



# EXISTENTIALISM AND POSTMODERNISM

## *The Cult For Self*



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## CHAPTER 13

# Postmodernism, Virtual Reality and Popular Culture

Dr. Prasenjit Panda

Postmodernism is appeared to be a new historical movement which is by and large responsible for establishing a new cultural epoch after World War II. It does not endorse the modernist distinction between high and low culture nor it aims for establishing any truth. Having an iconoclastic sensibility, postmodernism is often raises its voice against any institutionalised concept of culture, knowledge, religion and aesthetics. Postmodernism rejects the cultural and aesthetic elitism of the modernism. The grand narrative or the metanarrative of the modernism is replaced with micronarratives. Popular culture like TV, Cinema or photography were even considered to be low art amidst the *avant garde* movement which considers Imagism, symbolism, Marxism, surrealism as high art. Postmodernism claims itself as an anti-philosophical since it rejects traditional concepts of truth, beauty, goodness and being and welcomes the fragmented version of truth and meaning. Centre collapses as the raise of the margins becomes inevitable. Postmodernity becomes "a journey into unknown territory where the old cultural constraints no longer apply, and our collective security is potentially compromised" (17). In the words of French postmodern theorist Jean-Francois Lyotard,

We now live in a world where Eclecticism is the degree zero of contemporary general culture; you listen to reggae; you watch a Western; you are McDonald's dress retro in Hong Kong; knowledge is the stuff of TV game shows... Together, artist, gallery owner, critic, and public indulge one another in the Anything Goes – it is time to relax. (8)

Postmodernism rejects the traditional concept of culture which works as preexisting social ordering force that is transmitted to members