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## Journal Review: Third International Anthology on Paradoxism

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# Journal Review: *Third International Anthology on Paradoxism*

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*The Third International Anthology on Paradoxism* is available from Bell & Howell, 300 N. Zeeb Road, P. O. Box 136, Ann Arbor, MI 48106-1346 or <http://www.umi.com/bod/>

Recently I received a copy of this fascinating journal of paradoxist, tautologic and dualistic distichs by writers from fifteen nations, including the United States. You may be unfamiliar with the “distich” but, before I give its definition, it is pertinent to describe the movement out of which this term emerged.

A new movement in literature called paradoxism—which makes heavy use of opposites (antitheses, contradictions, oxymorons and paradoxes) at both local and global levels in creative work—began in the 1980s in Romania. Its initial driving force was an anti-totalitarian protest against a closed society where the entire culture was manipulated by a small group. Anthology editor, Florentin Smarandache, who now lives and teaches in New Mexico, responded to the crisis with the idea, “Let’s do literature...without doing literature!” In short, by keeping silent and, for example, observing that a bird in flight is itself a poem (a “natural” poem, needing no words).

This beginning then led to an emphasis on contradictions. Most in Romania lived a double life—an official one conforming to the political system and another “real” life. People said “life is wonderful” when, in reality, “life is miserable.” Language opposites were flourishing! Thus paradoxism was born. Folk jokes, which said one thing and meant the opposite, were very prevalent during Ceausescu’s era.

Paradoxism has introduced a number of literary terms; here are several of them:

*Paradoxist distich*: a two-line poem in which the second line contradicts the first, but both lines together form a sensible explanation of the title.

Example (by Smarandache):

## SCAPEGOAT

Even if he didn’t  
he did

*Tautological distich*: a two-line poem that appears to be redundant, but the pair of lines deepens the explanation of the title.

Example (Smarandache):

## IMITATOR

Discovered  
What others have already discovered

*Dualist distich*: a two-line poem in which the second line is the dual of the first, and together they explain the title.

Example (Smarandache):

## MULTIDISCIPLINARY

History or art  
Or the art of history

The Third International Anthology on Paradoxism entertains and puzzles its readers with nearly one hundred pages of distiches and variants, all offered in English but some also provided in Chinese, Italian, Romanian and Spanish.

Here are several samples:

from Paul Haugh (Australia):

## CUTTING REMARKS

Sharp as a knife  
Blunt as a cork

from Paulo Bauler (Brazil):

## ORDER

Someone with all the reasons is  
Somebody with no reason

from Maria do Carmo Gaspar De Oliveira (Brazil):

### DISCOVERERS

Portuguese discovered Brazil  
Already discovered by Indians

from Victor Chnagnone (China):

### ENEMY

Fails  
When we succeed

from Richard Cheevers (England):

### URBAN JUNGLE

On a London street  
Zebra crossing

from Anand Rose (India):

### WISE

When you know  
you don't know the answer

from John Grey (USA):

### MAD WORLD

you'd be crazy  
to be sane

## Real Numbers, Math Lives

*Arnold Trindade  
Glen Cove, NY*

It was so true the cone did age  
Ten-fifteen billion  
It is so true the earthly age  
Four and a half billion.

It is yet true my only age  
The forties  
My end, it will surely come  
The eighties-nineties.

Nature, her organic-inorganic wonderings  
In the wings, on cue  
Appear, disappear  
On a temporary reflector revolving.

See trembling aspen leaves, a grouse  
Alluring nest on the ground hatches  
In twenty-one days the fledglings drowse  
From on high the goshawk watches.

See this year the drumming grouse  
Their numbers few, heard scarcely  
The goshawk lays eggs only two  
Instead of four when prey a plenty.

See cold Arctic the hunting lynx  
Pursues the snowshow hare, a meal  
See as sunlight the flowerings control  
So hare fleets the lynx withhold.

The numbers when genius Jason dawned  
Bursting forth at nine and two  
See poor Jimmy come faster born  
Came four weeks with raw limbs too.

Earth a scientific developer  
Counts hours, days, seconds too  
Releasing light darkness covers  
In revolutions and leap years new.

Can we figures, give up forget?  
Can we cycles, senses insensate?  
Do we deny light-matter nets  
Food webs, equilibria, numbers-kind?

Thus the dispersing universal cone  
A developing matrix electromagnetic  
Her offspring, her coordinates dynamic  
Show moving graphs, patterns, bones.

Thus do light packets, photons  
Imprisoned energy, nucleons  
In seconds, minutes exposed  
Produce on matter-film sequential codons  
Alluring pictures, images  
The living kind!