

Paradoxism and Postmodernism

Ion Soare

For a better understanding of the aims of this essay it is necessary to recall, at least fugitively, the partial (in)adequacy of the notion and the term of *postmodernism*, what, in spite of the fact that it is recognized for quite a long time in the literature of specialty, still arouses controversies. First of all, it is about its too large sphere, that is a inevitable limit against its possibilities of individualization. Maybe to this fact contributes too, its appreciation as an epiphenomenon of the *postmodernity*- reality and term also large, having a historic and social, in consequence, first of all, a temporal motivation. This finding couldn't be ignored by a subtle and profound researcher as Mircea Cartarescu, what, recognizing the mouvement "a strong aesthetic and self-conscious attitude and the temptation for a typological definition of that", observes the phenomenon's tendency to extend itself "until an anthropological dimension (..) with tendencies for annexation as strong as those of the structuralism, three decades ago"¹⁾.

The terminological difficulties regarding the two notions repeat in some degree their "homologues" from the previous period- *modernity* and *modernism*. We will not insist on this matter, because there is in this field a fundamental work in our (and not only) literature- **Dictionary of literary ideas** (vol. I-III), whose herudite author- Adrian Marino- makes a brilliant analyse of the mentioned terms and the ideas reflected by them.

For the time being, these are the terms- *postmodernity* and *postmodernism*, they have been used for many decades and nobody has put the problem of their replacement.

As regards the prefix *post*-, it was explained in many ways: "breaking", "outrunning", "negation" etc.²⁾, although all the dictionaries give this element an only, temporal, sense: "after", "ulterior".

From the denomination viewpoint the paradoxism has none of the mentioned drawbacks: from the beginning, it had a clear field, established through a programme of an almost mathematical precision and strictness; the term belongs, evidently, to the artistic sphere (as well as the symbolism, the surrealism etc.). More than other movements, the notion and its sonorous cover send both of them to the reality of referent (the life's paradoxes) and to the artistic aspect: the paradox as a proceeding, as a figure of speech. The paradoxism appears, therefore, as one of the best defined and adequate denominations among the literary "currents", having its own physiognomy.

What distinguishes the paradoxism from other movements, especially from postmodernism? What is its relation with this large artistic and literary movement of the end of the 20th century?

One of the first advised researchers of the paradoxism, Constantin M. Popa- himself a "fellow-traveller" of Florentin Smarandache at the beginning of the paradoxist "adventure", developing the idea that this movement recalls the historical avant-garde's experiences, finds that Smarandache's approach is assumed, however, "from a postmodernist viewpoint"(cit. works, p.46).

The relation between the two movements is in great detail emphasized by Titu Popescu, what, in the mentioned work, dedicates to it a separate chapter: *On postmodernist filiation*.. Even from title it is noticed that the subtle exegete considers the paradoxism as a kind of a "product" or a successor of the large movement in the second half of the 20th century. Developing this idea the same author considers the movement as "an exaggerated extension of the postmodernism"(p.43)

and, in other place, he uses just the syntagm *notion- mother* for the latter (p.50). If we consider that the author talks about the “triad” modernism- postmodernism- paradoxism, where the three movements are evidently put on a level of a notional and functional equality, it would result that Titu Popescu considers the paradoxism as an “instrumentalization of the postmodernism”, a derivative of that one, attaining now a level of emancipation, of autonomy. Moreover, it is suggested the idea of a chronological consequence.

G. Bajenaru in his study “The paradoxist post-modernism (sic!) in Smarandache’s distichs”, also considers the author as an “enfant terrible of the post-modernist literature”³⁾.

In the pretty severe critic that the “traditionalist” Ion Rotaru has many times made against the paradoxism, the known literary critic and historian does not ever mention the word “postmodernism”, but he prefers (sometimes ironically) that of “neovanguardism”, or that of “rearguardism”, and he places Smarandache in the 1980s generation⁴⁾. Partly, at least, he is right,- the negativist spirit of the paradoxism (not at all nihilist!) justifies this viewpoint too. Moreover, the critic has intuited (or perhaps did it deliberately?!) the classicization of the new vanguard- the dialectic of negation that becomes assertion, the deconstruction that becomes construction- “ the big (sic!) apparent paradox”(A.Marino). Otherwise, other researchers: C.M.Popa, Florin Vasiliu, Titu Popescu etc., place it on the line of the 20th century avant-gardes too, distinguishing different dissociation’s degrees among these and, finally, they claim the paradoxism to the postmodernism, after some more or less nuanced analyses of their interferences.

It is also interesting Smarandache’s viewpoint, who, underlying the originality/individuality of the movement (“the paradoxism is paradoxism”), in **Defective writings** (as well as before in **Nonroman**), self-analyses all his own tendencies and influences from this volume, and also the majority (if not the all) of the used technico-literary methods. Among many other things draw attention the dry and lapidary mention of the word *postmodernism*- auctorial/scripted gesture about what we will return, because of its significance and importance.

The exegetes of the postmodernism described in different ways this movement, with inspiration characterized by Ovid S. Crohmalniceanu as a kind of “ monster from Loch Ness of the contemporary critic: more and more people declare that they have seen it, but they give some absolutely different descriptions about its fabulous appearance”⁵⁾. We limit our demonstration to that one of Ihab Hassan, resumed by Mircea Cartarescu in his complex work dedicated to the ROMANIAN POSTMODERNISM.

The indetermination. The ambiguities accompanied by breaks or dislocations of speech are met in a series of smarandachian creations, no matter the genres or species. The ambiguity, especially in the sense of “equivocal”, is one of the frequent used methods by the paradoxist Smarandache; through it, it is realized the paradox and, through extension, the contradiction or at least a possibility, a first step in their accomplishment, obtained through hints, puns and suspense: ”In the beginning was the violin/ And it remained a cello (*Variations on a sensitive string*) (“La inceput era vioara/ Si-a ramas violoncel”, *Variatiuni pe o coarda sensibila*); “She wears short skirts- I think that from the viewpoint of/ clothing she is unsatisfactory!”(*Antipoem of love*)(“ Umbla cu fuste mini- cred ca sub /aspectul tinutei lasa de dorit!” , *Antipoem de dragoste*) ; “She had fu-, strut herself/ With some better crazy one/ Because fought them those two/ And defeated both of them”(Care-worn and careful edition) (“ Ea se fu-, se fuduli/ Cu cite un nebun mai bun/ Caci luptara ei cei doi/ Si-nvinsera amindoi.”*Editie grijita si ingrijita*)). The patterns in a pure state are rare, the absurd, the surrealism and other *-isms*, living together everywhere.

The endeavour for perfection, the unitary, rounded or closed work lacks, as a rule, at Smarandache. Sequences and rough copies of life (otherwise actual- objective or subjective), paradoxical through momentary illuminated situations or emphasized through paradoxist means, replace the ample, rational and logical poems of the postmodernism. Only an attentive eye, a subtle mind, a good memory could re-create through the juxtaposition and ordering of these aleatory and anarchical paradoxist lightnings, an aliena(n)ted and full of contradiction world, in what the nebulous takes the place of the clarity and the end that we knew positively moral is blurred by the absurd of situations and human manifestations. The attractiveness of the creator approach is given by the literary “clear- obscure” obtained through contradictions, antitheses etc.

However, at least in the intention declared in manifestoes, the indetermination and the reproduction of smarandachian literary art hadn't have as purpose its transformation into a consumption object. On the contrary: ”Writers, do you sell your sentiments? Do you create only for money?” apostrophizes Smarandache, full of grief and indignation, some of his fellows.

The *fragmentation of the reality* is interdependent with the indetermination, or in its proximity, and it is (however!) the starting point of the paradoxistic creation. ”A heap of broken images”(T.S.Eliot) replace the “whole” as the potsherds of a broken mirror: ”Wash. Brush. Teeth...Fuuiii...Fuuiii(...).An open window. Towards the sky.Net.Mosquitoes”.(The heroic day of an ordinary man). The syntax is not, in fact, fragmented, but forced; the relation word have disappeared. The optimistic, bitter or tragical humor accompanies this technique, as a rule. The abundance of information, the fury of the trepidating life and the viewpoint of the arts' agony (if not death!) - all of these, oppose themselves to a continual and coherent speech. The internal contradictions of an objective reality and, subsequently, those of the paradoxist style, impose the same discontinuity and fragmentation.

“The fragmentariness in self, as a literary proceeding, -notices Mircea Cartarescu- is not specific (nowadays) only to the postmodernism, but almost to every form of art with what it coexists: neoavant-gardes (my underline) (...) paraliterature (...), so this method can't be used isolately, as a distinct criterion”⁶⁾. The fragmentation technique, as a stylistic proceeding, is detectable, on different levels (chapters, pages, paragraphs, phrases aso.) in the whole smarandachian creation; it opposes itself to that famous *integritas*- a feature of the modern literature and art. However, it is not available for the global level of his work- but we will come again to this aspect...

The *decanonization*, as an essential feature of the postmodernism, is practiced too, by Smarandache, but not in extreme forms. His common sense of a true-born peasant and his modesty that, paradoxically, coexist all the time with his measureless vanity and “splendid insolence” (C.M.Popa), brake the radicalization of his approach. If in the case of the political personalities his irreverence reaches the iconoclasy, as regards the literary- cultural ones it is felt the deference. Only a masked familiarism (a la Sorescu) emerges from time to time, if we do not take in consideration the relative big number of parodied authors- a few, famous names of our literature: “Our father (...)/From literary/ Heavens/ uncle Rotaru” (Ion- the writer,n.n.), or *Shakespeare Alexandru* and *Beethoven Nicolae* (these could be genuine names, according to the gypsies' habits to give their children rare, exotic, famous names)- titles of short prose. Paradoxist's decanonizing attitude does not avoid even The Great Creator. ”I come in -Get out, says he (Our Lord knew me/ faithful in my unfaithfulness)/ I ask him for a helping hand/ he kicks me/ This pig plays only dog's tricks- he is a complicated and impure person”(Audience at God) (“Intru-Iesi, zice (Domnul nostru ma stia/ credincios in necredinta mea)/ Eu ii cer o mina de

ajutor/ el imi da un picior/ Porcu asta face numai magarii - este un individ complicat si impur”, *Audienta la Dumnezeu*).

Smarandache’s demythitizing mind is relative moderate, because he does not question the existence of the literature (and, implicitly, of its major representatives), but he denies it to create it again; he does not want to create on ruins, but to re-organize the material of “construction”. A poet as Vasile Voiculescu, who proposes himself to become a “doctor in poetry”- will never reach the literary iconoclasy. His insurgence will refer to the styles, in the worst case, but not the authors.

Nietzsche’s denying of the subject’s reality, that would be only a fiction, in fact, its deconstruction, is tantamount to a creation of the imagination, leading, after Ihab Hassan, to those *life enhancing fictions*, real mental pictures of the postmodern art; otherwise, “ they are not manifestations proper of the *creative ego* , as well as the modernist works, but or they lack an own self, or they are the proliferations of some false egos”(Mircea Cartarescu). Because of this, they are characterized through a *lack-of-self* and *lack-of profoundness*, of a stratification that favors a search towards an primeval sense and the use of metaphors and symbols. Out of this, the defiance of any kind of hermeneutic.

The impression of disappearance, lack of the creative subject, is given by a good part of Smarandache’s works. Although neither Cartarescu, nor other postmodernism’s exegetes have not use the notion of lyrism anymore (characteristic attitude of the ego that expresses his personal experiences)- manifestation considered “obsolete”, traditionalist or, in the best case, modernist, the notion would have to be put in circulation back just on the postmodernism’s field, at least to amend it! It seems to us being able to operate further on, because it represents the main “opposition” against the prosaism, epicallism, even textualism. From this point of view, Smarandache’s objectivity is almost absolute and joins to the postmodernism’s “canons” perfectly. All the existence’s paradoxes/ contradictions, so fragmented and undetermined, re-create within the reader’s/ co-author’s imagination the whole dramatically and funny, at the same time, hell of the present world, in what the author’s creative subject seems to dissolve himself, in a forced accommodation and perverted complicity. Beyond any doubt the fundamental “absolutist” dyes step by step! In spite of some throb or cry, as that from *The suitors (Petitorii)* (from the volume **Emigrant toward infinity**, p.51), in our opinion one of the most beautiful poems of love, in the entire contemporary poetry. The cycle “*Closer to close*” (“*Aproape de aproape*”) from the mentioned volume is the most full of the poet’s “self presence”. These verses seem to be written in an older period of the poet’s life- at the time of the “accumulations” of all kind of desillusions. From here the direct, almost confessional style, with a certain period rhetoric (and arsenal), either he talks at first plural person :”We were the ploughmen of the good thought/ We wished the earth full of flowers/ We are the struggle for flowers martyrs” (“Am fost plugarii gindului de bine/ Noi am dorit pamintul plin de flori/ Suntem martirii luptei pentru flori”), or he expresses himself at first person: ”It’s draught of love in me/ They didn’t plant and didn’t water love”(*I, as a contradiction*) (“E seceta de dragoste in mine/ Iubire n-au sadit si n-au udat” *Eu ca o contradictie*).

Mircea Cartarescu has observed with subtlety the paradox created through the interference of the figurative and the non-figurative in the modern and the postmodern art. In spite of this paradox, for the modern artist the referent lacks or it gives just an illusion of its existence (“false referent” works). In this way the reality seems to disappear, the text returns to itself, being its own referent, feature known under the name of *un(re)presentable*. Smarandache would say, quoting from Roussel, “the dog potters along” (Defective writings) (“Cainele se-nvirte in jurul

cozii” Scrieri defecte) or “starting from an idea, to branch out yourself at infinity without saying anything”(Ibidem) (“pornind de la o idee, sa te ramifici la infinit fara a spune nimic”).

The paradoxist’s attractiveness for atrocious and grotesque (sometimes pornographically-masked) in **Nonroman (Nonroman), The country of animals (Patria de animale)** etc, situation met at the neoavant-gardes too, is, also, a feature of the postmodernism.

The irony - against the object or the subject (self-irony) is sovereign in the entire smarandachian work. From a mean of construction and of defense too, in a hostile and full of contradictions world, it becomes a habitude and even an aim in itself (the author seeming to take everything in laugh); it knows every levels/ degrees possible: almost kind and sad “Finally, his time has come: sleet and snowing”(Old age without youth age) (“In fine, a venit si timpul lui: lapovita si ninsoare” *Batrinete fara tinerete*); lenient: ”the football players think/ with their shoes”(On Wimbley, in Banie) (“Fotbalistii gindesc/ cu bocancii” *Pe Wimbley, in Banie*); harsh: “The quotes of the Danube’s waters will continuously rise /with new drowned men...”(*Florentin’s teachings...*) (“Cotele apelor Dunarii vor creste continuu/ cu noi inecati...” *Invataturile lui Florentin*); till sarcasm: ” Vitoria Lipan is running, she is called by the country/ of Welsh... lives well/ only from memories”(*Characterize the subject*) (“Vitoria Lipan fuge, o cheama tara/ Galilor... traiește bine numai din amintiri” *Characterizati personajul...*;(...we could add, the... Romanian nowadays subject, opposed to the mioritism, nonmioritism!). We met everywhere in the smarandachian “style of the nonstyle” and in the linguistical material used, “game strategies from imitation to glossolalia, from self citation to intertextuality”- cartarescian appreciation suiting as well as possible to Smarandache too. The perspectivism from his two last volumes (**Defective writings, Time for jokes**) (**Scrieri defecte, Vreme de saga**), tends to generalize itself, aiming all the spheres of a changing society: its internal contradictions, the men (adapted, victims or martyrs), life and literary styles cliches and everything coexist with a prolonged self irony, with its own negation.

The hybridization as a specific feature of the postmodernism (unlike *irony* that was-with certain distinctions, detectable also in other literary movements), is abundantly practiced by the paradoxism’s founder: the poetry (as a parody and an imitation) appears converted into theatre (*Love’s affairs(Aventurile dragostei)* from the volume **I am against myself (Exist impotriva mea)**, but also in a series of pseudo- poems with an appearance of dia- and tri! -logues) and in **Nonroman** are mixed almost all the literary genres (epic, lyrical, dramatic) and possible species: short story, fable, story, lampoon, essay aso. and other extra-literary ones: the politic manifesto, puzzle aso. In its turn, the poetry becomes a genuine dramatic prose... or texts and pretexts, dadaist collage, in which coexist in an eclectic harmony (or in an harmonious eclectism!) almost all the *-isms* of the 20th century, older or *neo* ones. The cultivated or popular (the proverbs) aphorisms become distichs (paradoxist, tautological aso.); the fables turn into epigrams, the contemporary- urban (sometimes suburban!) or rural folklore is recovered (**From world gathered) (De prin lume adunate)** or (**Suburb songs) (Cintece de mahala)**, obtaining paternity in a kind of deliberate and declared plagiarism, as in a reversed process of the popular creation’s birth.

This kaleidoscopic diversity of genres, species and styles create a fascinating image of a variegated literary “carpet”, woven from the most varied materials, realized in the strangest colors and shades. But a kind of magic, flying carpet, on what the reader experiences together with the author, the whole existential and *non-existentia*(and literary alike!) “panorama of the vanities” from the end of the 20th century.

Tightly closed by hybridization and, somehow a product of it, is the *carnavalesque* emanated by the smarandachian paradoxism, characterized through an often excessive comic. It is obtained not only through paradoxes, but also through irony (see above), imitation, parody and other different means added to the “masks” that the gifted writer put himself at every step- all these realize a genuine literary show, whose burlesque is concurred only by the “scenario” polyphony. The text’s productivity and diversity, the tendency to caricature, the linguistic virtuosity in the phrase construction and deconstruction, the verbal inventiveness of a (post)modern sphinx, the “subtle orality “about Cartarescu was talking”⁷⁾, all these contribute again at the impression of literary show. This feature- *the carnivalesque - the burlesque- the grotesque*, is all the more emphasized at Smarandache as in the depth of his being of a word artist, he does not despise the literary traditions (romanian and universal), but he wants their renewal, using other means of expression. “The clinic of words” where he brought for treatment the words sick of wear and tear and banality, seems to be a sanatorium for talkative and funny crazy people, where these live their “merry apocalypse”.

In spite of the temporal (and temporary) unconcordances between the writing and the publishing date of some works, it is noticed at Smarandache a clear evolution from a “pre-paradoxist” (C.M.Popa), in fact, modernist period, to an emphasized paradoxist stage, corresponding to the triumphant moment of this well individualized movement. At the same time it is noticed the author’s/ character’s passing from the gravity of the literary and existential approach to a lucid assuming of a burlesque actor role as a final solution for the spiritual-literary(and biological, in the same measure, in function of the sincerity of one or another “game”) survival.

The impression of a literary-marathonesque show is produced by all the smarandachian writings, no matter the genre, but almost in the play **Metahistory**. In poetry - at him, a genre far enough from its used understanding - and in proses (almost nonfunctional notions because of the hybridization) the postmodernist show is given by the somehow film succession/ agglomeration of the contemporary life sequences- itself a strange and variegated show seeming escaped from the director’s/ scenario writer’s control. The author’s linguistic performance is at least as original, burlesque and stateliness to the thematic one.

But unlike many of nowadays poets that create within the framework of the postmodernism, the paradoxist Smarandache did not enter as a mere actor in this exciting and ample show. Having a real vocation of a founder, he has tried and much part he has succeeded from the beginning, to order ...the unorderable, applying in literature one of his most known paradoxes: ”All is possible, the impossible too! ”. It is known that only the great actors do not let the impression of a simulation, that the identification with the character is total. Smarandache is one of these actors, of course, thanks to his gift, because “the paradoxism doesn’t mean exemption of talent”(Titu Popescu).

The contextuality of the paradoxist texts and of the majority of the postmodernist ones, “ leads after the inner law of these arts to the resumes and even the deformations of them”. The redundancy is deliberate: Smarandache “despises the mannerism and imitation (C.M.Popa), they belonging (as well as the self imitation and the “self plagiarism”) to the movement’s programme. At the same time the text is used as an instrument and it has the clear role- declared not a single time by the author- to invite the reader to become a co-author at its (re)writing (*Subject of short prose, Greuceanu, The reader becomes writer*, etc.) (*Subiect de nuvela, Greuceanu, Cititorul devine scriitor* etc.). That is the reason for the frequent calls for the events foreground (happenings). The literature on computer recommended by author aims the same thing- receiver’s

implication in the creative act:” Programmez les ordinateurs pour écrire a vos places” urged Smarandache the readers in his first nonconformist manifesto. Public’s “contribution” at the literary creation’s birth, besides the obsessive insistence in the daily’s approach, creates a substantial and fascinating impression of a literaturization of the existence. In paradoxism the life and the literature join themselves until merging., seeming to be able to replace one another, much than a mere reciprocal influence (incidentally saying, the influence of literature and of art, in general, but also of that postmodernist, on the life, are still not enough pointed out by experts!).

The requirement of the *performance* about what has talked Ihab Hassan, resumed by Mircea Cartarescu (cit. work.p.103), through subsequent revisals - represents in their opinion an important feature. This point of view is not axiomatic and it is worth returning to it.

The massive interference between art, literature and existence, concretized in the aesthetization of the last, has as result “a more emphasized loss of the sentiment of reality, here including the time and the history.”(Mircea Cartarescu).In our opinion here acts a kind of a perfidious trap, that in fact is a ... non-logic. Its effect could be real, but belongs to the creator, not without fail also to the receiver, because public’s participation at the birth of a work of art is, however, only a tendency arised from a desideratum of the first. The danger of *idola theatri* is obvious.

The consistency- paradoxical!- of life’s aesthetization lies in the creation by the postmodern writers of some imaginary universes, with fictious spaces and beings but “subtly inserted in the real world”. In this way Cartarescu cites: Marquez, Doctorow, Banulescu aso. However, the literary-historical associative flash functions automatically: is not the literature (from all the times) a multiply transfiguration (more or less representative as art, methods and results) of the reality? We think that this constructionism is not, in fact, a feature only of the postmodernism, but it merges with the literature itself!

Man has talked for more than a hundred years about the death of the literature through different *methods*: cancellation through the action of its opposite (*antiliterature*), scientification aso. In postmodernity takes place its “dissolution”, but the result of this planetary “chemistry” should be useful for the world’s life: what could be more benefic for the human existence, than this ineffable and evanescent “transfusion” of an artistic noble plasma through the arteries of a human organism not without fail tired, but “mad, mad ... as a hornet”?

As in counterpoise with the construction of a fictious world that has its own reference, today man is talking about the abolishment of the reality (Mircea Cartarescu, cit.work, p.104). But is a good thing that it hasn’t ventilated yet the idea of the reality’s disappearance, of its “death”!- that imposes the thought that the parallelism between postmodernity and postmodernism is not perfect, however.

For Smarandache the reality is present as a permanent obsession; from it he takes his creative resources. The irony and the parody have at him an intrisec, constructionist and subtly shaping aim. The artistic world created by him is not really a fictious one: under the thickened, caricatural lines and under the coloured life potsherds (and coloured by life), the reader composes again in his imagination the entire world of our days, full of paradoxes and contradictions, either human characters and weaknesses (vices) or are re-created in order to be stigmatized and cancelled some entire totalitary regimes (**The country of animals, No exit** aso.).

Is there an *immanence* in this universe created by Smarandache? Is this universe sufficient to himself? The answer to this question can be only partly affirmative, as long we talk about a certain mannerism; however it constitutes precisely the essence of the paradoxism, the total of the

stylistic features (and also of content) that differentiate it from the other literary movement in the 20th century.

It is easy to notice from the concise above speech, that all the main features of the postmodernism (there are also others, after the researchers’* viewpoint) are also found in paradoxism, with some distinctions that we have underlined above, but for the clarity of our demonstration we will emphasize again, more systematically. Thus, at Florentin Smarandache that begun his literary way with declared intentions of a founder, nothing is aleatory, even the aleatory is deliberate, controlled and discreetly directed for serving the proposed aims. He who reads with attention and patience his whole work finds that all the textual fragmentations are little wheels, parts of a big gearing, not without a certain stateliness, that functions: the PARADOXISM. With these criteria for reading, the indetermination, the fragmentation and the other paradoxisto-postmodernist features won’t appear as aleatory anymore, as some fatal products of the postmodernity, but together with the other features they build up a strong and living system. Axiologically seen, the result obtained reaches the performance and does not remain at the level of an intention or a tendency, as it happens sometimes in postmodernism. Moreover, appear to us of a good performance some “modules” of this gearing, especially in the dramatic creations: *The country of animals*, *The formation of new man*, *Destiny* aso (*Patria de animale*, *Formarea omului nou*, *Destin*).

A contradictory current through its essence, the paradoxism does not entirely disown the ego’s lyrical tribulations. In some poems (*Somewhere, out of time (Undeva, in afara timpului)* from the volume **I am against myself**, *Deafs and dumbs (Surzi si muti)*, *Healing (Vindecare)* etc., from **Emigrant to infinit**), the Man Smarandache, seemed to revolt against the nietzschean idea about the subject’s/ ego’s destruction, turns itself from an old man into a weak and perplexed traditional child that calls about his modernists parents. The lyrical intrusions into the paradoxism’s big postmodernist web, prove the deliberate and programmatic character of movement, opposed sometimes to the postmodernist’s aleatory and disorder. The author’s tendency towards the rehabilitation of some fixed species (with certain deviations pushed to the extreme) - haiku, distichs, one line poems aso.- and towards the foundation of some new subspecies (tautological distich, dualistic distich, combinatory drama, paradoxist quatrain, paradoxist distich aso.) are as many proofs about Smarandache’s tendencies to break the (pretty vast) frame of the postmodernism, that is not interested in the creation of new literary species. We think that it couldn’t talk about a proper *hybridization*, but, in the worst(?) case about a paradoxism’s graft at the tradition.

The paradoxism “ forbids itself the implicit self-commentary that excelled in the postmodernist prescription”(Titu Popescu), but not entirely, because Smarandache analyses sometimes his own work, from interior, as a part of the creation itself (**Nonroman, An upturned world**)(**Nonroman, O lume intoarsa pe dos**).

As concerns the paradoxism’s relations with the avant-gardes of the 20th century, this problem is pretty complex, and it would be superficial, if not minimizing, to catalogize it as a (neo)avant-garde movement. We’ll no make here the “ history of the matter”, especially after the above “confrontation” between paradoxism and postmodernism. The same subtle and profound critic, Titu Popescu, has resumed the best this aspect, asserting that the smarandachism “has passed from the avant-garde’s insurgent and disputatious spirit to the ironical-parodical recovering of the traditions.”(cit.work.,p.37). Thus, Titu Popescu distinguishes a “avant-garde” tendency only on the first period of the paradoxism, that corresponds with its origin/ motivation on artistic and social plane: the dispute. Afterwards the movement would has entered the large

field the of postmodernism through the “ironical-parodical recovering of the traditions”, that we have to recognize, is an essential feature of this ample movement.

Starting from the opinions and information about paradoxism of some different researchers, but also of Florentin Smarandache himself, and mathematically (and in the paradoxist spirit movement) using the formal logics’ dates, we find the following:

- the paradoxism started as a new contest, as regards the theme - against the political totalitarianism and as regards the style - against the “classicism tyranny”, that is the modernism; from this point of view it belongs to what Ion Rotaru, and after he, the majority of “paradoxistologists” named *neovanguardism*;
- the new movement has a distinctive profile as regards the content and the means of expression; it reflects the paradoxes and the contradictions of a world in a perpetual transition, using some distinctive proceedings based especially on the paradox as a figure of speech, but also on other artistic means related to the paradox through their dual/contradictory character: antitheses, antinomies, oxymorons, antonymies aso.
- through the “reflection” of the same reality (or, not to disappoint the “postmodernistologists”- through the creation of a imaginary world), but using the contemporary human existence’s elements and the assimilation of some specific artistic techniques (the fragmentary, the irony, the hybridization, the constuctionism aso.), the paradoxism tends towards a merger with the postmodernism; from this viewpoint they are alike two mathematical crowds which intersect themselves, having more and more common objects and tending towards a superposition that they will never reach because each of them has also certain distinct features, opposite to an entire identification;
- speaking fairly and without any intention to diminishing postmodernism’s literary- artistic stature and importance, it comes out a paradoxism’s general and clear tendency to enlarging its sphere; thus, it get out from the present times plan and plunges in the past, with recovering stops and “courtships” (even though ironical-ludic) to the almost all the literary movements from all times, until the greek antiquity or the “golden mines” of popular creation, that could be much older. “The common denominator” under that takes place this large assimilation/ absorption is the “paradoxist style” that individualizes itself through originality and expressive force. At us only “The Levant of the brilliant Mircea Cartarescu” (Gh. Tomozei) represent a genuine postmodernist retort as regards the approach and, at the same time, the recovering, from an ironical- ludic new viewpoint, of a literary past considered old- fashioned today;
- the paradoxism is, not less, an intelligent and successful synthesis of all the avant-gardes from the 20th century, because it can not be put the problem of their parody/ imitation, as themselves represented at their time as many taking in laugh of some certain canons and anchylosed patterns (the retort of retorts would be a nonsense, as well as their parody, because the parody of parody is impossible!);
- in some points the postmodernity-postmodernism parallelism arises some disadvantageous disputes for the latter. Thus, the new (post)industrial world supposes, logically, the performance (not only at an intentional level) as well as in sport- both of them being fields of an unquestionable proportion and importance. But the postmodernism excludes the performance proper, although names and understands it as successive resumptions and revisals (Ihab Hassan), these being made by receivers and not by authors. It is suggested thus the idea of some stages towards the real performance, of some reiterations on the way towards the *inaugural show*, that supposes, although, the performance. But the artistic performance could become a masterpiece’s substitute, a fact

that is in contradiction with postmodernism's *indetermination*. At its turn, the masterpiece supposes a value and, implicitly, a hierarchy of values- either human or artistic, that run counter to the postmodernist canons having as philosophical fundament the conceptions of Nietzsche and Heidegger as regards the human being's contextuality and aleatory. If were imposed or taken as some *canons*, the postmodernist features could become dogmas encroaching upon its own freedom of creation. Cartarescu himself establishes the contradiction of some features of the postmodernism (cit. work p.105).

The lucid, objective and absolutely fair paradoxism's founder has noticed from early time the traps laid to its movement and tried to avoid them. These are not less than those of the postmodernism, because "nothing is perfectly, even the perfect". He surpassed the test of the "disappearance of the literature" returning to the words and letters (even though sometimes these are delusive and bewildering ones!). The receiving of his movement as a vanguardism, either a *neo* one, represents also a certain danger and the paradoxist theoretician should pay more attention to it.

The two movements tend towards an equalization of their contents. I have read many paradoxist poems of some poets that pass for postmodernists and that hardly heard about paradoxism. Smarandache himself, but also other paradoxists, writes postmodernist texts too. Anyway, it isn't any possibility of a cancellation between the two movements!

Florentin Smarandache has not been alone on the "battle field" for a long time, in order to leave him out of consideration; however the paradoxist "team" is smaller, it aims towards an international expansion. But the challengers' forces are still unequal.

If in literature has been more fair-play and justice, if the always restless letters' world hasn't been so selfish and passionate, then would have been recognized for a long time, *entirely*, the paradoxism's unchallenged originality and the founder merits of Florentin Smarandache- brilliant mathematician and writer and an encyclopedic mind with remarkable achievements in philosophy, logic, painting, enigmistic. The hesitations, the indifference and other human "nonsentiments" persist in unrecognizing.

We warmly assert (and with the risks that devolve from that!) that the Romanian Smarandache from Balcesti-Valcea is from the point of view of the originality of his literary approach, a Tzara of the end of the 20th century. More than this one, Smarandache has not founded his movement on formalism and hazard, but, also more than the postmodernism, on the contradictions and the paradoxes of the contemporary society, and, as regards the style- on contradictory expressive *proceedings* from the large sphere of paradoxes.

In the opinion of Mircea Cartarescu the postmodernism "closes a big loop in the European culture, returning itself at the ambient, utilitarian, decorative and eminently democratic art's perception, fore the romantic revolution"(p.8). The next reader's question appears logically: what else will follow after the loop's closing? If we admitted the theory of the cyclicity of civilization and culture, the answer could be only one: another loop will have to be opened, however it would has just from the beginning a somehow different physiognomy. And it will has to find another name for the post- postmodernism (a funny, if not a ridiculous term).

What about the paradoxism? Normally, this movement will last as long as will exist paradoxes and contradictions in the society, in the human thinking and in its sonorous (and/or written) cover- the speech. It means a long time, because the inner contradictions of the objects, phenomena, ideas, communication systems aso., will exist practically for ever, even though in a permanent change and becoming.

Every paradoxist has the chance to become an EMIGRANT TO INFINITY.

**) Gheorghe Grigurcu, for instance, resumed by Titu Popescu (cit. work, p.38), distinguished the following features of postmodernism: the epicization of lyrical speech, the intertextuality, codes' heterogeneity, Babel totality, form's deformation, relative ludic, objectivity experimentation. All these could be find again- with other denominations- in the eleventh hassan-cartarescian features analyzed above.*

NOTES

I.Paradoxology and paradoxism

1. Ion Rotaru, *Pseudo- eseu asupra unui curent literar euro- american, Psudo-essay on a Euro- American literary study*, in “Antology of The Paradoxist Literary Mouvement”, Los Angeles, 1993, p.39.
- 2.Ibidem, p.42.
- 3.Gheorghe Tomozei, *Funcția Smarandache, Smarandache function*, preface at the volume of verses *I am against myself*, by Florentin Smarandache , ed. Macarie, Targoviste, 1994, p.8.
- 4.Ibidem, p.7.
- 5.Adrian Marino, *Dictionar de idei literare I, Dictionary of literary ideas I*, ed. Eminescu, Bucuresti,1973,p.117.
- 6.Ion Soare, *Un scriitor al paradoxurilor: Florentin Smarandache, A writer of the paradoxes: Florentin Smarandache*,ed.Almarom, Ramnicu Valcea, 1994.
- 7.Ion Rotaru, cit.place.
- 8.Florin Vasiliu, *Paradoxism's main roots*, Phoenix, USA, XIQUAN PUBLISHING HOUSE, 1994, p.7.
- 9.Ibidem.
- 10.Ibidem, p.58.
- 11.see the above mentioned works of Florin Vasiliu, Ion Rotaru aso.
- 12.Florentin Smarandache, *Tragedie antica, Antique tragedy*, manuscript.
- 13.Titu Popescu, *Estetica paradoxismului, Paradoxism's aesthetics*,ed. Tempus, Bucuresti, 1995, p.51.
- 14.see the essay of Adrian Marino, *Moartea literaturii,Literature's death*, in “Mozaicul”, an I, nr.12, Craiova, 1999, p.1.
- 15.Adrian Marino, cit.work, p.127.
- 16.Titu Popescu, cit. work, p.56.
- 17.Ibidem, p.139.
- 18.Adrian Marino, *Dictionary...* ,p.130.

II.Two mathematicians poets: ION BARBU and FLORENTIN SMARANDACHE

- 1.Alexandru Cioranescu, *Ion Barbu. Monografie, Ion Barbu. Monography*, ed.Fundatia Culturala Romana, Bucuresti, 1996, p.5.
- 2.Dinu Flamind, *Postfata la “Poezii” de Ion Barbu, Postface at ” Poems” by Ion Barbu*, ed. Minerva, Bucuresti, 1976, p.170.
- 3.Al. Cioranescu, cit. work, p.49.
- 4.see the chapter”*The relation mathematics- literature in Florentin Smarandache's work*” from our monography *A writer of the paradoxes- Florentin Smarandache*, ed. Almarom, Valcea, 1994, p.67- 71.
- 5.Jean Michel Levenard, *Florentin Smarandache et le mouvement pardoxiste*, in “*Antology of the Paradoxist Literary Mouvement*”, Los Angeles, 1993, p.80.
- 6.Dan Barbilian,*Opera matematica, vol III, Mathematic works, vol.III* Ed.Didactica si Pedagogica, Bucuresti, 1970, p.13.
- 7.Charles Ashbacher, in *Journal of Recreational Mathematics*, USA, vol.28, /2, 1996-1997, p.132.

- 8.see Adrian Marino, *Dictionary... I* (chapter "The antiliterature"), p.100-159.
- 9.Dinu Flamand, cit work, p.154.
- 10.Al. Cioranescu, cit.work, p.47.
- 11.Florentin Smarandache, *Collected papers*, vol. I, ed. SocietatiiTempus, Bucuresti, 1996, p.296- 297.
- 12.*Ibidem*, p.35.
- 13.Florentin Smarandache, *Intreaba- ma sa te- ntreb, Ask me for I ask you*, ed. Macarie, Targovista, 1999, p.50.
- 14.*Arghezi, Bacovia, Barbu, Blaga, Fundoianu, Maniu, Pillat, Vinea, Voiculescu presented by Laurentiu Ulici*, ed. Enciclopedica Romana, Bucuresti, 1974, p.121.
- 15.Titu Popescu, cit. work, Tempus, Bucuresti, 1995, p.139.

III.Paradoxism's offensive

- 1.Other writers are bounded with the foundation of the movement: Constantin M. Popa, Constantin Dinca, Traian Nica, etc.
- 2.see, for instance, C.M.Popa,*The Paradoxist Literary Mouvement-* Chicago, 1992; Ion Soare; *A writer of the paradoxes: Florentin Sdmarandache*; Titu Popescu, *Paradoxism's aesthetics*, Bucuresti, 1995 aso.
- 3.see Ion Soare, cit. work, p.6.
- 4.Titu Popescu, cit.work, p.98.
- 5.*Ibidem* , p.47.
- 6.Marian Barbu, *Virtutile si servitutile teatrului modern, The virtues and servitudes of modern theatre*,(manuscript),Craiova, 1999, p.
- 7.Titu Popescu, cit work, p.133.
- 8.Florentin Smarandache *Antique tragedy*, (manuscript), p.9.
- 9.see the above mentioned ample study of Marian Barbu.
- 10.Letter to Florentin Smarandache,from april, 23, 1995
- 11.Idem, from april, 13, 1994.
- 12.Marian Barbu, cit. work, p.75.
- 13.Ion Soare, cit. work, p.75.
- 14.Cezar Ivanescu, in preface at the volume, p.4.
- 15.Gabriela Haja, *Jocul cuvintelor*, Words' game, in "Timpul", Iasi, no.11(52), nov.1997, p.9.
- 16.Gheorghe Tomozei, *The Smarandache Function-* preface at the volume *I am against myself*, Ayus, Craiova, 1997 and ZAMOLXIS PUBLISHING HOUSE, Phoenix, Arizona, USA,1997, p.10.
- 17.Ovidiu Ghidirmic, in *Preface* at the volume *Through tunnels of words*, by Florentin Smarandache, Haiku, Bucharest, 1997, p.10.
- 18.*Ibidem*,p.5.
- 19.*Ibidem*,p.6.
- 20.Titu Popescu, cit, work, p.34.
- 21.Andreea Deciu, *Pacatele postmodernismului, The postmodernism's sinns*, in "Romania Literara", nr.20/24-30 mai,2000, p.19.
- 22.Al.Mirodan,*Florentin Smarandache, Happenings with Pacala...*, in"Minimum", Tel Aviv, year XI, no.128, nov.1997,p.47.
- 23.Al.Florin Tene, *Florentin Smarandache: Professor in Afrika- Afrikan journal*, in "Povestea Vorbei", no.1/2000, Ramnicu valcea, p.14.

24.Mihaela Constantinescu, *Forme in miscare.Postmodernismul,, Forms in movement. The Postmodernism.*, ed.Univers Enciclopedic, Bucuresti, 2000, p.73- 74.

25.Daniela Cristea Enache, *O manusa intoarsa pe dos: postmodernismul (II) An upturned glove: the Postmodernism(II).* Akind of Lego, in “Adevarul literar si artistic”, anul IX,nr.519/mai,23,2000, p.5.

26.J.M.Levenard, Ion Rotaru, A.Skemer. *Antntology of the Paradoxist Literary Mouvement*, Los Angeles, 1993, p.69.

27.Mircea Cartarescu, *Postmodernismul romanesc, The Romanian Postmodernism*,ed. Humanitas, Bucuresti, 2000, p.102.

28.Constantin M.Popa, cit. work, p.46.

29.G.Bajenaru, *Postmodernismul paradoxist in distihurile lui Smarandache, The paradoxist postmodernism in Smarandache’s distichs*, in” Meridianul Romanesc”, Anaheim, California, SUA, IIIrd vol., no.101, march 20-26, 1999, p.15.

IV Paradoxism and Postmodernism

1.Mircea Cartarescu, cit.work, p.23.

2.Ibidem, p.83.

3.G. Bajenaru, cit.place.

4.Ion Rotaru, *O istorie a literaturii romane, A history of the Romanian literature*, ed. Niculescu, Bucuresti, 2000, p.584.

5.Mircea Cartarescu, cit.work, p.179.

6.Ibidem, p.96.

7.Ibidem, p.102.