

# **The Paradoxist Distich Theory**

(Fore/word and Back/word)

## **The Fourth Paradoxist Manifesto**

by Florentin Smarandache (1998)

The **PARADOXIST DISTICH** consists of two verses, antithetic to each other, but which together amalgamate in a whole defining (or making connection with) the title.

Commonly, the second verse negates the first, containing therefore an antonymic/antagonistic notion/collocation or opposite idea.

### **The making of the distich:**

- Take a dictionary of phrases and linguistic expressions, proverbs, sayings, teachings, aphorisms, riddles, adages, maxims, quips, or famous sayings of well-known personalities, and contradict them without pity, shear them!
- Or take a dictionary of antonyms, and another of synonyms and joggle with contradictory notions/collocation/phrases - homogenizing heterogenic elements; choose also an adequate title and you enter in Paradoxism.

The School of Paradoxist Literature, which evolved around 1980s, continues through these bi-verses closed in a new lyric exact formula, but with an opening to essence. For this kind of procedural poems one can elaborate mathematical algorithms and implement them in a computer: but, it is preferable a machine with ... soul!

### **Characteristics:**

The whole paradoxist distich should be as a geometric unitary parabola, hyperbola, ellipse at the borders between art, philosophy, rebus, and mathematics – which exist in complementariness; and to contain:

- Antitheses, antinomies, antagonisms, antiphrases, paraphrases, contrary metaphors, polarizations;
- paradoxes at the semantic level: ideate, social, political, theological, linguistic, psychological, philosophical, and even scientific; exactly this paradox provides the savory to the whole; from here the beauty of the writing, the flavor of the small metaphor fluttering its twined wings;
- pseudo-paradoxes here and there;
- preposterous character, against an obsolete academism and behind the times traditionalism (Al. Lungu genus);
- the oxymoronic replication / fusion / juxtaposition of jargons, linguistic expressions, patterns, archetypes, schemes, blueprints, classic stencils;

- the finding of (molding/embodying in) creation formulae and anti-formulae;
- counter – poems;
- antithetic epigram styles;
- parodies of phrases and linguistic expressions, proverbs, sayings, aphorisms, adages, assessments, (petrified, and not only) language clichés, grammatical structures, phraseologies by:
  - o alterations of sense to 45 or 90 degrees;
  - o in the opposite sense, against (at 180 degrees);
  - o the figurative interpreted strictly speaking, and vice versa (breach of all conventions);
- paraphrases for the purpose of refreshing the dead patterns;
- or in metaphorical nonsense, exaggerated, parabolic (reduction enlarged, like at a microscope, penetrating in the infinitesimal of the small worlds, concentrated);
- idiosyncrasies at contradictions, incongruences, divergences, deformations, alterations, distortions, mystifications, poetic mock-ups and anti/non-poetics;
- text, para-text, anti-text, inter-text, non-text with paradoxist modulations (sublanguage, over-language, meta-language);
- inspired / chiseled folklore: quips, wisecracks, jokes (from cartoon characters and shows (Bulă, Itzic and Ştrul));
- or juggled with the homonyms' ambiguity (multi-sense);
- some paradoxes became common places, metaphors, they are traditionalized – although initially they encountered resistance, they were rejected; that's the *fait accompli* of any paradox!

The paradoxist distiches should be:

- diagrammatic;
- providing some knowledge;
- philosophical quintessence;
- brilliant imagination;
- witty words, memorable, soothing your soul;
- few words; *non multa, sed multum* : maximizing the minimum, minimizing the maximum – these days, when people read less, we need concise writings;
- with diversity of topics, notional spheres, paradoxist poetic equations;
- put it bluntly, openly, funny, cleverly (if we use the scalpel for the lyric's surgery);
- when read, the verses should glide;
- at least one interior rhythm (even rhyme) for a plus of harmony (in this apparent disharmony);
- the metric structure of the two verses is randomly selected;
- the phrases show some special sweetness;
- attention at the poem division; playful in time and contra-time, caesura and anti-caesura;
- having a title, the poem is integrated, rounds off, becomes an entity;
- the title, short and comprehensive, should contain the key of the poetics' corpus (the referred to and referring to it)
- a sort of definitions for lyric rebuses: based on anti-theses, and utilizing bi-verses that define the title;
- do not interpret the paradoxist distiches as simple witticisms, but meanings of meaningless (deeperly going to the substance, to the kernel), other times even

- meaningless of meanings (simplistic impressions, after superficial lecture, that the material is understood profoundly);
- of an organic eclecticism.

This volume is untranslatable, but adaptable to other language's clichés.

### Historical considerations:

I discovered the Paradoxism, I did not invent it. It existed before ... paradoxists.

The popular wisdom, and a part of the cultured creation, fit closely on the classical paradoxist mould; with this purpose, let see the following examples:

- beginning with the antique Greeks, through Plato (who puts in Protagoras' mouth):  
Everybody / Teaches everybody;
- or our Roman ancestors:  
*Festina / Lente* (Rush / Slowly);
- continuing with old Romanian aphorisms:  
Stay curved / and think straight (C. Negruzzi, <Pîcală și Tîndală>, fragment, 1840);
- how did Voltaire say?  
The rules in art are made / To be ignored;  
and then?!
- Baudelaire with "Les fleurs du mal";
- Eminescu about a virgin:  
Willing / Unwilling
- passing by Caragiale, with his:  
Clean / Dirty
- the jocular Arghezi from Oltenia:  
We say something / And smoke something else! (observe the transparent allusion) but also his poems from "Flori de mucigai" ("Mold's flowers");
- the political paradox:  
for example

The more some want to put Marshal Antonescu down, even more do the opposite camp glorifying him – it is like using a scale: when a pan is too low, you feel adding more weight on the opposite pan to establish the equilibrium; it is a psychological process. The same, during a game between two teams for which you don't have any preference, you tend to be supportive of the team that has less chances to win; (+ and - should balance each other); therefore, we can make the affirmation that

"Ion Antonescu fell / Rising"

- therefore, their effort to destroy him, in fact helped the rise of his popularity; it is the action of the Opposite Effect, plus the Equilibrium Law; and vice versa; excessive ovations produce converse reactions: He, the favored of the regime "The poet Mihai Beniuc ascending / He failed"; unanimity (positive or negative) does not exist;
- About the Stalinist bureaucracy:  
Two people shovel / Three people report;

- Grigore Moisil's irony :  
 ION BARBU: Is the biggest mathematician / amongst poets,  
 And the biggest poet / amongst mathematicians!  
 (Which, unfortunately-fortunately, applies to me as well?);
- similarly, Alberto Caeiro, a.k.a. Fernando Pessoa:  
 The unique secret sense of things  
 Is that these don't hold any secret sense;
- and more recent, a social paradox  
 "The power / of the powerless"  
 essay of Vaclav Havel, who from a dissident (without any power), becomes  
 President (with the highest power) in the past Czechoslovakia, implementing a  
 democratic country, which in turn tears itself apart :
- O. Paler in "Flacăra" ("The Flame") publication:  
 SPECIALIZATION means  
 To know more and more / about less and less,  
 Until you'll know everything / about nothing!
- the economic paradox:  
 Countries that produce too much / which they don't consume  
 And consume a lot / from what they don't produce  
 (Roger Garaudy, 1997);
- Caracal "shockers":  
 a) Prison / on the Liberty street!  
 b) Cemetery / on the Resurrection street!  
 c) Robbery / at the Police Station!  
 d) Fire / at the Fire Station!
- Playful talk, in contrary sense:  
 I do you a favor; / Do you get upset?  
 (Well, obviously not!);
- Or proverbs, maxims, sayings, witticisms, often used contemporaneous  
 reflections:  
 The lazybones / Runs around more  
 Let's go at work to work; / God help us not to find work!  
 He laughs / Of distress!  
 Take it away from me / Otherwise I take him out  
 Taking a deaf dog / To hunting  
 Catch the blind, / Tear his eyes out  
 Whip the saddle / To attention the mare!  
 When two argue / The third wins  
 Let be a wolf / Eaten by a sheep!  
 The man who doesn't serve / Will not become a boss  
 You drink his money away / And he drinks your money away  
 Making strong knots, / Requires time to undo  
 Your have hope / Like the beardless for the beard  
 Penny wise / And pound foolish

(I. C. Hîntescu, "Proverbele românilor", ("Romanian's Proverbs"), Edition in care of Constantin Negreanu and Ion Bratu, Forward by I. C. Chițimia, Facla Publishing House, Timișoara, 1985)

(reverse interpretations);

- And the English proverb:

A glass is half full / Or half empty,  
therefore any thing can be positive and negative; it depends of your angle of interpretation – this principle is used by propagandists;

- From the Newspapers' big headlines (or even from books' titles from bookstores, or references in a library), which, if in their contents contain a paradox, they become more inciting and shocking when read [see the predilection of many writers in using antinomies in order to surprise (or attract) the public];

- Even at football, the coach advising his players:

The best defense / Is the attack –  
Without being a paradox, but a tactic, a reality;

- Extending to the American Murphy's laws of a bitter humor:

The probability that a slice of bread will fall on its spread face is greater than that of falling on its non-spread face

(!)

- And in Calculus there exists, somehow paradoxist (but, however, non paradoxical!)

$Sup\ inf (M)$  is the dual of  $inf\ sup (M)$ ,  
which means the largest from the smallest, and the smallest from the largest, respectively.

Great, isn't it?

- Or the upside-down "drunk's song":

From the drunk / tavern I'm coming,  
On the fence I walk / the road holding.  
With the dogs / I hit the stones  
And am friend / with foe abalones!

- And the following three semi-paradoxist verses:

Who knows how a thing is done, does it!  
Who doesn't know, teaches others how to do it!  
And who doesn't know how to do it nor to teach others, leads!!

(applicable to previous party's secretaries, cultural guides, and not only);

- During the dictatorship:

Art. 1. The boss is right.  
Art. 2. The boss is always right.  
Art. 3. When the boss is not right, it is applicable Art. 1 or Art. 2;

- Or from the jokes whispered sometime in various corners,

CEAUȘESCU ERA

The pessimist: Worst that this is not possible.

The optimist: No, it is possible (!)

(and, indeed, the transition period proves to be much more difficult) which jokes intellectually sweetening those black years;

- Plus the famous popular <tops> (synonym: like jokes, gags, with semi-absurd nuances, but nevertheless of a very... plastic logic!)

THE STUPIDITY TOP:

To believe that your mother in law

Is virgin!

or

THE SWIMMING TOP:  
To swim with one hand, and with the other  
To move your legs (!)

or

THE HEN'S TOP:  
The hen's legs are similarly parallel,  
*Especiallly the left one (!!)*

(the second line tops all).

And many others, under the reader's eye and at listener's ear.

### **Types of Paradoxist distiches**

1. Clichés paraphrased:

“The right man / In the wrong place” = OFFENDER

2. Parodies:

the popular proverb <Talking about the wolf / And the wolf is at the door>  
becomes, through ironic substitution,

“Talking about the wolf / And the *pig* is at the door (!)” = COINCIDENCE;

3. Reversed formulae:

“Any exception / Admits rules” (instead of <Any rule / admits exceptions>);

4. Double negation

which means affirmation:

“War / Against war” = PEACE;

5. Double affirmation,

which means negation, strange no?

“The sanctification / Of saints” = ORDINATION, that is, the saints have  
their sins, therefore they are not saints;

6. Turn around on false tracks:

“With one eye of glass, / And the other of cat!” (You think of a being, but in  
fact is) = THE MOTORCYCLE;

7. Hyperboles (exaggeratedly):

“Out of four workers / Five are bosses” = BUREAUCRACY;

8. With nuance changeable from the title:

“She was virgin / twice” =

a) serious (biblical): VIRGIN MARY;

b) or joking: PROSTITUTE;

9. Epigrammatic:

TO SOMEONE WHO LIKES MEETINGS = "Let him meet / With himself";

10. Pseudo-paradoxes:

"Non-guilty ones / Indicted ones" = INNOCENTS

"Motivation / Of no motivation" = NEGLECT;

11. Tautologies:

"Close to / Close" = PROXIMITY

"Beyond / The beyond" = EXTREME FAR AWAY

"City / Of cities" = METROPOLIS

"Dipper / Than deep" = BOTTOM

"How friendly / Are our friends?" = VIGILANCE;

12. Redundant:

"Do we go / Or we don't stay?" = WHERE

"Are you sleeping, / Or you did not wake?" = CUCKOO CLOCK

13. Based on pleonasms:

"He invents something / Already invented" = PLAGIARIST

Public transportation cashier: "Advance / Forward!";

14. or on anti-pleonasms:

THE TRAVELERS:

"No, we advance / Backwards!";

15. Substitution of the attribute in collocations

(using mockery, ridicule, and contra-sense):

<Lame of a leg>, which is trivial collocation, and which becomes by substitution:

"Blind / Of a leg" = LAMELY

(and so it becomes more interesting);

16. Substitution of the complement in collocations

[pedaling on a metamorphic nonsense (not absurd), exaggerating the collocation into surrealist direction) :

<With the socks broken at the ankle>, which is a common expression, becomes after substitution:

"With the broken socks / On your rear!" = RAGGED (good-humor);

17. Permutation of various parts of the whole:

<Becomes devil's brother / Until crosses the lake>

“Becomes lake’s brother / Until the devil goes away” = PUDDLE;  
<Don’t put the hand / Where your pot doesn’t simmer> has variants:  
“Don’t put the pot / Where your hand doesn’t simmer”,  
or  
“Your pot doesn’t simmer / Where you don’t put the hand” = ATTEMPT;

What are the ‘original’ forms of the following expression’s permutations?

“The hammer / Praises the gipsy”  
“Eye to eye / Don’t pull the vultures”  
“Beat the hot / While is iron”  
“The cat with mice / Does not catch bell”  
“Good dog / In a cheese sack”  
“Behind the heroes / Many wars turn up”  
“Don’t get broken / That you stretch”  
“Same hat / With other Maria”  
„The trunk doesn’t jump far of / Its chips”  
“Drop stupid pear / In the sapless mouth”  
“The gift of teeth / Is not looked up in horse”

?

Find a corresponding title for each of these 11 paradoxist distiches;

#### 18. The negation of the clichés

(that would produce antitheses):

<Accept / What you’re given> becomes

“Accept / What you don’t get = NONCONFORMIST;

<Let me alone / To let you alone> becomes

“Let me / Not to let you” = REVENGE MAN;

analogous

“ The deaf hears / But doesn’t match them up” = CONFUSION;

#### 19. Antonymization (substantively, adjectively, etc.):

<Sweet as / honey> becomes

“Sweet as / The gall” = BITTER (alcoholic beverage), and

“Bitter as / The honey” = SUGAR SYRUP;

#### 20. Fable against the grain:

AND THEY HAD A DAUGHTER SO BEAUTIFUL... //

“That you could look at her / But at sun not”!

(<sun> and <her> have been transposed);

#### 21. Change in grammatical category (preserving substitutions’ homonymy):

IN NEED // “The good friend / Hardly is detected”

(Adverbial of place <in need> is changed in adverbial of manner <hardly> using a phonetic substitution), and vice versa:

HARDLY // “The good friend / In need is known”;

22. Epistolary or colloquia style:

DEAR TEACHER, // “The child knows to read / But doesn’t know the alphabet”  
observe the aberration):

23. Puzzles

“He looks at you / Without seeing you” = (Who? THE MOLE, because  
does not have eyes; or THE BLIND);

24. Metaphors:

“I affably bathe in the nightly / light of your ebony locks of hair” = LOVE;

25. Philosophical:

PARSIFAL (Greek): “He didn’t know / That he knew”;

26. Distiches – translations:

VOLENS NOLENS = “Willy / Nilly”;

27. Pure scientific definitions

“Superior form / Of inferior species” = AMEBA;

28. Homonymic puzzles (rebus)

“More sea than the / Sea” = THE OCEAN;

29. Distiches of dual verses:

“The science of religion / Or the religion of science” = THEOLOGY;

30. Paradoxist poems-collage:

Violent images, collected from the press or mass media, which alternate  
discordantly one to each other (volume in work);

31. Semi-collage poems:

Collages + contradictory original creations (volume in work);

32. The majority of distiches can be generalized:

“To see what / Others don’t see” = PERSPICACIOUS(I)

“To hear what / Others don’t hear” = PERSPICACIOUS (II)

Expanding we have

“{Predicate} what / Others don’t {Predicate};

Analogous UNDER QUESTION MARK:

“How free / Is the free press?”

Where <free> and <press> could be substituted by {attributes}, and {subjects}  
respectively;

33. Snapped (entrapped) in creationist formulae:

Let	<S(N)>	a noun at nominative,
	<S(G)>	a noun at genitive,
	<S(A)>	an adjectival noun,
	<A>	an adjective,
	<V>	a verb,
	<Adv>	an adverb,
	<Adv/A>	an adjectival adverb,
	<V/S>	a substantivized verb,
	<Non-S>	the antonym of the noun S,
	<Non-A>	the antonym of the adjective A
	<Non-Adv>	the antonym of the adverb Adv
	<Non-V>	the negation of the verb V,

{plus the connection particles (prepositions, conjunctions, etc.) modified accordingly}.

Here are some categories:

**a) <S(N)> / <S(G)>**

“The critique / Of the criticism” = EXEGETICS

**b) <S> / <S/A>**

“An occasion / Occasionally” = MISHAP

**c) <S> / <Non-S>**

“Adhesion / To no adhesions” = LIBERTINISM

“Any known / Has an unknown” = THE EQUATION

**d) <V> / <Non-V/S>**

“It represents / The non-representing” = INSIGNIFICANT

And vice versa

**e) <Adv> / <Non-Adv/A>**

“Serious in / His non-seriousness” = FUNNY

“Honestly / He is a non-serious individual” = SINCERITY

formulae which should be invented by active (no passive) readers

...?.....?....?...

34. Pairs of dual distiches:

Defining the same notion (title):

“Anarchical / Melody” = JAZZ (I)

and

“Melodious / Anarchy” = JAZZ (II)

or different notions:

“Professional / Amateur” = DILETTANTE

“Amateur / Professional” = PASSIONATE;

35. Double paradox:

“Anarchical melody / Or melodious anarchy” = JAZZ

“The sense has a nonsense, / And the nonsense has a sense” = THE  
ESSENCE OF PARADOXISM  
(Sometimes is done by combining two dual distiches);

36. Double semi-paradox:

“Renowned geologist amongst physicists,  
And physicist amongst geologists” = GEOPHYSICIST  
(Sometimes is done by combining two semi-paradoxist distiches);

37. Novel of paradoxist distiches (concatenated):

with antagonist chapters; Example: PERPLEXING YOU!

F I R S T C H A P T E R

&1

Where there is wisdom  
The stupidity also nests

&2

Intelligent people, geniuses,  
Sometimes make childish errors

&3

They complicate to no purpose  
Simple things

&4

In a coherence  
Very incoherent

&5

Their international recognition  
Becomes unrecognizable

S E C O N D C H A P T E R

&1

Where there is enough stupidity  
Occasionally, the wisdom nests

&2

Mentally reduced men, anonymous,  
Occasionally come up with superb assertions

&3

They usefully simplify  
Complex things

&4

In an incoherence  
Very coherent.

&5

Their international non- recognition  
Becomes recognizable

## E P I L O G

Any exception  
Admits rules

The literary currents are a form and re-form of reply to the world, in this end of the second millennium of science and technology, when we witness an electronic revolution, an informational revolution, *World Wide Web*, <The Internet>, when the poetry is dead, therefore the poetry is not dead – and new formulae of expression need to be invented.

And this is not a non-sense; instead it is a lyric adaptation to the anti-lyric, when the art is a non-art itself...

Introducing species of poetry with a novel *fixed form*, the paradoxism captures a new way (in fact very old!) of representation.

For legitimating the new poems we present, below, a prime number, 601\* of typical classical p-a-r-a-d-o-x-i-s-t d-i-s-t-i-c-h-e-s, collected and refined during 1993-1998.

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\* If 601 is a “prime” number in Z Space, then it becomes a “composite” in the Z[i] Space of Gauss’ Integers, because:

$$601 = (24+5i)(24-5i).$$

P. S. An electronic form of the “PARADOXIST DISTICHES” could be obtained sending e-mail to the author.

The file is in Word Perfect 6.1 for Windows 95.

The paradoxism, spread at international level, is present also on the internet (in English).  
A Romanian version and a French version will be added soon.

Please visit the following URLs:

<http://www.gallup.unm.edu/~smarandache/a/Paradoxism.htm>

(*home page* in construction and expansion)

and a Digital Library of Arts and Letters in many languages:

<http://www.gallup.unm.edu/~smarandache/eBooksLiterature.htm>

## THE LAWS OF PARADOXISM<sup>1</sup>

1)

Any phenomenon has significance  
And insignificance

2)

Any thing has value  
And a non-value

3)

The sense  
Has a non-sense

4)

The non-sense  
Has a sense

5) - PARADOX 1

Everything is "α",  
Even "Non-α"

6) - PARADOX 2

Everything is "Non-α",  
Even "α"!

7) - PARADOX 3

Nothing is “ $\alpha$ ”,  
Not even “ $\alpha$ ”!

[These three paradoxes are equivalent.]

By substituting “ $\alpha$ ” with a corresponding attribute and, evident, “**Non- $\alpha$** ” with its antonym, one obtains interesting particular cases.

For example:

All is possible, / Even the impossible! [= the Paradoxism’s motto]  
All are absents, / Even the presents [= nobody pays any attention to the meeting]

Everything is relative, / Even the Relativity Theory [and, indeed, it has been discovered that the speed of light is not the ultimate speed in the Universe, therefore Einstein was mistaken]

Nothing is perfect, / Not even the perfection!

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## Exercises for Readers and Invitations to Writers

The poems would excel through their definition's beauty, their gimmick.  
For example, find a title for each of the following 13 distiches:

Inconsolable / Consoler  
Seeming / Unseemly  
The most corrupts / Are those so called uncorrupted  
You're playing / With are you screwing up yourself?  
Help me / By not helping me  
I drink , / And you get drunk!  
An intrinsic value / Extrinsically  
I'm drifting away / The nearness..  
Art is the reality / Of my imagination  
A small beginning / For MUCH  
I'll offer an advice to you: / Don't believe advices  
I swear to you / On my lack of swerings  
Angel / Diabolically

Reciprocally, create a definition (paradoxist distich) for each title [notion (or syntagma) = key]:

MISTRESS, HOT, MARRIAGE BED, WITHOUT DISCRETION, LONGING TO GO,  
WHERE?, TO PRISON, TO REMEMBER, SINCE I WAS BORN, STRIPED, DEAD  
DRUNK, BOO!, 13,

which will be published in the next edition of the „Paradoxism” magazine.

Also, the author waits for Paradoxist Distiches, as well as essay about this poetry with fix form, typed/computerized manuscripts, for the next anthology which will contain world wide writers, in various languages. The contributors will receive a copy of the publication containing their submissions.

The author's intention is to materialize a Paradoxist dictionary/encyclopedia containing distiches, classified by themes, key words, poets, and definition types.

{Send your contributions at the address shown in preface.}

Published in the book "Distihuri paradoxiste", preface by the author, postface by Dan Țopa, Ed. Dorul, Aarborg, Denmark, 1998, <http://fs.gallup.unm.edu//DistihuriParadoxiste.pdf> ;

- published on the web by LiterNet, Bucharest, 2003, <http://editura.liternet.ro/fsmarandachedistihuri.php> (without this manifesto);
- Translation in Serbian-Croatian and presentation of the author by Ioan Baba, "Paradoksistički Dvostihovi", post-face by Bogdanka Petrović, Lumina Publ. Hse., Novi Sad, Yugoslavia, 2000, <http://fs.gallup.unm.edu//Dvostihovi.pdf> ;
- Translated in English by T. Iosifaru, F. Smarandache, M. & S. Dediu, as "Paradoxist Distiches", Automaton, 107 p., 2006, <http://fs.gallup.unm.edu//ParadoxistDistiches.pdf> ;
- Translated in Chinese as "601 Paradoxist Distiches" by Yuhua, Xiquan Chinese Hse.,

- Beijing, 97 p., 2008, <http://fs.gallup.unm.edu/PDsimplifiedCHINESE.pdf> ;
- Translated into Russian as [Парадоксистские двустишия](http://fs.gallup.unm.edu/ParadoksistskieDvustishya.pdf) by Dr. Adolf P. Shvedchikov, Avtomaticheski, 87 p., 2010, <http://fs.gallup.unm.edu/ParadoksistskieDvustishya.pdf> .