

AN INTRODUCTION TO LATERAL REVISION

Word removal, search for form, analysis of line integrity and rhythm, and maximizing concrete detail are logical things we do when revising poems. Sometimes the logical thing, deducing “what's wrong” isn't the best solution. Sometimes improving your work comes from approaching it from the side and disrupting your own intentions.

THE LATERAL REVISION WEB APP was designed to help readers disrupt their intentions or offer an image or idea and comes largely from three different, but closely related post-Modern utilities:

In 1960, François Le Lionnais and Raymond Queneau founded the **OUVROIR DE LITTÉRATURE POTENTIELLE (OULIPO)**, translated as The Workshop of Potential Literature. OULIPO consisted of writers and mathematicians who developed (and gathered) several techniques to constrain writing and disrupt intention when composing and revising work. Some **EXAMPLES**: lipogrammatic techniques (Euonia), S+7, or homophonic translation.

LATERAL THINKING is a term coined by Edward de Bono *in 1967*. Lateral thinking involves solving problems through an indirect and creative approach, using reasoning that isn't immediately obvious and involving ideas that may not be obtainable by using traditional logic. An **EXAMPLE**: (**1 + 1 = 6**) where the lines in the equation are used as tally marks to total the answer.

Brian Eno (music producer) and Peter Schmidt (painter) first published **OBLIQUE STRATEGIES (ONE HUNDRED WORTHWHILE DILEMMAS)** *in 1975* after they had both separately developing similar strategies to break creative blocks. The cards contained aphorisms, phrases, and cryptic gestures which might be helpful when arriving at a block when creating music. A few **EXAMPLES**: Fill every beat with something, humanize something free of error, disconnect from desire, and convert a melodic element into a rhythmic element.

The lines in the web app are designed to encourage lateral thinking during revision stages of a work. Lines may foster associative leaps for the work you already have, provide direct suggestions, or offer a question or phrase in another language to interpret. The same card can offer multiple suggestions for different pieces with the interpretations only limited by the artist's own creativity. **EXAMPLE**: “Hands left open like a missing object” might invite the writer to write an image of a hand open like a flashlight is missing, write about a missing object, a group of people's left hands open and taking a vow to find an object, or any number of things.