

FORMALISM

A POEM

All art is form

All poetry is form



**IN THE BEGINNING WAS THE WORD,
THE WORD IS A FORM.**

Joseph Beuys



**THE ONLY WORKS OF ART PRODUCED BY AMERICA,
... AND ITS BRIDGES.**

**Rule-based forms
assume the principle
that order in the world
is not organic,
not from within
(whatever Emerson said)
but imposed
by an organization
– religion,
nature,
social structure,
or even
poetic structure.**

“Formal versification is the primary structure of poetic order, the assurance to the reader and to the poet himself that the poet is in control of the disorder both outside him and within his own mind. .”

Arbitrary rules enable creativity

Like with a powerpoint presentation, I put everything I've got into regulation boxes and what emerges looks like something that fits a pattern even while I have given up nothing of my wild individuality – or maybe I've given a framework for my wild individuality that is communicable ...something even you would understand

The more constraints one imposes, the more one frees oneself of the chains that shackle the spirit... the arbitrariness of the constraint only serves to obtain precision of execution."

Igor Stravinsky

There are at least two kinds of arbitrary rules:

Active and passive

- Rules we live by
- Rules we accept

I must do what I can to preserve
my life

Vs.

I must pay my income tax

As in The Sonnet

In a world where
everything fits
together

In a world where
nothing fits together

THE SONNET

Dante Gabriel Rossetti

A Sonnet is a moment's monument,
--Memorial from the Soul's eternity
To one dead deathless hour. Look that it be,
Whether for lustral rite or dire portent,
Of its own arduous fulness reverent:
Carve it in ivory or in ebony,
As Day or Night may rule; and let Time see
Its flowering crest impearled and orient.
A Sonnet is a coin: its face reveals
The soul,--its converse, to what Power 'tis due:
--Whether for tribute to the august appeals
Of Life, or dower in Love's high retinue,
It serve; or, 'mid the dark wharf's cavernous breath,
In Charon's palm it pay the toll to Death.

VS

The Mental Status Exam

Raphael Campo

What is the color of the mind? Beneath
The Cranium its pinkish gray, with flecks
Of white mixed in. What is the mind's motif?
Depends on what you mean: it's either sex
Or it's a box, release or pessimism.
Remember these three things: ball, sorrow, red.
Count backwards, from one-hundred down by sevens.
What is the color of the mind? It's said
That love can conquer all--interrupt, please.
And who's the President? What year is it?
The mind is timeless, dizzy, unscrupulous;
The mind is sometimes only dimly lit.
Just two more silly questions: Can you sing
For us? Do you remember those three things?

New forms

For that new look

oulipo

**rule-based
on the principle
that there
IS no real
no absolute order,
neither religious
nor scientific
that all orders
are arbitrary**

**– the act
of writing
OuLiPo
has a political
and philosophi-
cal basis**

**Freedom
from the imperative
of making sense
as the world
knows it**

**Openness
to the possibility
that there may
be another kind
of sense
to be discovered**

As whatshisname said

e. e. cummings

pity this busy monster,manunkind,

**not. Progress is a comfortable disease:
your victum(death and life safely beyond)**

**plays with the bigness of his littleness
-electrons deify one razorblade
into a mountainrange;lenses extend**

**unwish through curving wherewhen until unwish
returns on its unself.**

**A world of made
is not a world of born-pity poor flesh**

**and trees,poor stars and stones,but never this
fine specimen of hypermagical**

ultraomnipotence. We doctors know

**a hopeless case if-listen:there's a hell
of a good universe next door;let's go**

But then

Sometimes
It all comes
Together.
See?

A Quasi-Haiku

Mike Smith

Liars repel
Samurai via rum,
As lepers rail

palindrome

Becomes haiku

becomes

Frye's Theory of Modes

As for me

I just want

a form

like Shakespeare says

'some form'

to talk to you