

Jean Francois Lyotard –(1924 –1998)

A French philosopher, sociologist, and literary theorist. He is well known for his writings on postmodernism after the late 1970s and the analysis of the impact of postmodernity on the human condition.

In *The Postmodern Condition – A Report on Knowledge* (1979) he outlined the following

According to Lyotard the postmodern condition is marked by a crisis in the status of knowledge in the Western Societies.

These meta-narratives - sometimes 'grand narratives' - are grand, large-scale theories and philosophies of the world, such as the progress of history, the knowability of everything by science, and the possibility of absolute freedom.

There is not one truth but many truths which compete and have equal value.

He expressed the postmodern condition as 'incredulity to **metanarratives**'.

Fredric Jameson – argued against this position in his book

Postmodernism or, The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism(1991)

Says that

1. Many of the so called aesthetic qualities of postmodernism are present in modernism or even earlier texts

'Consider, for example, the powerful alternative position that postmodernism is itself little more than one more stage of modernism proper (if not, indeed, of the even older romanticism); it may indeed be conceded that all the features of postmodernism I am about to enumerate can be detected, full-blown, in this or that preceding modernism.' (Jameson 1991)

2. That postmodernism is no longer shocking and has become part of the establishment – it has become its own 'metanarrative'

'As for the postmodern revolt against all that, however, it must equally be stressed that its own offensive features – from obscurity and sexually explicit material to psychological squalor and overt expressions of social and political defiance, which transcend anything that might have been imagined at the most extreme moments of high modernism – no longer scandalise anyone and are not only received with the greatest complacency but have themselves become institutionalised and are at one with the official or public culture of Western society.' (Jameson 1991)

