

**HANS RICHTER**

**ACTIVISM, MODERNISM,  
AND THE AVANT-GARDE**

edited by  
**Stephen C. Foster**

Published in collaboration with  
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Art, Iowa City

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## Appendix

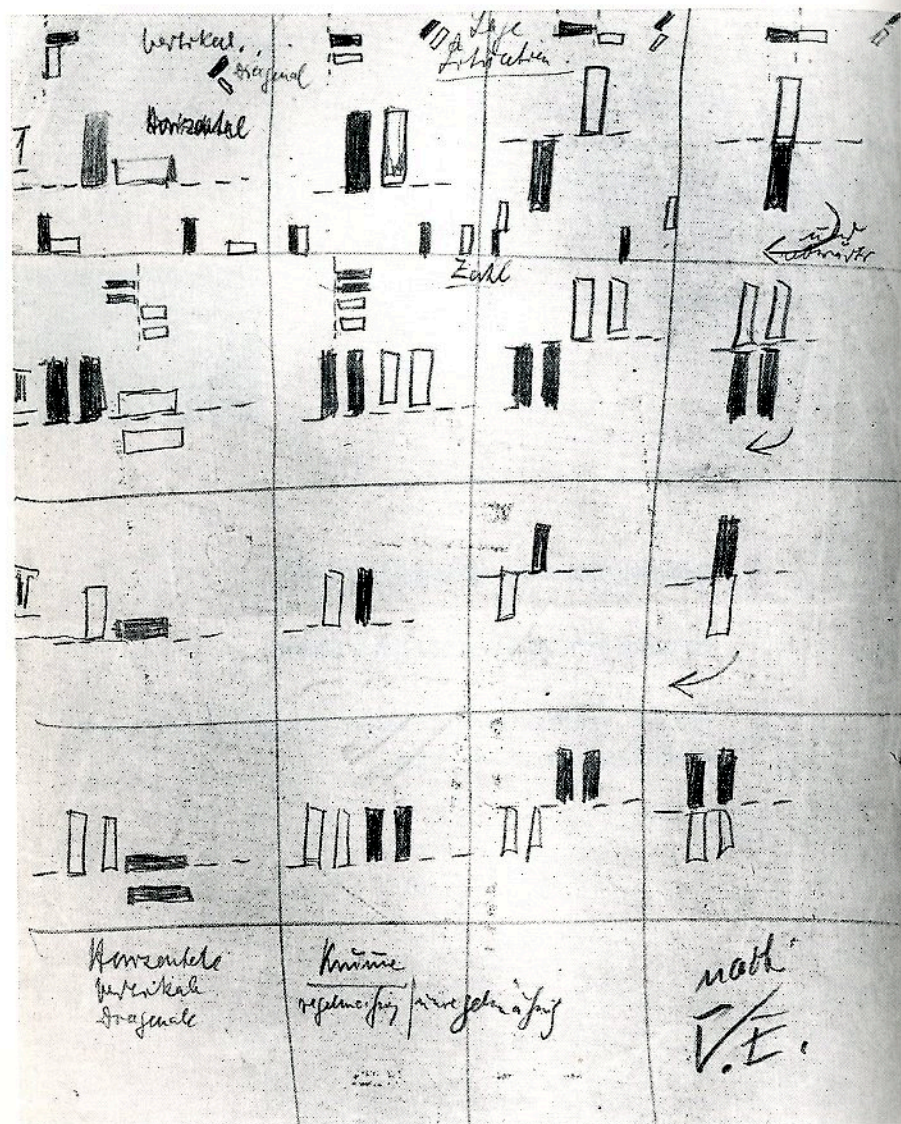
HANS RICHTER

### Demonstration of the "Universal Language"

*translated from the German by Harald Stadler*

Note: [\*\*\*] indicates indecipherable words in the manuscript. *Italics* indicate French or English words in the original.





vertical  
diagonal  
horizontal

position  
situation

number

and  
downward

horizontal line  
vertical line  
diagonal line

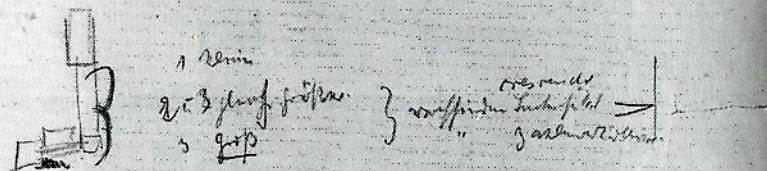
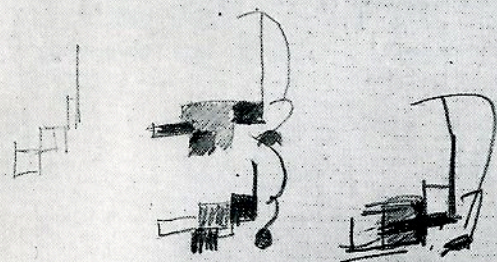
curved line  
regular/irregular

adapted from  
V. E.



G. Lammert.

$\frac{=D \quad 1=D \quad \text{Proportion} = D}{\text{Intensität}}$

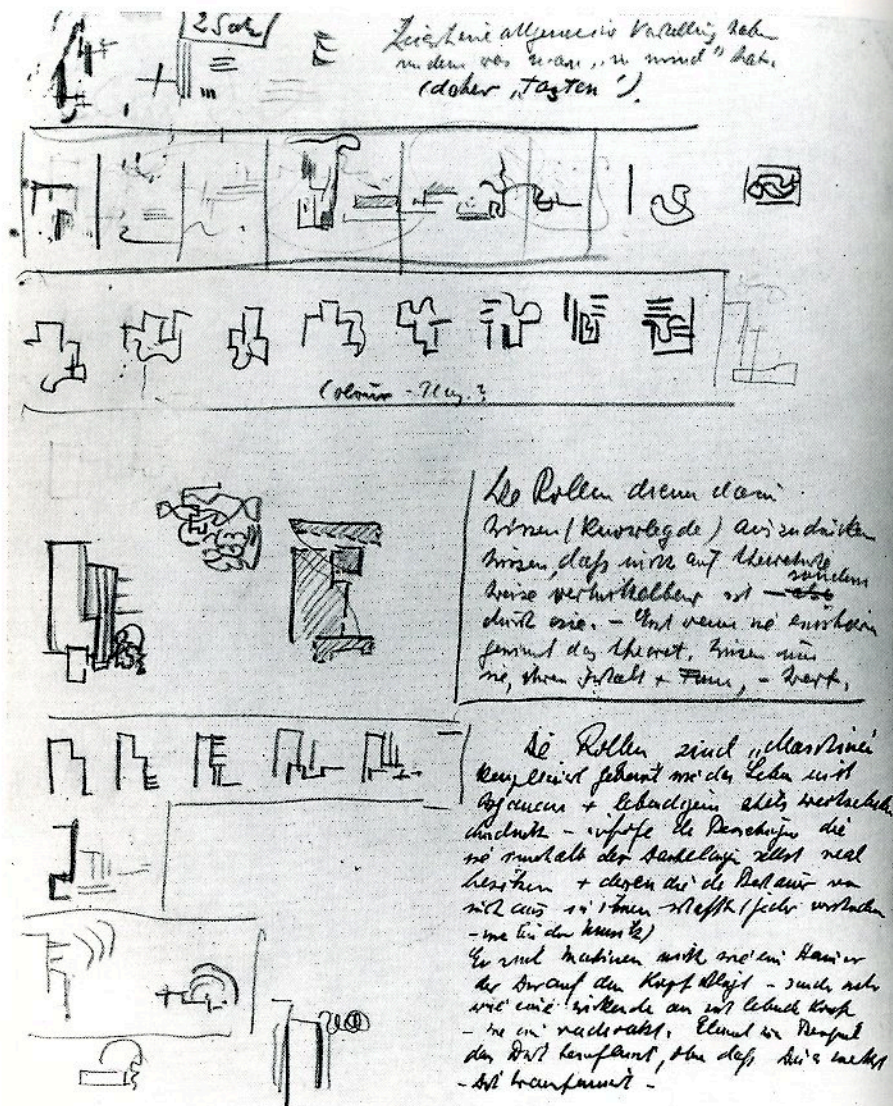


D = dominant

$\frac{=D \quad / = D \quad \text{proportion} = D}{\text{intensity}}$

- 1 small
- 2 & 3 sufficiently bigger different intensity
- 3 big " numerical proportion





2 movement

First get a general idea of what you have  
"in mind." (hence "grope")

Color-Play?

The scrolls are meant to express  
knowledge (*knowledge*) knowledge that  
cannot be realized in theoretical ways—  
only through them.—Only if they exist  
does the theoretical knowledge of them  
obtain its content + form, = value.

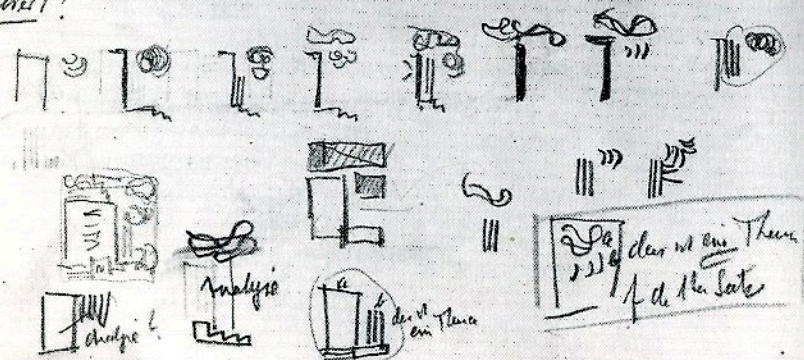
The scrolls are "machines," complicated  
constructions like life with organic + alive  
and ever-changing expression—due to  
the relations which they themselves  
really possess within these repre-  
sentations + those which the inventory  
creates within them out of its own  
(everyone understand—as in music)

They are machines not like a hammer  
that bangs on your head—more like an  
active living power—like a radioactive  
element, for example, that without your  
knowing it transforms you—



die "Kleidung" dürfen die Motive nicht verändern.  
damit verändern sie mit — in den Augen des Beobachters  
— aber die Längsachse von 1 —, in Gegenstandsformen  
ist dies aufzuheben: indem sie eine prinzipiell schem.  
Kunde (räumliche formenmaße — od. die Relativität in  
Form verhalten darstellende) Kleidung annehmen.  
2. Bedeutung des Gegenstandes!!!

alles zusammen  
Die Manifestation des befreiten = identischen Willens (mit dem Gesetz)  
ist die Form. Die Form wird nicht als (primäre Gestalt) <sup>identisch</sup> zur Manifestation  
(Formform) sondern als Erfindung = Synthese: die FORM als  
Symbol — wird erst durch Synthese, formenmaße, phantasie die  
alle die Funktionen (des Satzes, — der Rolle) ausführen können, mehr  
fehlt!



The "attitude" must not change the motives, that way they  
change—in the eyes of the observer —Cover up the  
importance /—. This is neutralized in diagonal systems: as they  
assume a position that is principally suspended (spaceless so  
to speak or demonstrating relativity in a vertical way). 2 fold  
meaning of the diagonals!!!

everything multiplied

The manifestation of freed = identical will (identical with the  
law) is form. Form does not want to appear as [\*\*\*] sign—  
message—(basic form) but as invention = synthesis. (FORM  
as a symbol——arises only through synthesis so to speak) a  
machine that can perform all the functions (of the movement,—  
the scroll), even procreate!

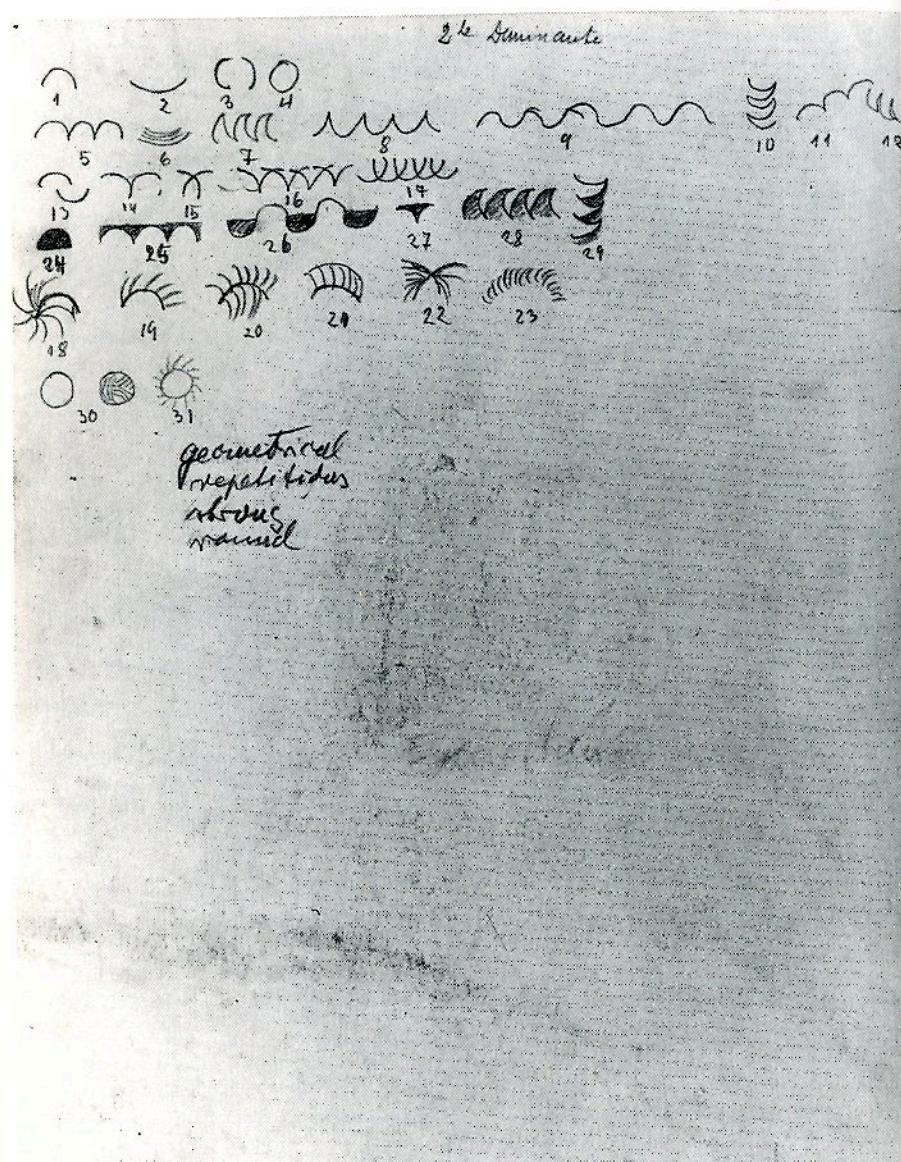
this is one theme  
for the 1st movement

analogy? that is

analogy

that is





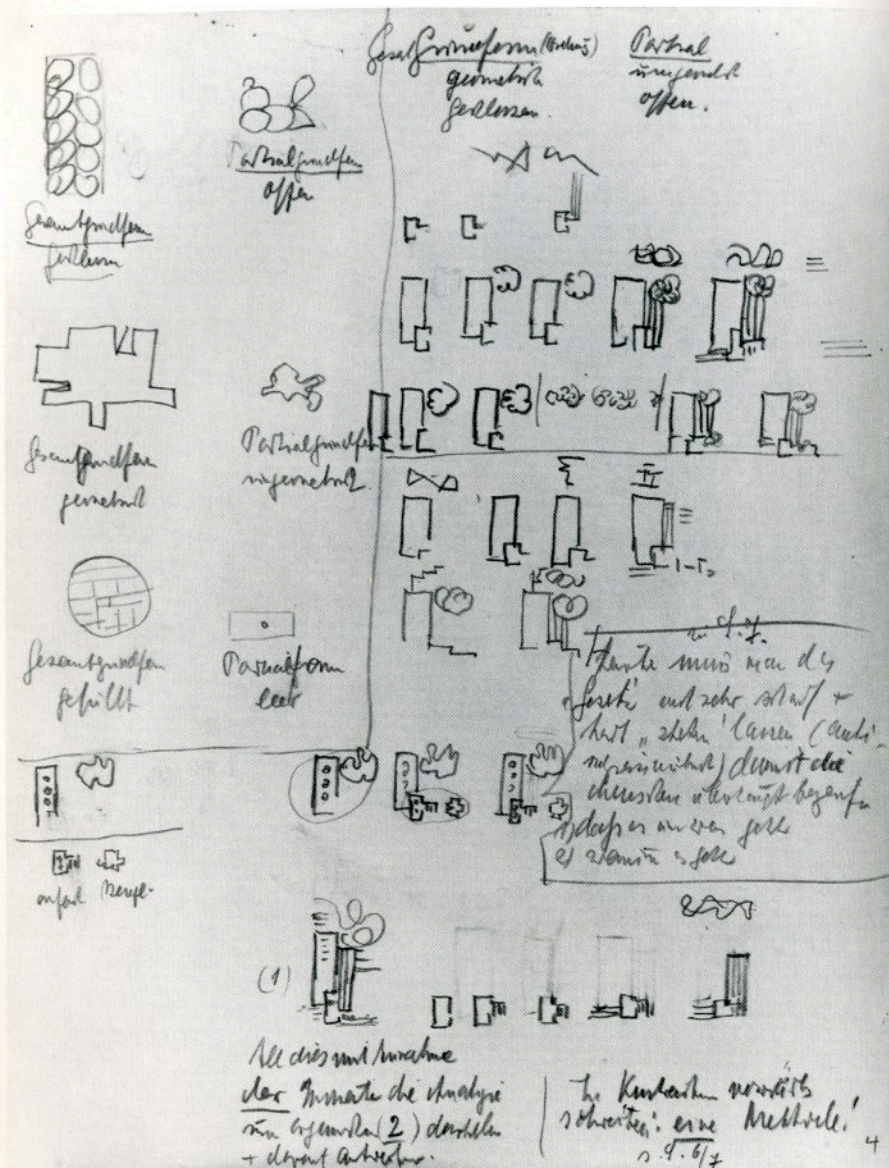
2nd dominant

geometrical  
repetitious  
strong  
round



$$\frac{1}{x^2} = x^{-2}$$





total basic form (order) partial  
 geometric nongeometric  
 closed open.

partial basic form  
 open

total basic form  
 closed

total basic form  
 geometric

total basic form  
 filled

partial basic form  
 nongeometric

partial form  
 empty

re. p. 7

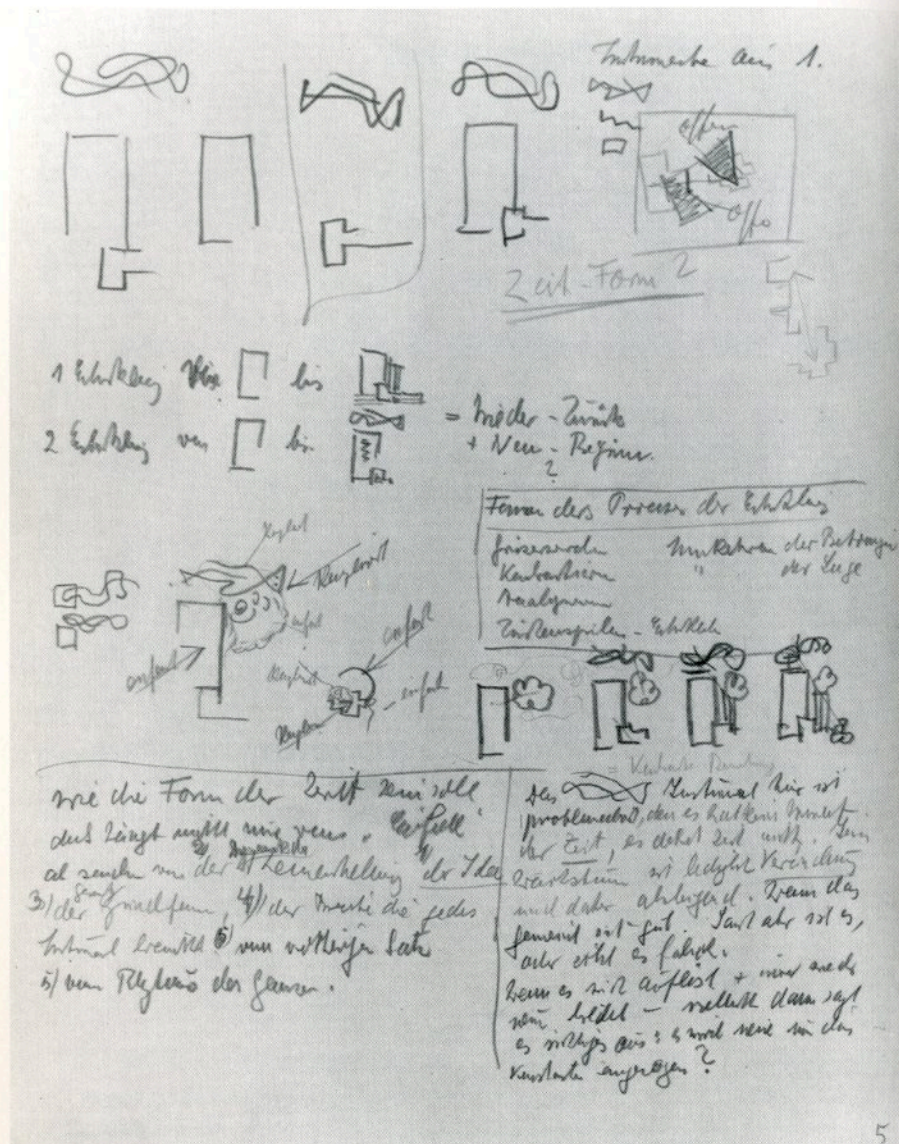
Nowadays one has to leave the "law" "standing" very sharp + rigid (anti-[[[[]]) so that people will really grasp

- 1) that there is a point
- 2) what the point is

All of this accepting these patterns the analogy to represent organic structures (2) + respond to them

Proceeding by way of contrasts: one method! cf. p. 6/7





instruments from 1.

open

open

time – form ?

= back – again

+ new beginning

?

1 development from to

2 development from to

forms of the process of development

simple

complicated

simple

complicated

releasing

contrasting

analogizing

interluding—development

reversal of emphasis

" of position

= contrast rating The instrument

here is problematic since it has no aspect of time, it does not extend time.

Its growth is only an alteration and thus descending. If that is meant—fine.

Otherwise it is or works wrong. If it dissolves + takes on a new form—then it says something right: it is newly attracted to the constant?

how the form of time will be, that depends not only on the “idea” but on

2) the dynamic of the theme,

1) the idea,

3) the total basic form,

4) the `***` that every instrument uses

6) the previous movement

5) the overall rhythm.







Das Problem (die Quelle) ist nicht klar.  
 Nach welchem Gesetz „dürfen“ die Verbindungen ver-  
 mitelt sein? Welche Freiheit besteht?  
 Von besteht in 2 wo sind die Grenzen — dann die  
 Möglichkeiten sind freieren — etc. (Antwort 9. 5)

Dynamik  
 Rhythmus  
 Metrik

### Zeit-Maass

- 1) Heme: (8/2)  
 Schreitender Rhythmus — jedes Element eine Synthese aller vorhergehenden.  
 ununterbrochenes Maass und des Rhythmus.  
 Hauptteil, ohne. Relativ unbewegt — wenn ich ruhig stehe  
 gleichförmiger Rhythmus. Explosionsbewegung
- 2) Symphonie: tanzender Rhythmus.  
 vom Grundmass des Aufbaus — mit ununterbrochenem (im Einzelmaass)  
 von 3 er Maass in 2 er Maass wechselnd. / bewegt — heftig.
- 3) Präludium: Vorspiel einfacher Maass durch Abwechselnd.  
 Langsamere Massen folgen...  
 „Anföhren, Verfolgen, Aufbrechen“ — etc.

Kontrast muss in der Zeit.

unverändert: Abnehmen (rückwärts!)  
 Füllen: Leeren  
 doppelte: verdoppeln die 2. Reihe Teil. & rückwärts)

At first the problem (the source) is not clear. According to which  
 law are the changes "allowed" to occur? What kind of freedom  
 is there? What does it consist of? where are the limits — since  
 the possibilities are un-limited (answer p. 5)

dynamics  
 rhythm  
 metrics

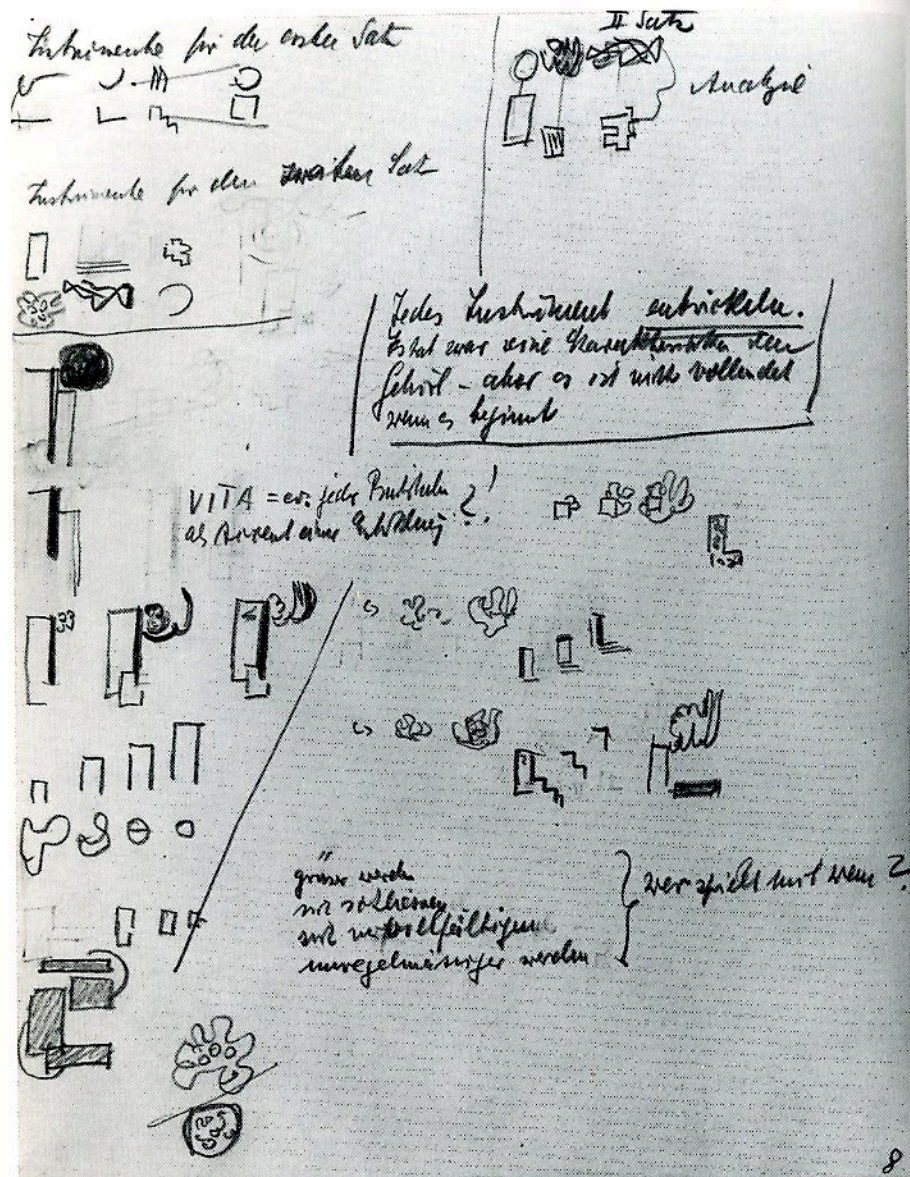
### Time—Measure

- 1 Mass (cf. p. 7)  
 striding rhythm—Every element is a synthesis of all the  
 preceding ones and of the theme. uniform measure  
 maestoso, grave. Relatively motionless  
 —if very animated  
 homogeneous (Accent) then radical change!  
 explosions
- 2 Symphony: dancing rhythm  
 different from the basic measure of the beginning (in the  
 interlude) changing from three-beat to two-beat measure./  
 (Accent)—change
- 3 Prelude: prelude simple measure through (Accent) change.  
 Slow increase follows . . . . . flourish, fade, flourish,—end

Contrast [\*\*\*] within time.

increasing	:	decreasing	(spatial!)
filling	:	emptying	"
doubling	:	simplifying	cf. space table (spatial)





Instruments for the first movement

II movement

analogy

Instruments for the second movement

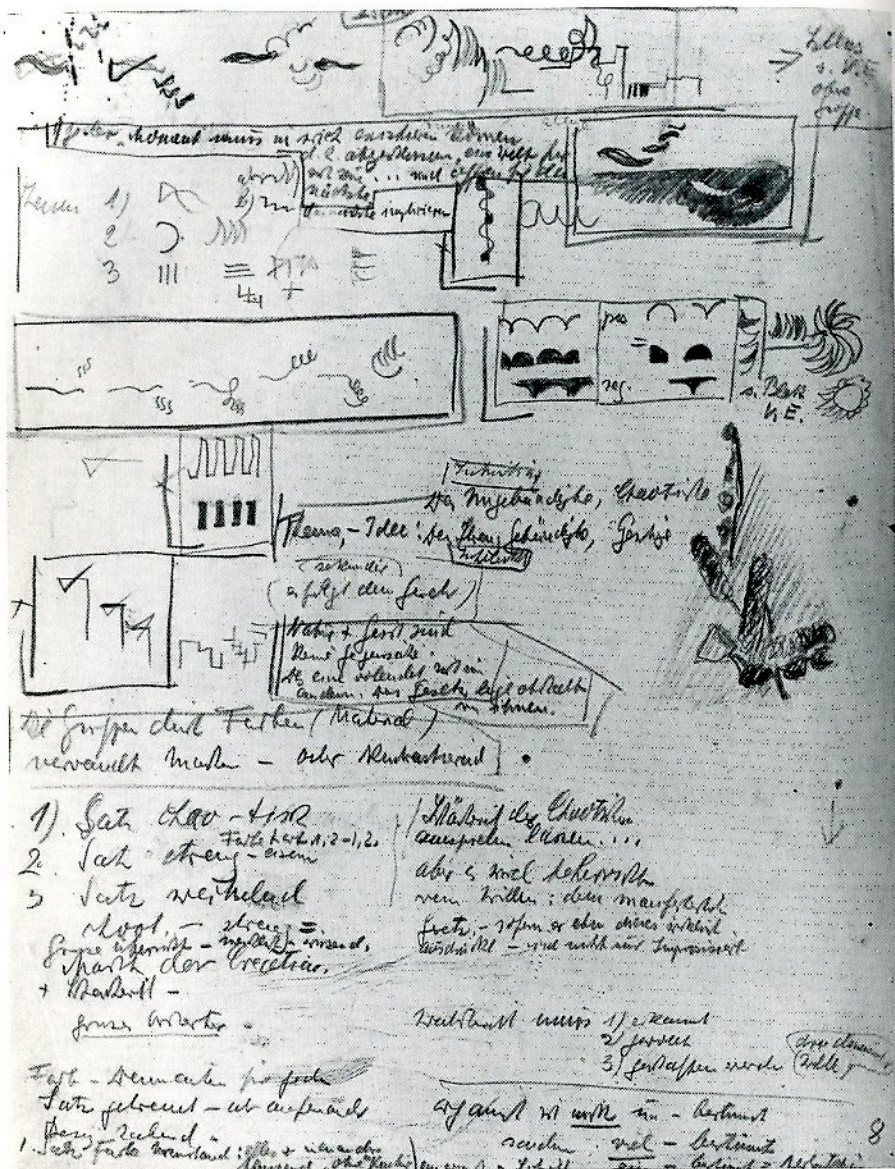
Each instrument is to be developed.  
Though it has its characteristics to the  
ear—it is not completed when it begins

VITA = he: each letter  
as an Accent of a development?!

getting bigger  
getting smaller  
multiplying  
getting more irregular

who plays with whom?





2 movement

ending  
cf. V. E.  
upper  
group

Each moment must be able to exist in itself, i.e. it must be completed, a world of its own . . . and open for the next imply the next

themes

cf. page  
V. E.

intuition

the untamed, chaotic

theme,—idea: the strictly tamed, mental  
intellect

secondary

it follows the law

nature + mind are  
not opposites.

The one completes itself in  
the other. The law lies above  
them.

Through color (material) the groups are  
interrelated—or contrasted.

- 1 movement chao-tic
- 2 movement severe—rigid color value 1,2—1,2
- 3 movement changing  
chaotic—severe =  
general outline—noticing—knowing.  
power of creation.  
+ truth —

Allowing the truth of the chaotic  
to be expressed . . . but it is  
controlled by will: the manifest  
law.—as far as it really  
expresses just that—is not just  
improvised

large orchestra

truth must be 1) recognized  
2) wanted  
3) created

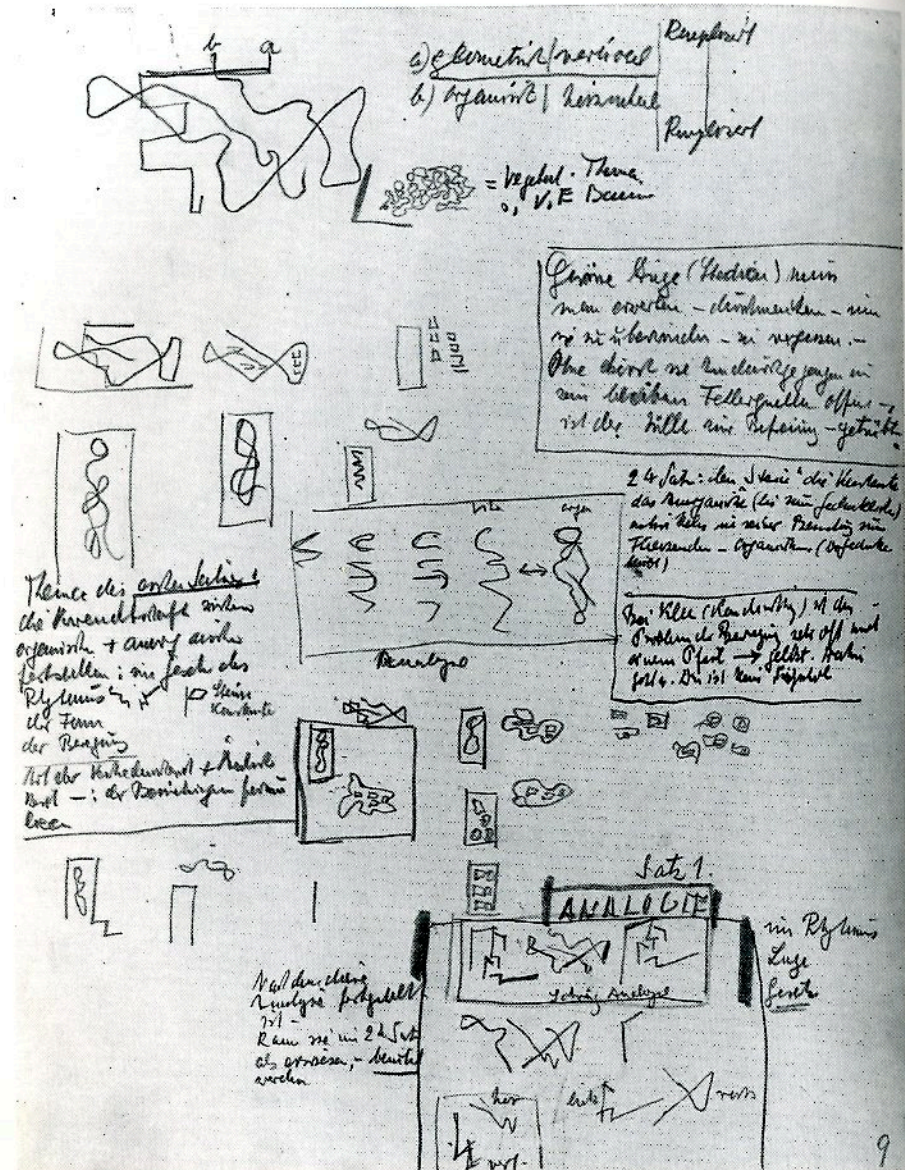
color-dominants separate for each  
movement—but related to each other.

1. movement color original state:  
everything + running into one another  
“without” contour

three  
dominant  
will  
organic is not un-defined  
but multiply defined  
inorganic—writing uni-defined

[\*\*\*]





- a) geometric / vertical  
b) organic / horizontal

complicated

complicated

vegetative theme  
cf. V. E. tree

Larger things (studies) one must acquire—undergo—in order to overcome them—forget them.—  
Without having gone through them, sources of error will persist—, and the will to liberation is—clouded.

2 4 movement: develop the "stone" the constant of the inorganic (fully into an idea), in its ties to the flowing—organic (pre-thought persists)

vita organ

analogy

With Klee (Kandinsky) the problem of movement is very often solved with an arrow → There it goes. This is not a symbol.

Theme of the first movement: determine the relationship between the organic + inorganic: by the law of  
rhythm stones  
of form constant  
of motion

Nature of relationship + matter [\*\*\*] —:  
of relations [\*\*\*]

movement 1  
ANALOGY

Once this analogy has been determined—it can, in the 2nd movement, be used—as established

in rhythm  
position  
law

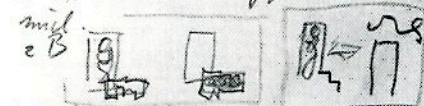
angular analogy  
hor. left right  
vert.



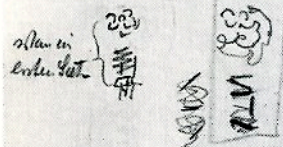




Was "wird" - empfängt Worte und mit wofür also Dingen verbunden  
mit



Was sollte Kindheit - Malerei Tafel nach 2  
Lohrer: Lohrer  
Pfeil: Lohrer



what has to be "explained"—introduced and what thus requires passages, for example

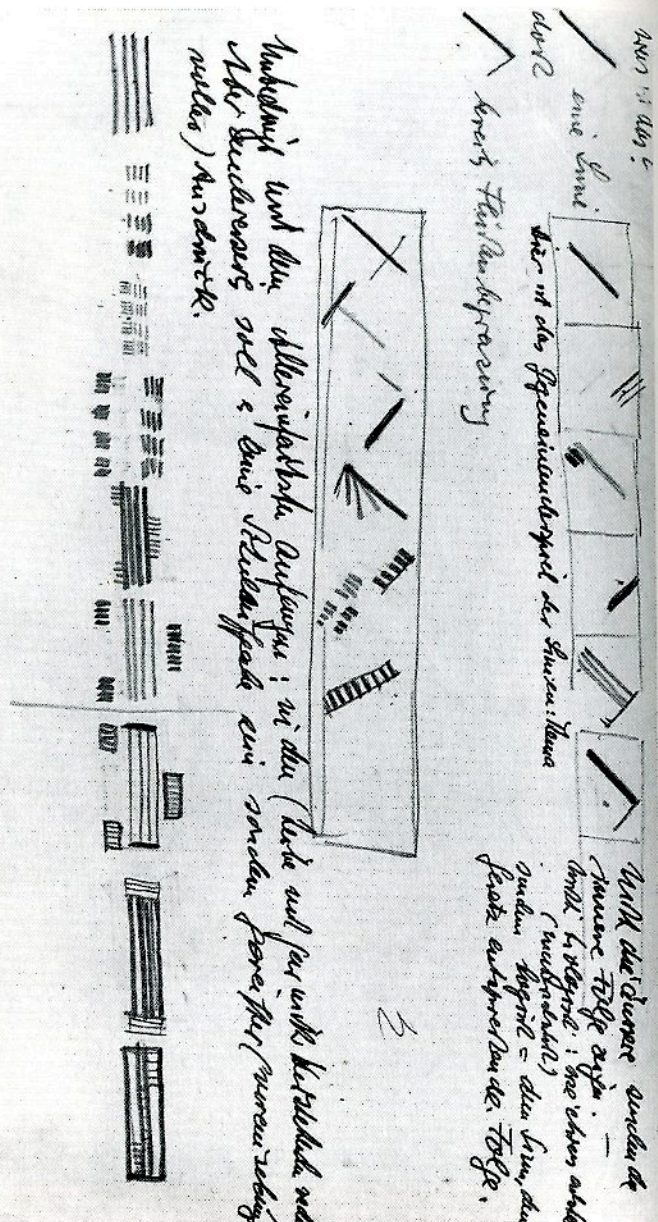
Create tables for which contrast-analogies?

heavy : light horizontal expression

filled : empty vertical "

already a  
first movement





what is that?

a line

Here the playing against each  
other of lines constitutes the theme

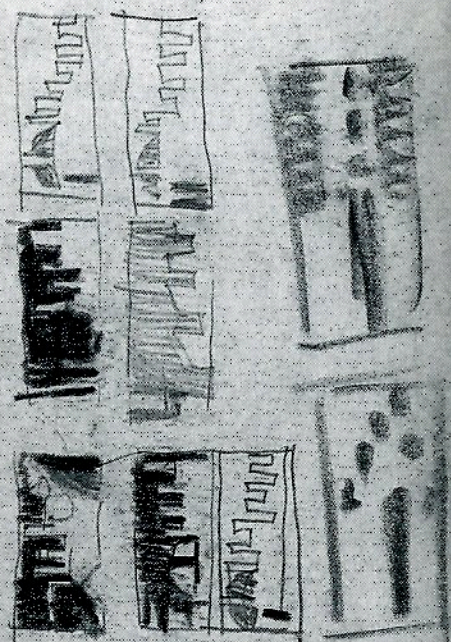
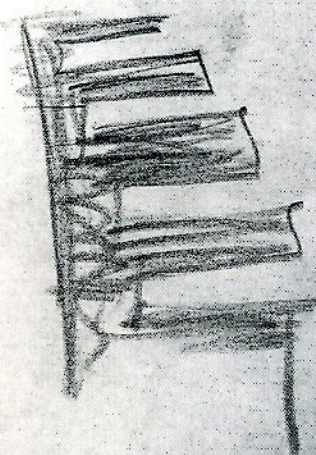
there

already area limitation

Do not show the outer but the inner  
sequence.—Not biologically: how  
something emerges (materialistically) but  
rather logically = the sequence  
corresponding with the meaning, the law.

By all means start with the most simple things: [\*\*\*] On the other hand it is not  
supposed to be on a level of schoolwork but mature (preconditional) expression.





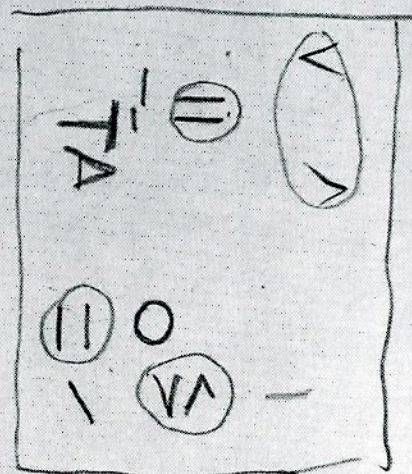
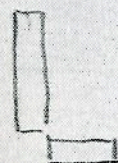
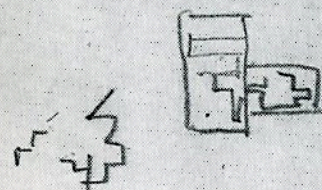
Detail upward  
 tendency downward  
 Detail downward  
 tendency upward

Detail upward  
 tendency downward

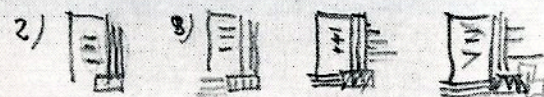
detail downward  
 tendency upward



1 Satz Raum wird gefüllt  
 2 Satz Raum wird gefüllt  
 und determiniert III



Gruppe 1)  
 2) 3) 4) 5)



1 movement

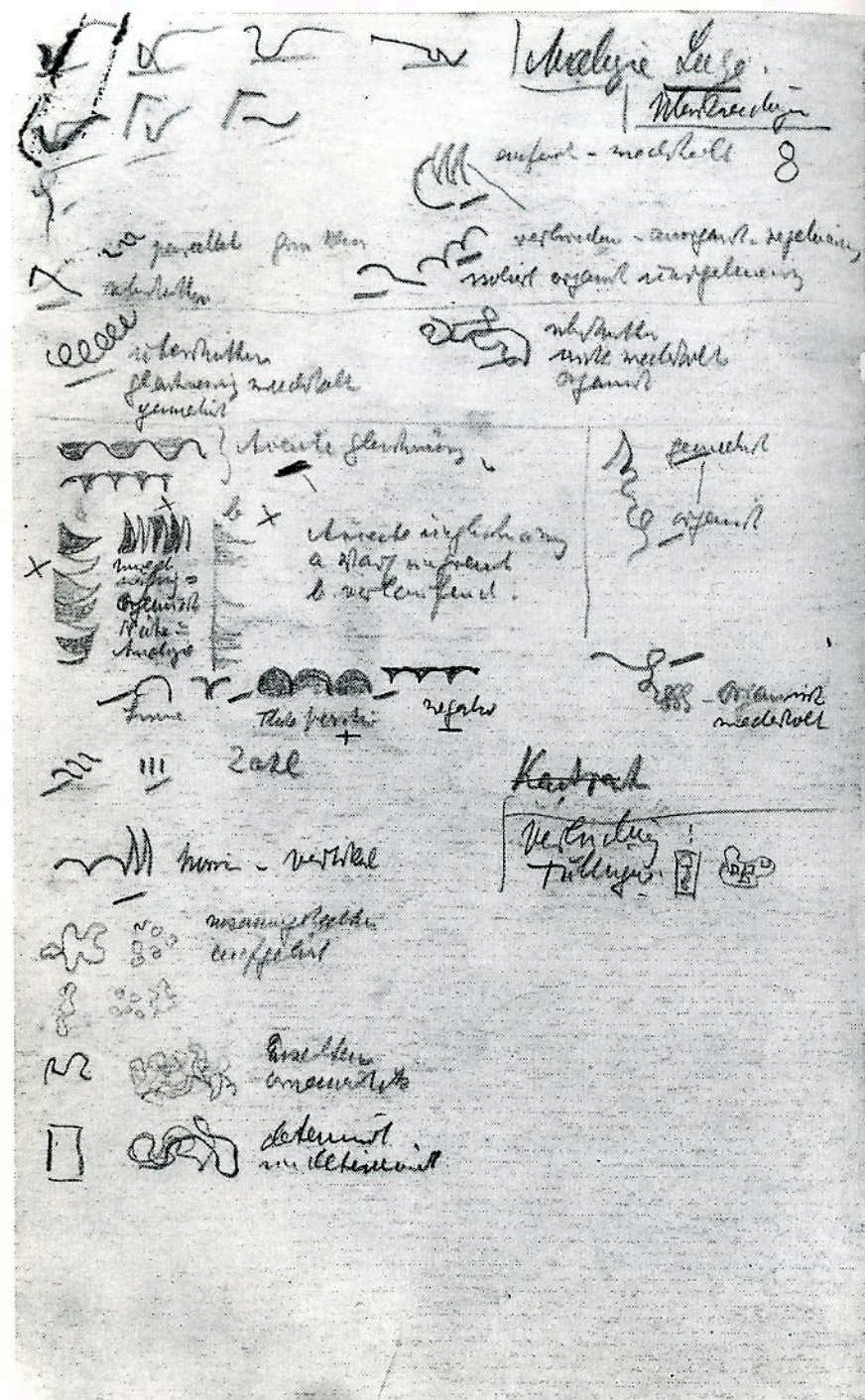
space is being filled

2 movement

space is being formed  
and determined

Group  
 always in  
contrasting pairs





analogy position  
intersections

single—repeated  
connected—inorganic—regular  
isolated—organic—irregular

parallel big small  
intersected

intersected  
regularly repeated  
geometric  
moments even  
moments uneven  
a strong [\*\*\*]  
b elapsing

irregular =  
organic  
proximity =  
analogy

meaning theme  
number

horiz—vertical

joined together  
dissolved

single component  
ornamental

determined  
undetermined

positive negative organic  
+ - repeated  
contrast  
connection  
filling



AUFBAU

2121 BROADWAY  
NEW YORK 23, N. Y.Mr. Hans Richter  
405 East 72 Street  
New York 21, N. Y.

Hand-drawn sketches of faces and figures, some with labels like 'Problems' and 'Aim'.

Handwritten notes: 'I. i. Fringe against no particular only', 'Chaos', 'Aim'.

(envelope, Dec. 1957,  
Aufbau Publ.)

Front:

f. i. From organic  
to geometrical order  
(or reverse) 2 problems

to most  
which possibilities of  
1). Transformation  
2). Conditions  
Instruments  
3. Dramatization  
+ Aim

Back:

The amorph should have  
+ geometrical under + side plays.  
to prepare the transition

The Also—(or) the "back-ground" may  
play their role + become forefront =  
form = leading

to Chaos



- Exposition / Thema im Einleitungssatz / Exposition
- 1) Dominante mit Gegenpart aus voll selbst - auswasch  
mit in der ersten Lage auswasch
- 2) 2 Stimme mit Dominante als neues Ensemble  
aus wasch in der ersten Lage
- 3) 3 Stimme: Kontre Dominante - Parallelismus Einführung - immer fließend;  
als 1 + 2: Kille - Barmherzigkeit - Stabilität - Klarer Ordnung = hart.
- Thema im Einleitungssatz
- I Satz.
- a. Dominante direktweg führend - ein Gegenpart mit 2. Stimme.  
Kontre Dominante als Akzent.
- b. 2 Stimmen Einleitungssatz - relativ maximale Einführung bis zum Gegenpart.  
gegen mit gleiches Figur in Beginn
- c. Kontre Dominante Einleitungssatz - relativ maximale Einführung  
gegen mit gleiches Figur in Beginn (nicht Parallelismus in der ersten Lage) auswasch auswasch
- d. Klimax: Dominante in freier Vielfachzahl mehrere  
Leitmotivgruppen - stark betontes Ziel in t. verbundene  
Kille - Dominante - 2 Stimme nur an der ersten Lage  
begleitend.  
End hier Thema "frei" Parallelismus + freie Phantasie  
neue Form bilden.  
minimale nur maximalen Ausdruck.

## Exposition

## Outline

Theme—repeat [\*\*\*]

permanent  
change of  
the

1) dominant with counter-playing out

flowing

of itself—play ensemble-playing  
only in medium register+ structured  
The cheerful  
be on top2) 2 voice with dominant as a new  
ensemble-playingThe dramatic  
be on bottom3) 3 voice—counter dominant—characteristic introduction less fluid; then 1 + 2: will—  
consciousness—stability—clearer structure = rigid

## I Movement.

## Theme The Organic

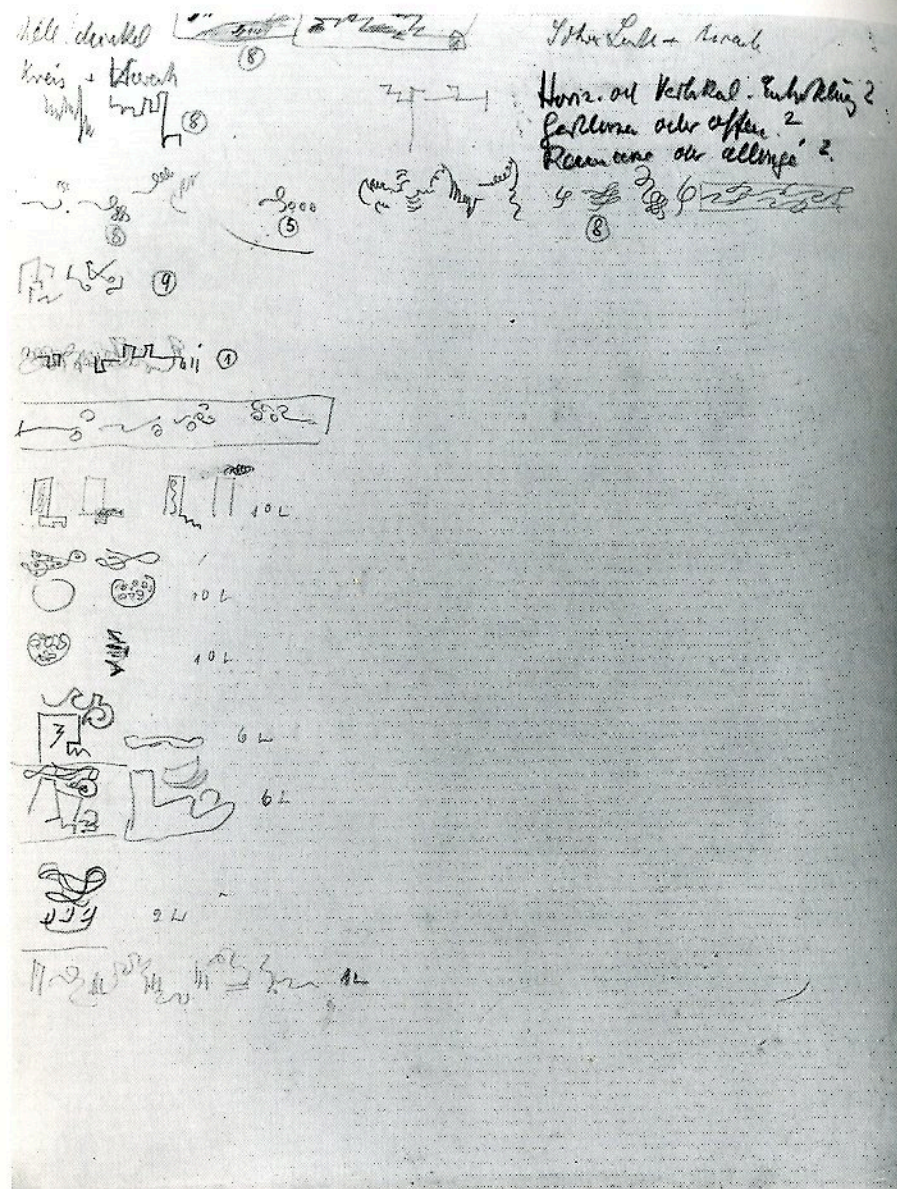
a dominant is leading throughout—in counter-playing with 2nd voice. Counter  
dominant as Accent.b 2 voice interlude—relatively maximal development all the way to the symbol—with  
exactly the same figure as beginningc counter dominance interlude—relatively maximal development exactly with same  
figure as beginning (cf. prelude—guitar)

flowing against continuous

d climax: dominant in utmost diversity = as several groups of instruments—strongly  
answered by counter dominance as brought forth in c.—2 voice accompanies only  
in analogyOnly here theme "free" parallelism + free improvisation  
Creating new form.

Minimal expression before maximal expression.





light dark

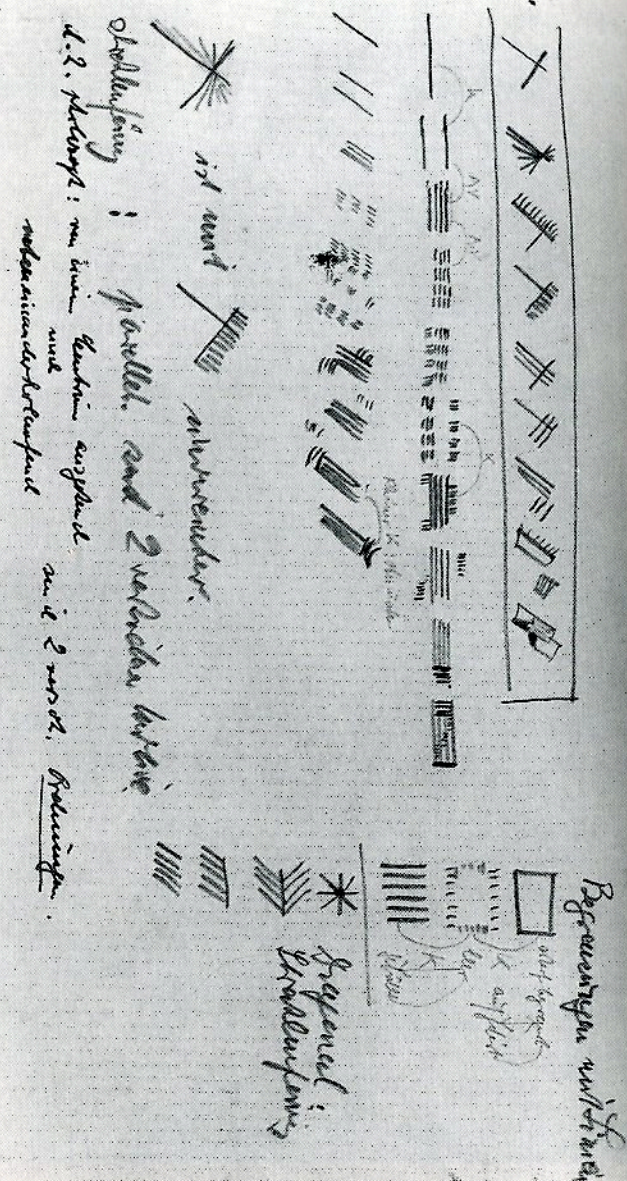
circle + rectangle

Horiz. or vertical development?

Closed or open?

Ramassé or allongé?





limitations through lines

strictly limited

K cancelled

empty

K

filled

diagonal:

radical

smaller K: top/bottom

and

are incompatible.

radial : parallel are 2 different motives

i.e. philosoph: emanating from one center

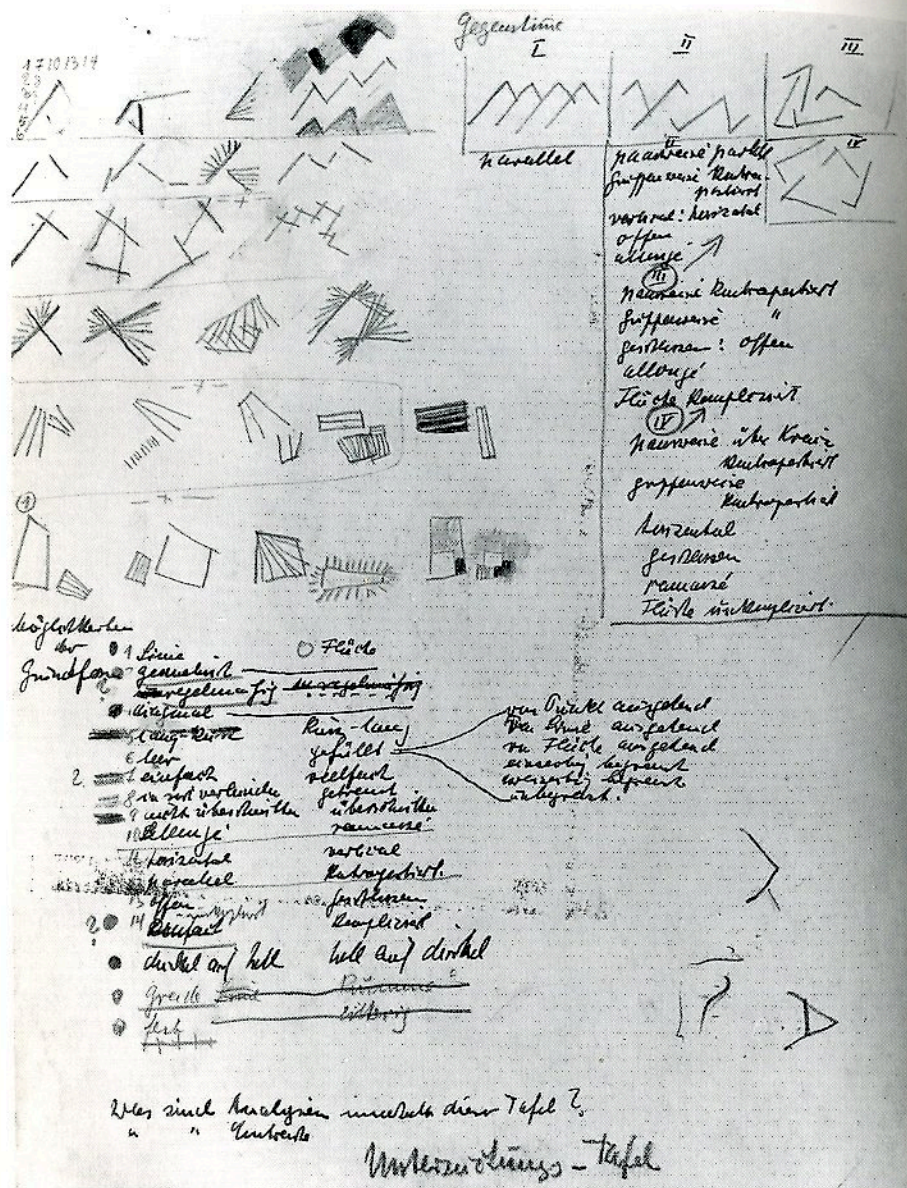
and

running parallel

are 2 diff.

calculations.





Objects		
I	II	III
parallel	parallel in pairs	IV
	contrasting in groups	
	vertical : horizontal	
	open	
	<i>allongé</i>	
	III	
	counterposed in pairs	
	" in groups	
	closed : open	
	<i>allongé</i>	
	surface complicated	
	IV	
	counterposed crosswise	
	in pairs	
	counterposed in groups	
	horizontal	
	closed	
	<i>ramassé</i>	
	surface uncomplicated	

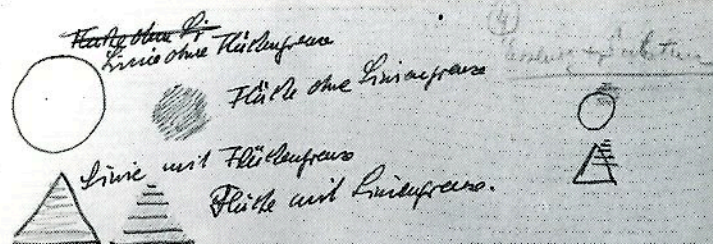
possibilities		
of the		
basic form		
1 line	area	
2 geometric		
3 regular	irregular	
4 diagonal		emanating from point
5 long-short	short-long	emanating from line
6 empty	filled	emanating from area
7 single	multiple	limited on one side
8 internally	separated	limited on two sides
linked		unlimited
9 not intersecting	intersecting	
10 <i>allongé</i>	<i>ramassé</i>	
11 horizontal	vertical	
12 parallel	counterposed	
13 open	closed	
14 simple	complicated	
dark on	light on	
light	dark	
straight line	bent line	
solid	shaky	

What are the analogies within this table?

" " " contrasts

### Table of Differentiation





(1° moralisch 2° materiell)

(1°) Willensähnlichkeit — Grenzauflösung  
(1° moralisch 2° materiell)

(2°) Willensunterschied — Grenzkontrast  
(1° moralisch 2° materiell)

(1°) Willenskontrast — Willensähnlichkeit  
materiell moralisch

(2°) Willensähnlichkeit, Tümel Koordinationspunkte

1. In ähnlichem Material ist der Willensunterschied primär, die Willensähnlichkeit sekundär.

2. In ähnlichem Willen ist der Willensunterschied primär, die Willensähnlichkeit sekundär.

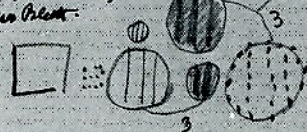
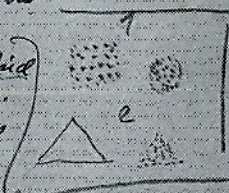
1. Willen freiflächiger Kontrast des Willens + der Materie

2. Willensähnlichkeit Beziehungen des Willens zur konträren Materie.

Willen freiflächiger Ähnlichkeit der Materie und des Willens

Willensähnlichkeit Kontraste des Willens in derselben Materie

Willensähnlichkeit des Willens Kontrast in Materie



line without areal limitation  
area without line limitation

Essence + Substance

line with areal limitation  
area with line limitation

(1° moral 2° material)

1° similarity of will—analogy of border  
(moral 2° material)

2° difference of will—contrast of border

1 moral 2° material

1° contrast of manner—difference of material  
material moral

2° similarity of manner, inner points of coordination

manner

1 With similar material, the difference of will is primary, the similarity of will is secondary.

2 With similar will, the difference of manner is primary, the similarity of manner is secondary.

1 Visible tangible contrasts of will + matter

2 Mysterious links between will and contrary matter.

Visible tangible similarities between matter and will

Mysterious contrasts between will within the same matter. (large page)

Mysterious similarity of will  
Contrast within material

Sensory contrast of will

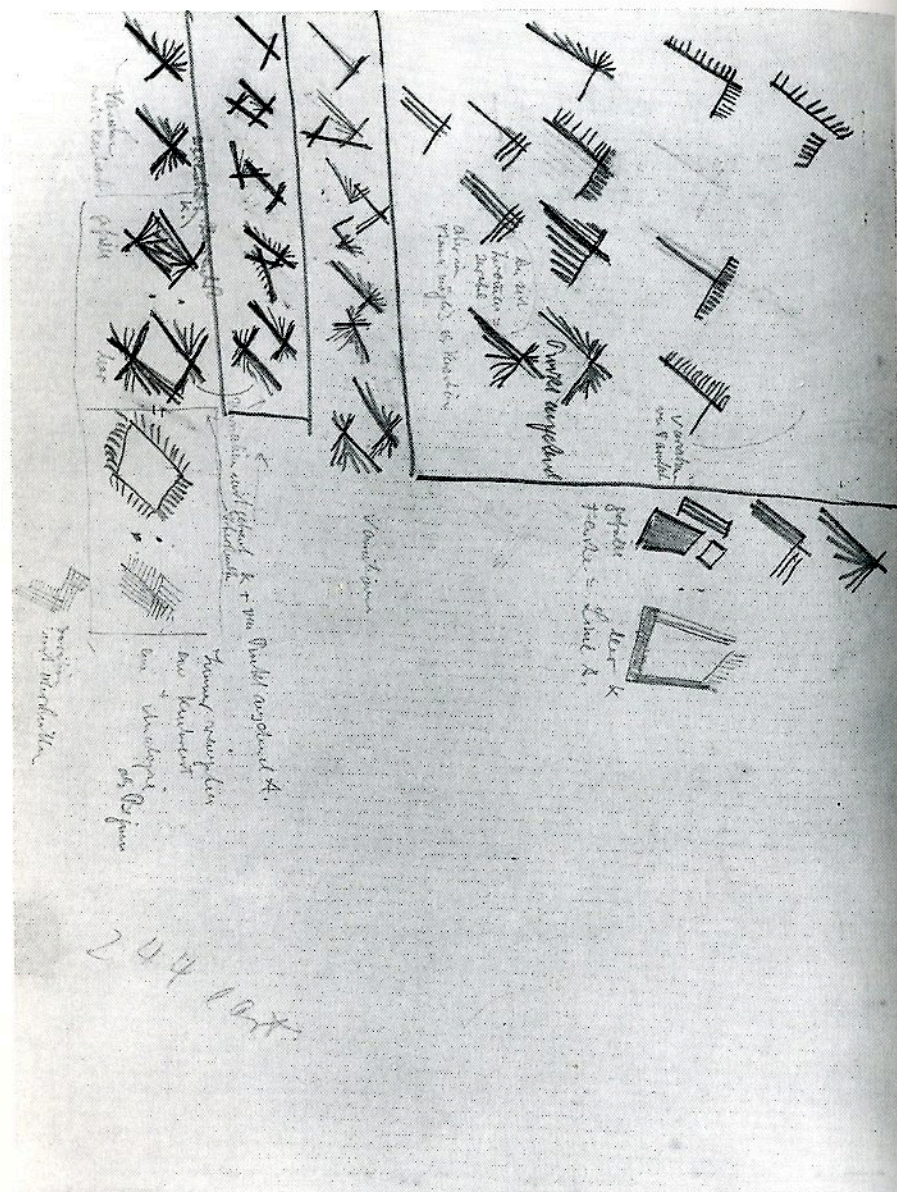
Similarity of

material

Contrast of material

Similarity of will





variations  
of parallel

filled empty K  
area = line A

point emanating

Actually  
[\*\*\*] =  
parallel

but one  
theme conceivable as variation

## Variations

eccentric concentric  
K.

variation with separate K +  
A emanating from point.  
intersected

Always at least  
one contrast

+

one analogy

as a beginning

variation  
with intersected



getrennt	11 \ /	1 Gruppe einzelne
verbunden	√ → Abzweigen	2 Gruppe doppelt
überkreuzt		3 Gruppe vielfach
		1 Linie komplex

separate

1 group single

linked

transformations

2 group double

intersected

3 group multiple

1 meaning main characteristic