledge and it critiques narratives for being illegitimate and untrue. Scientific narratives do not tell the truth. Lyotard begins his book, 'The Postmodern Condition' (1979) with these opening lines: 'The object of this study is to describe the condition of knowledge in the most highly developed societies. I have decided to use the word 'postmodern' to describe that condition'. Lyotard argues that science has always been in conflict with narratives. The majority of them prove to be false. In his work, Lyotard has defined the forms of knowledge. He defines knowledge and comes to the conclusion that scientific knowledge never gives out truth. Status of knowledge is always altered. Knowledge is

never universal. The traditional society becomes modern and the modern society takes a turn to postmodern society. The pace of knowledge is faster or slower depending on the country and within countries. Science therefore, does not give the absolute truth. Scientific knowledge is never neutral. Lyotard argues that scientific knowledge is a kind of discourse. It is a framework of thinking. Our knowledge about madness, sexuality and punishment has changed all through the periods of history. It clearly shows that knowledge in all its respects is a discourse. The leading sciences and technologies have had to do with language: phonology and theories of linguistics, problems of communication and cybernetics, modern theories of algebra and informatics, computers and their language, problems of translation and the search for areas of compatibility among computer languages, problems of information storage, telematics and the perfection of intelligent terminals, paradoxology. Technological transformation of knowledge is seen in the postmodern era. Scientific knowledge in our present information age is subject to technological transformation. Cybernetics is the best way for the transmission of our acquired knowledge. Knowledge is also commercialized through machines and later in the circulation of sounds and visual images like media. Knowledge thus would become common to a layman through technological devices. In the age of technological development, the nature of knowledge cannot remain unchanged. It can be predicted that anything in the structure of knowledge which cannot be transformed through machines is abandoned and consequently the direction of research will change. The producers and users of knowledge must now possess the means translating into these languages whatever they want to invent or learn. Along with hegemony of computers comes certain logics and therefore a certain set of prescriptions determining which statements are accepted as 'knowledge statements'. The moment the knowledge comes out of a computer, it is taken as legitimate knowledge. The national social science research body makes all efforts to sanction technological aid to research. The present scientific knowledge is never neutral. It does not give any knowledge; it only provides skills and technology. Hence Lyotard says that the transmission of knowledge is no longer designed to train elite capable of guiding the nation towards its emancipation, but to supply the system with players capable of acceptably fulfilling their roles at the pragmatic posts required by its institutions. There is thus, a constant change in the nature of our knowledge. Knowledge in the form of an informational commodity indispensable to productive power is already, and will continue to be, a major-perhaps the major-stake in the worldwide competition for power. It is conceivable that the nation-states will one day fight for control of information, just as they battled in the past for control over territory, and afterwards for control over access to and exploitation of raw materials and cheap labor. Knowledge becomes a commodity. In the present era, knowledge is produced in order to be sold. Such knowledge is for new production. Obviously, the production of knowledge is for exchange. Lyotard comments on the present nature of knowledge. The relationship of the suppliers and users of knowledge to the knowledge they supply and use is now tending, and will increasingly

tend, to assume the form already taken by the relationship of commodity producers and consumers to the commodities they produce and consume that is the form of value. Knowledge is now and will be produced in order to be sold; it is and will be consumed in order to be valorized in a new production: in both cases the goal is exchange. Knowledge ceases to be an end in itself; it loses its 'use-value'. It is widely accepted that Knowledge has become the principal force of production over the last few decades. In the post-industrial and postmodern age, science maintains and strengthens the productive capacities of nation-states. The differences between the developed and developing countries are that of the production of knowledge. What is important in the content of knowledge is the information richness. The nation-states, which are endowed with more information are considered more powerful. It is conceivable that the nation-states will one day fight for control of information, just as they battled in the past for control over territory, and afterwards for control of access to and exploitation of raw materials and cheap labour. Scientific knowledge is subordinate to government. The body of knowledge does not represent the totality of knowledge. The society is plural and diverse. The form of knowledge varies according to the plurality of society. Knowledge and power are strongly correlated and those who are in power decide what knowledge is. In this computer age, the question of knowledge is now more than ever a question of government. In developing countries, it is invariably the government which sponsors a large number of projects and it is through the projects that the scientists are subordinated to government, from big science to little sciences. When Lyotard talks about narratives, he includes both the narratives-scientific and social-cultural. His basic argument is that the assumptions, which we had about science, have all been demolished in the context of present-day society; therefore the scientific narratives do not have any legitimacy. It is a widely accepted assumption of science. During the period of earlier modernity, around the 18th century onwards, people had great faith in science. For instance, instead of answering to religion as the guarantee of truth, political and economic fields developed which claimed to have the standing of science. Being 'scientific' or 'rational' was a sign of credibility. Lyotard claims that around the end of the Second World War, most of the scientific myths have collapsed. What have remained today are not the big scientific narratives but the little sciences. Scientific assumptions collapsed and hence rejected narratives. In a long period between Enlightenment to mid-twentieth centuries sciences justified itself by claiming that it needs no justification. The idea of its activities was pursued in the name of the timeless metanarratives of progress, emancipation and knowledge. By appealing in this way to ideas whose meanings are taken to be self-evident and universally agreed, science was able to masquerade as a single project objectively carried out for the good of human race. But, in the aftermath of the Second World War, it was realized by the world community that the scientific assumptions which ruled over the human mind had collapsed. Scientific rationality does not lead to progress. Science contributed to the massive ecological disaster and the development of nuclear and chemical weapons. It has

made difficult to link scientific rationality to progress. Science has failed to comprehend concrete reality. It is a myth to understand that science is exact in all its aspects. There are several areas where science stands on uncertain grounds. For instance, approaches like chaos theory, quantum mechanics, etc., have highlighted uncertainty in measurement. Because of these influences, it has become harder to see science as the activity of a rational mind confronting a concrete reality. According to Lyotard “sciences today are sceptical about the possibility of penetrating the truth or finding of answer. So sciences are carried out on a more modest, limited level. Realizing that they cannot find permanent answers to everything, they only come up with temporarily valid opinions, and seek to solve merely immediate, local problems. In the postmodern era, there is an emergence of little sciences because knowledge became splintered and incoherent. The idea that one day the sum of all knowledge will add to a state of perfect information has now been abandoned. Instead of it, we have today a large number of little sciences consisting of minor specialism. Splintering of scientific knowledge also influenced the disintegration of social and cultural life. Lyotard has his focus fixed on scientific knowledge but he draws a parallel between the scientific narratives and social cultural narratives. As the coherent scientific knowledge got splintered in specialism, so there also appeared a splintering in cultural and social life. In his report, Lyotard found many echoes in fields as diverse as a political theory, cultural theory, and art criticism. Indeed, later edition of the book ‘The Postmodern Condition’ include a postscript, which concentrates on aesthetic rather than scientific issues and the text as whole can be read as an overview of how the rules of games’ have changed in culture at large. It is perhaps not surprising to learn therefore that postmodern condition has had more of an impact on the humanities than it has had on the hard sciences. Lyotard has his major concern on the forms of knowledge, its ability for production. But his findings have a profound impact on humanities, politics, and social thoughts. The points in his reports are as follows the Re-explanation of Marxism is seen in the work. Lyotard was much influenced by Marxism. For Marx, class was the major instrument of exploitation. The proletariat class was universal and this class would lead the revolution for socialism. Such a position of Marx was not acceptable to Lyotard and other postmodernists. He argued that any single class, structure or factor cannot bring revolution. His plea has been that modern political theory is never coherent in its structure. There are much of fluid identities and social groups in the arena of political and this will never lead to any revolution. In other words knowledge is splintered and therefore the working or proletariat class is also charged by this incoherent knowledge. Such a fluid, diverse and incoherent knowledge falsifies or transforms the Marxian theory. This is the precise impact of Lyotard on Marxian theory of socialism. In contrast he advocates a paralogical legitimation, which is in essence, a conscious move away from established reason and methods. He construct a postmodern epistemology, which can put up knowledge under the new conditions of being “against metanarratives and foundationalism; ...and being for heterogeneity, plurality, constant

innovation, and pragmatic construction of local rules and prescriptive agreed upon by participants". Lyotard was influenced by the writings of Karl Marx. He shared Marx's dissatisfaction with capitalism, and became involved in the socialist revolution movement in Algeria. However, he reconciled from his involvement there in 1966, due to his loss of faith in Marxism as a totalising theory. Marxism positivises Lyotard's growing incredulity toward metanarratives, already stimulated by the World War II experiences. Lyotard effectively contradicts himself in his discussion of postmodernism by virtue of that concepts function as a new, all-embracing metanarrative. The metanarrative is seen as the only way of understanding the world and interpreting events, facts or experiences, to the exclusion of all others. What is contradictory in Lyotard's idea is that he gives unnecessary emphasis to the fact that the nature and circulation of knowledge are changing in the postmodern era. His line of thought is that knowledge is codified as information and translated into computer languages. It is commodified and therefore ideas in research are produced not for their truth-value but for their saleability. The 'commodified knowledge can co-exist with knowledge for its own sake'. It seems a contracted interpretation of his own forecast to limit the existence of knowledge to a commodified form. This awareness may well have serious implications for the interior logic of Lyotard's whole argument. The usefulness of Lyotard's work is already well established. According to Best and Kellner "in many circles Lyotard is celebrated as the postmodern theorist par excellence and above all, Lyotard has emerged as the champion of difference and plurality in all theoretical realms and discourses". Jean-Francois Lyotard's 'The Postmodern Condition' develops the claim that today's capitalism acts as a 'Vanguard machine' that drags humanity after it, dehumanising it in the drive for ultimate efficiency. He argues that the only resistance to this form of the inhuman is another inhuman that is at work in human subjectivity. In contrast to this technological inhuman, Lyotard claims that postmodern thought is able to identify an alternative form of the inhuman: the potential for being taken hold off by surprising and uncanny transformative possibilities that cannot be predicted, explained or mastered by technologically based systems of reason. He locates this sense of the inhuman in the 'anguish of a mind haunted by a familiar and unknown guest which is agitating it, sending it delirious but also making it think'. For Lyotard the human is the product of a conflict between two inhuman: the inhuman systems of technology and capitalism that threaten to satisfy anything in the human that is not of value to them, and, within this same human, the uncanny strangeness of another inhuman that is a potential site of resistance. He argues by raising question: what else remains as 'Politics' except resistance to this inhuman system? and what else is left resist with but the debt to which each soul has contracted with the miserable and admirable indetermination form which it was born and does not cease to be born? – Which is to say, with the other inhuman...? It is the task of writing, thinking, literature, arts, to venture to bear witness to it. According to Lyotard, the role of postmodernism is to perform an imminent critique of the day-to-day structures of realism.

What this means is that it operates within the realist context of a given culture to shatter its norms and challenges, its assumptions, not with a new set of criteria drawn from outside of that culture, but rather by showing the contradictions the culture contains, what it represses, refuses to recognise or makes unrepresentable.

CONCLUSION

In his essays, 'The Postmodern Condition' and 'What is Postmodernism?' (1982), Jean Francois Lyotard attacks the totalizing sensibilities of the Enlightenment which is the way of the modern movement according to Habermas. Lyotard targets the Enlightenment's authoritative explanations of the world and challenges Habermas's call for an end to "artistic experimentation" and for "order ... unity, for identity, for security". The unity which Habermas desires is discharged by Lyotard as an illusion which suppress the ever increasing plurality of contemporary culture. This dismissal is the basis for his theory of grand narratives, or meta narratives. Lyotard believes knowledge has become a commodity and consequently a means of empowerment. He sees knowledge as being communicated through narratives, or different ways of interpreting the world. Grand narratives are authoritative, establishing their political or cultural views as absolute truths beyond any means of criticism. They have a totalizing effect on the culture, reducing it to universal codes which usurp their local counterparts.

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