

On Paradoxism

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Begun in the 1980s by Florentin Smarandache, a revolutionary writer, artist, and mathematician, whose works are considered innovative and progressive, as well as controversial, paradoxism is an avant-garde movement involving literature, art, philosophy, and science. It was employed as an expression of protest against repressive and totalitarian societies and based on the excessive use of contradictions, antitheses, antinomies, parables, and paradoxes: sense is nonsense; nonsense is sense; everything is possible – even the impossible.

Eventually those in the new movement realize that they could publish the unpublishable. How? As the author indicates: Simply: literature-object 'The flight of the bird', for example, represents a natural poem, that is not necessary to write down, being more palpable and perceptible in any language than some signs laid on the paper, which, in fact, represent an artificial poem – deformed, resulting from a translation by the observant of the observed, and by translation [that] one falsifies. Later Smarandache based paradoxism on contradictions,

because the society in which he and his contemporary writers lived was based on a double life: the official one, propagated by the political system; and the real one, which they actually lived. The mass media propaganda promulgated that life was wonderful, but, in reality, it was miserable. Thus life was a paradox. And so, paradoxism was born.

Inspired by the 'the upside-down' world of Romania's Ceaușescu regime, Florentin Smarandache's literary debouchment from that repressive totalitarian culture, in which all means of creative expression was stifled by the dictator and the small group in power imagined this new movement. What vented was an intellectual spring. The folkloric jokes, popular with the ruling new, gave way to a new style in Romanian literature.

As a natural progression, the author extended the use of the movement to art, philosophy, and science through experimentation, which brought... new procedures, methods or even algorithms of creation and the vagary of 'embezzling' – changes to the writing of the day, much of which is expressed through the dialogue and actions employed in this political trilogy.

The features of paradoxism are broken down according to various features. The basic thesis is: *everything has a meaning and a non-meaning in harmony with each other*. The essence is: *sense has its reciprocal non-sense and vice versa*. The motto of paradoxism is *All is possibile, the impossible, too*. The symbol of paradoxism is the *spiral* – an illusion, or vicious circle. Ways in which paradoxism differs from other modes of the avant-garde: it is revealed through contradictions, antinomies, anti-theses, anti-phrases, antagonisms, non-conformism, and paradoxes. Paradoxism can be used through the scientific method (especially algorithms) for generating and studying contradictory literary and artistic works; and to create contradictory literary and artistic works in scientific spaces by using scientific symbols, meta-language, matrices, theorems, lemmas, etc. Paradoxism also has its use in mathematics, medicine, military, and robotics.

The boldness of Smarandache's plays could be compared with that of August Strindberg, the Swedish playwright progenitor of German expressionism and the theatre of the absurd. Like that fin de siècle author and playwright, Smarandache is a prolific writer, authoring over twenty works. Because of the daring and experimental style of his work, he is often ostracised by

the literary establishment and his contemporaries in academia; however, world wide, he has a loyal following – especially by those considered part of the contemporary intellectual spring.

In *Faulty Writings* (1997), a collection of short stories and prose within paradoxism, Smarandache brings hybrid elements from rebus and science into literature. His experimental album of paradoxal art, *Outer-Art*, comprises over-paintings, non-paintings, anti-drawings, and super-photos, foreseen with a manifesto, *Ultra-Modernism?*.

Titu Popescu, in his classical book *Paradoxisms Aesthetics* (1994), documents the evolution from the use of paradoxes to paradoxism. Other studies of Smarandache's use of paradoxism in literature were made by the Romanian writers. I. Soare, I. Rotaru, and Gheorghe Niculescu.

In contrast to other *-isms* in literature today – Dadaism, cubism, surrealism, and abstractism – and other absurd movements, paradoxism has a significance in literature and art, which is revealed through its contradictions, antinomies, antitheses, anti-phrases, antagonism, non-conformism, and paradoxes. With the launch of new and interesting mathematical theories and

computer technology during the second half of the 20th Century, it is now possible to embed various types of "fuzzy" information within literary and artistic expression, as well.

A Trilogy in Paradoxism is not simply an example of paradoxism in literature, or merely a trio of plays from the theatre of the absurd, or an attempt to focus on a single silver of the time and a particular political regime. Smarandache's dramas epitomize the perversion of power and the ambiguousness that plagues today's superpowers, just as it did the Roman Empire. The nonsensical dialogue, chauvinistic rulings, and paradoxal imagery in these dramas mimic the preoccupation with power, pride, self-grandiloquence, revenge, belittlement of opponents and an ideology based not on constructive dialogue and equality, but on subjugation, terror, and/or annihilation. *The emperor has no clothes!* Like Pampolinn's constituency in Lallelulla, many in today's world choose to hear no evil, see no evil, speak no evil – an "Axis of Evil" in paradoxism.