The Literature of Exhausted Possibility: The Entanglement of Postmodern Fiction

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Abstract:
Postmodern literature, fiction in particular, is, according to Barth (1984), a literature of exhausted possibility due to its entangled thematic and technical approach which defies the conventional modern fictional form. It reflects the zeitgeist or the spirit of postmodernism which is regarded as a revaluation of the modern enterprise; an enterprise that embodies universality and coherence. The present research paper attempts to address the recurrent thematic element that postmodern fiction revolves around: that of the presence of the historiographic element in postmodern fiction which reflects in itself the evaluation of past history; such a fictional preoccupation reflects the major postmodern philosophers’ and thinkers’ concerns, such as those of Lyotard and Baudrillard, on the impossibility for the existence of a universal coherent history. This criterion is one amongst other criteria that justify the exhaustion of postmodern fiction.

Keywords: John Barth, Postmodern Fiction, Postmodernism, Post-historicism, Historiographic Metafiction, Jean Baudrillard, Fredric Jameson, Jean-François Lyotard

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