

Rhythmic organization, although an essential condition for keeping the attention and thus prolonging the life span of the image, is not in itself fully sufficient to secure the maximum endurance of attention necessary for integration of plastic form. One is well acquainted with the irritating sensation produced by the regular repetition of a sound of a drum. One knows almost instinctively that a simple rhythmic pattern possesses a regularity that soon becomes monotony. If the image is to remain a living organism, the relationships within it must have progressively changing aspects. One cannot long look at the same visual relationship without exhausting nervous energies of attention. The power of rhythm in keeping attention prolonged is conditioned by the necessity to feed attention by progressively changing optical material. Change implies movement. The final task of plastic organization is, then, the creation of an optical structure of movement that will dictate the direction and progression of plastic relationships until the experience reaches full integration. The most evident characteristic of movement is its unity, its dynamic continuity. Movement, however, implies also the opposite of unity: variety of locations. The very meaning of movement lies in this inner contradiction of the dynamic unity and the static discontinuity. To experience movement, then, means to disclose its contradictory aspects, to establish their mutual relationships, to follow up the contradiction through all stages. The picture field is two-dimensional surface and the optical changes therefore must necessarily be within the circulation of the vision of the flat plane. The kinetic basis of plastic organization--the linear paths of the eye on the picture-plane--is the common measure that binds into a unity the changing plastic relationships. The eye follows the given path, and the kinetic sensation of the eye movement charges the line with its own experience-quality and establishes a dynamic continuity, a unity of the surface.

The function of the kinetic linear path in plastic organization may be compared with the function of melody in musical composition, and the following observations of musicians should be helpful in bringing about further clarification.

"Music, theoretically considered, consists altogether of lines of tone. It more nearly resembles a picture or an architectural drawing, than any other art creation; the difference being that in a drawing the lines are visible and constant, while in music they are audible and in motion. The separate tones are the points through which the lines are drawn and the impression which is intended, and which is apprehended by the intelligent listener, is not that of single tones, but of continuous lines of tones, describing movements, curves and angles, rising, falling, poising--directly analogous to the linear impressions conveyed by a picture or drawing."¹

The linear unity can encompass all possible optical opposites on all levels of space and can be generated by any factor of visual organization. When plastic forces fail to create the experience of depth, linear movement will organize flat shapes. Not only does each shape have its own individuality, but simultaneously the outlines of the shapes have dynamic power to lead the eye from one to another. A number of contiguous shapes placed on the picture-plane are automatically connected by the movement of their continuous outlines. These lines move first from one figure to another, forming groups, and then from one group to another, creating a progressive organization of all the elements on the picture surface. The common dynamic linear direction thus has an equivocal meaning. Each shape outline shares the direction of visual flow. This ambiguous spatial content is increased in vitality when new qualities are added to the shapes. If value differences are introduced where value uniformity previously held, if one shape is made black and another white, the remaining ones of intermediary values, the two-fold character of the space will be made more evident. One shape will appear to advance toward the spectator, another to recede, and so on, but the evident or latent continuation of the outline continues to move on the flat surface and the contradiction and identity between the depth dimensions and the

¹P. Goetschius, Elementary Counterpoint