

# Pictographs, Ideograms, and Alphabets in the Work of Paul Klee

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Paul Klee (1879-1940), the Swiss artist who taught at the German Bauhaus, used ancient and modern pictographs and alphabets in many of his paintings and drawings. The discreet characters of the various systems of writing were well adapted to Klee's unusual additive technique by which he retained the expressive purity of the formal elements. In the 1910's and 1920's, Klee used roman letters to construct abstract formal patterns, but in the 1930's he reanimated the conventional symbols of the alphabet, turning them into active representational figures suggestive of their pictographic origins. His most revolutionary achievement was the invention of bold ideograms, combining different pictographic schemata in a set of double images which enrich a basic idea through chains of associated ideas, thus altering the notion of a picture as representing a scene fixed in time and space.

Paul Klee's interest in ancient systems of writing is obvious from his work and has frequently been commented upon, especially in discussions of the schematic drawings and paintings of the 1930's.<sup>1</sup> At a time when such bold images were not as fashionable as they are at present, some attributed this development to the scleroderma that slowly sapped his strength and finally, in 1940, stopped his heart. However, one can point to parallel developments in the work of his contemporaries—Miro, Picasso, and Matisse—and, curiously, in the very history of image making itself, as writing emerged from simple picture-making. Close attention to Klee's developing interest in pictographs, ideograms, and alphabets provides positive reasons for the phenomenon of the late works and reveals their direct relevance to his own peculiar method of working and the changing artistic goals which have dramatically altered traditional notions of what a picture should do.

Klee had shown an interest in pictographs as early as 1903 when he copied in his journal four beggars' signs from a pam-

|   |                     |       |  |
|---|---------------------|-------|--|
| 西 | Abernd, Westen, alt | 司     | ein Vogel auf dem Neste  |
| 見 | sehen,              | alt 見 | ein Auge auf zwei Beinen laufend   |
| 忠 | treu,               | alt 忠 | aus dem Bild des Herzens (unten) und dem der Mitte (eines in der Mitte geteilten Vierecks) zusammengesetzt, also „das Herz auf dem rechten Fleck haben“; |
| 思 | denken,             | alt 思 | ein Gesicht, das aus dem Herzen hervor, kommt;   |
| 好 | lieben,             | alt 好 | Mutter und Kind, nach anderer Auslegung Jüngling und Mädchen   |

Figure 1. Comparison of ancient and modern Chinese characters from Karl Weule, *Vom Kerbstock zum Alphabet*.

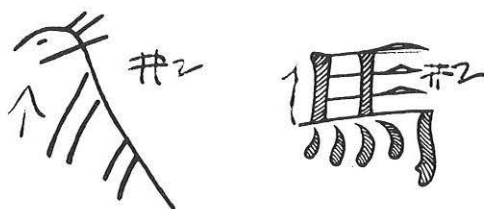


Figure 2. Ancient and modern Japanese characters used by Sergei Eisenstein to illustrate an article in *Cahiers d'Art* (1930).

phlet on Swiss folklore,<sup>2</sup> and Jürg Spiller has noted that Klee had in his library a popular introduction to the origins of writing, Karl Weule's *Vom Kerbstock zum Alphabet* (Stuttgart, 1915).<sup>3</sup> Here Klee would have seen the transformation of natural signs into conventional symbols, graphically demonstrated in tables comparing Chinese characters with their original clearly identifiable shapes (Fig. 1). He would also have appreciated the comparison of the old and the modern Japanese pictographs for "horse" (Fig. 2) illustrating the same process of abstraction in an article by Sergei Eisenstein in an early issue of *Cahiers d'Art*,<sup>4</sup> the avant-garde magazine which frequently reproduced Klee's work and which, according to his son Felix, he collected.

Klee tried his hand at creating his own pictographs, transforming simple schematic figures into signs of varying degrees of abstraction. *More and More Signs* (1932; Fig. 3) is a churning mass of figures in the process of dissolution. Some, like the prominent

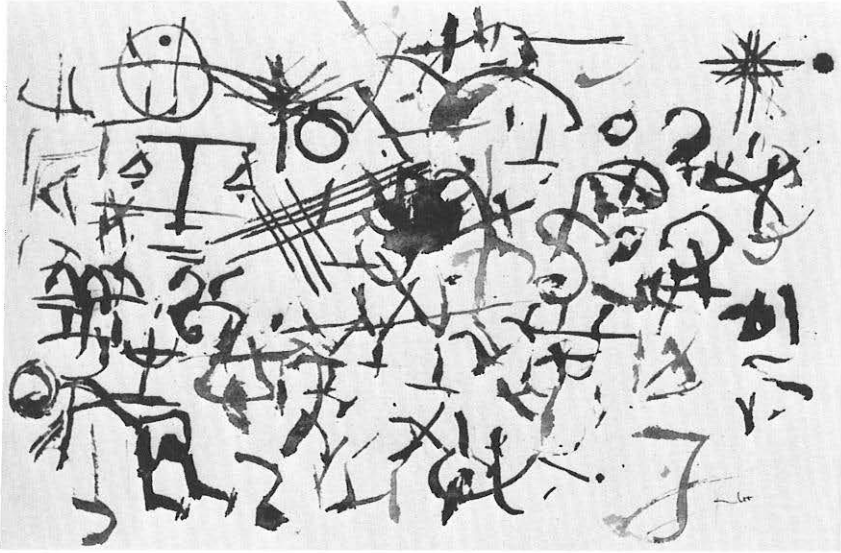
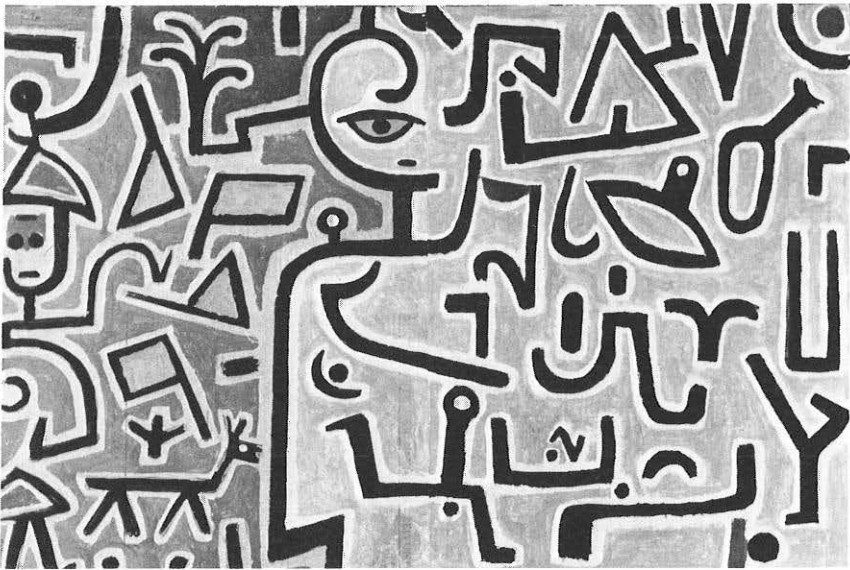


Figure 3. Klee: More and More Signs (Zeichen verdichten sich). Brush drawing. 1932/Qu 1. Klee-Stiftung, Bern.

Figure 4. Klee: Intention (Vorhaben). Paste colors on newsprint over burlap. 1938/J 6. Klee-Stiftung, Bern.



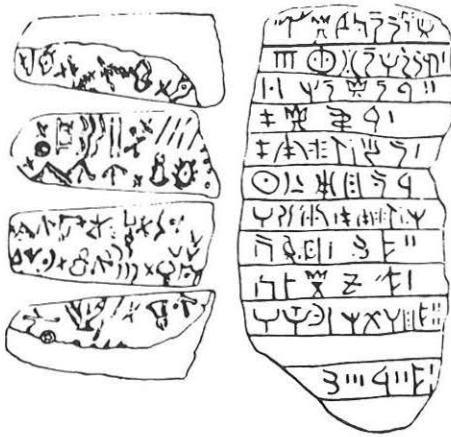


Figure 5. Examples of Minoan pictographs and linear script from Karl Weule, *Vom Kerbstock zum Alphabet*.

|               |    |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|---------------|----|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Alvöo         | XX | Y | Δ | ↑ | E | W | V | W | W | Δ | ∟ | I | H | M | N | W | X |
| Ägyptisch     | X  | Y | Σ | ↑ | E | W | V |   |   | Δ |   |   |   | H | M |   |   |
| Allgemeinisch | X  | Y | Δ | ↑ | E | N | V | M |   |   |   | I | H | I |   |   |   |
| Übersisch     | X  | Y | Δ | ↑ | E | N | V | M |   |   | Γ | I | H | I | K | M | X |
| Allphönikisch |    |   | Δ | ↓ | ε | Λ | W |   |   | Δ | Γ | H | I | Λ |   |   |   |
| Punisch       | X  |   |   | ↓ | ε | Λ |   |   |   |   | I | H | I |   |   |   |   |
| Runen         | X  | Y | Δ | ↑ | E | N | V | M |   |   | K | I | N | I |   |   |   |
| Alvöo         | W  | Δ | ↑ | ε | W | W | W | Δ | ∟ | J | Y | X | ∟ | W | X |   |   |
| Ägyptisch     |    | ↑ | E | F | W |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   | V |   |   |   |
| Allgriechisch | H  |   | F |   |   | C |   |   |   | K | Y | ∟ | ∟ |   |   |   |   |
| Übersisch     | M  | ↑ | W | ε |   |   | W | X | K |   |   |   |   | ∟ |   |   |   |
| Allphönikisch | W  |   | ε | ε | ε |   | ∟ | X | ∟ | ∟ |   |   |   | ∟ |   |   |   |
| Punisch       | ∟  |   | ε | ε | ε |   | ∟ | X | ∟ | ∟ |   |   |   | ∟ |   |   |   |
| Runen         | W  |   | F |   |   |   |   |   | K | N | ∟ |   |   |   |   |   |   |

Figure 6. Comparative table of ancient scripts from Karl Weule, *Vom Kerbstock zum Alphabet*.

heads and the falling figure in the lower left corner, are distinguishable as natural signs sharing some recognizable aspect of the referent, but others are as far removed from any recognizable object as the letters of the alphabet which also appear in the profusion of “hen scratches.” A more systematic transformation of signs into symbols is found in *Intention* (1938; Fig. 4). To the left of the central figure are easily recognizable schemata on a dark green field: the girl, the animal, the tree. Within the glowering figure itself, against a glowing red background, are more abstract signs, but the representational origin of some is still obvious, especially in the running and kicking figures toward the bottom. In this painting, which Klee called *Vorhaben* (noun: “intention”; verb: “to have in mind”), he was able, by using figures of varying degrees of abstraction, to contrast the abstract

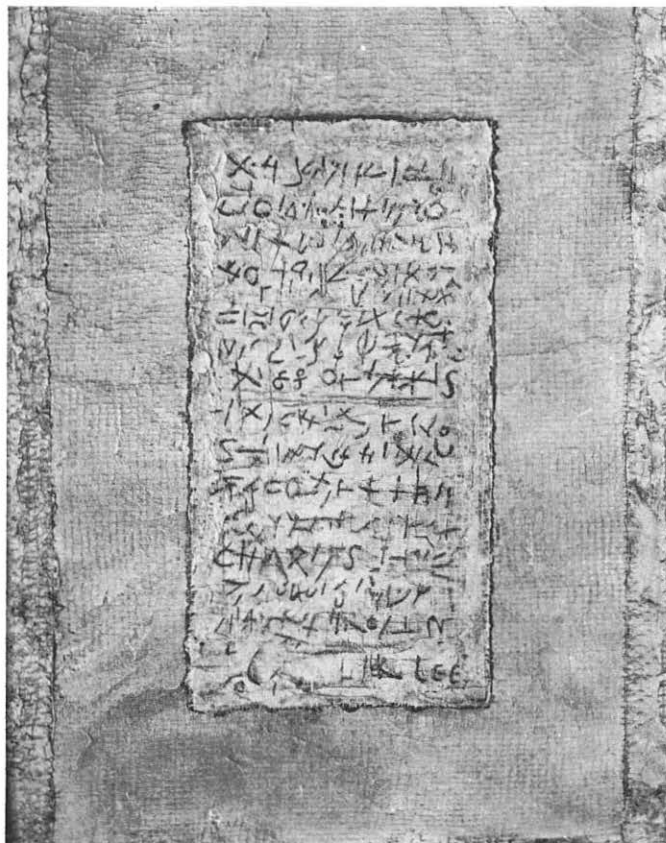


Figure 7.  
Klee:  
Document  
(Urkunde).  
Oil and plaster  
on gauze.  
1933/Z 3.  
Angela Rosengart  
Collection,  
Lucerne.

character of thought (suggested by the symbolic figures within the glowering man) with the reality of the world without, signified by the more fully realized figures in the green field.

Many of the recurrent symbols in Klee's pictures of the 1930's, such as the flag-shapes (◄, ◑) and the plant form (Ψ) in *Intention*, were used in the ancient Mediterranean scripts which are ancestors of the modern roman alphabet. A number of these symbols were reproduced by Weule (Figs. 5 and 6). Klee used these and similar symbols in paintings which appear to be undecipherable fragments of antiquity. Such paintings as *Document* (1933; Fig. 7) might appropriately be called "forgeries"; one can hardly call them "pictures." These caprices lie at the very border between art and writing; without even speaking metaphorically, it can be said that these paintings were written.

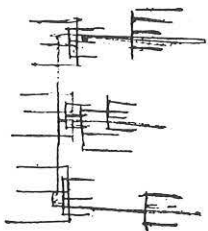




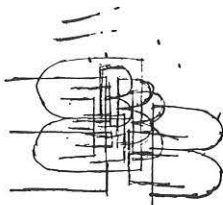
Figure 10.  
Klee:  
Number-Trees  
(Zahlenbäume).  
Pencil.  
1918/198.  
Klee-Stiftung,  
Bern.

Klee had included writing as an important part of his pictures at an early date. In 1901 he wrote rather defensively that in his portraits he added “words on the brow and around the corners of the mouth” but that his “human faces are truer than the real ones.”<sup>5</sup> In the series of illuminated poems made during the war (Fig. 8), the words are more than accessories; the letters serve as the framework of the whole composition. By 1918, letters and numbers were liberated from any conventional symbolic meaning in such drawings as *Inscription in the Clouds* (1919; Fig. 9) and the sheet of figures whimsically transformed into *Number-Trees* (1918; Fig. 10). Through such arrangements of numbers and letters Klee was working toward the art of pure form, described in his *Creative Credo*, in which “abstract formal elements are put together like numbers and letters to make concrete beings or abstract things; in the end a formal cosmos is achieved, so much like the Creation that a mere breath suffices to transform religion into act.”<sup>6</sup>

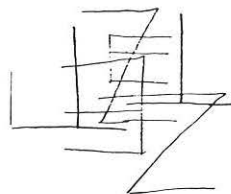
A subject E, purely static



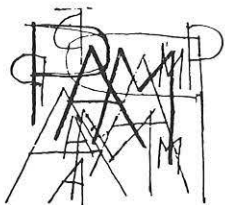
Two subjects, E, B



Three subjects, Z E T



A higher subject, P A M



P R I in dynamic position



E I L in dynamic position



Figure 11. Klee: Compositional exercises with capital letters. Pedagogical notes for the Bauhaus, 1922. Klee-Stiftung, Bern.

In the alphabet, Klee had found a ready-made system of discrete units which could be combined and recombined in endless variations. The combinations of letters which Klee made in 1922 (Fig. 11) are almost fugal in their formal purity. They have meaning only within their particular "formal cosmos." The letters of the alphabet long ago lost any semblance of their pictographic origins. Simply by looking at the letter A, for example, one would never suspect that it is supposed to be descended from the Egyptian hieroglyph for "eagle." From the representational point of view, the letters of the roman alphabet are entirely neutral, and as such, they are ideally suited as building blocks for formal constructions.

In the 1930's, however, Klee reanimated the long-dead letters of the alphabet, turning them back into recognizable objects. By juxtaposing T-shapes with pine tree schemata in *Place of Concord*

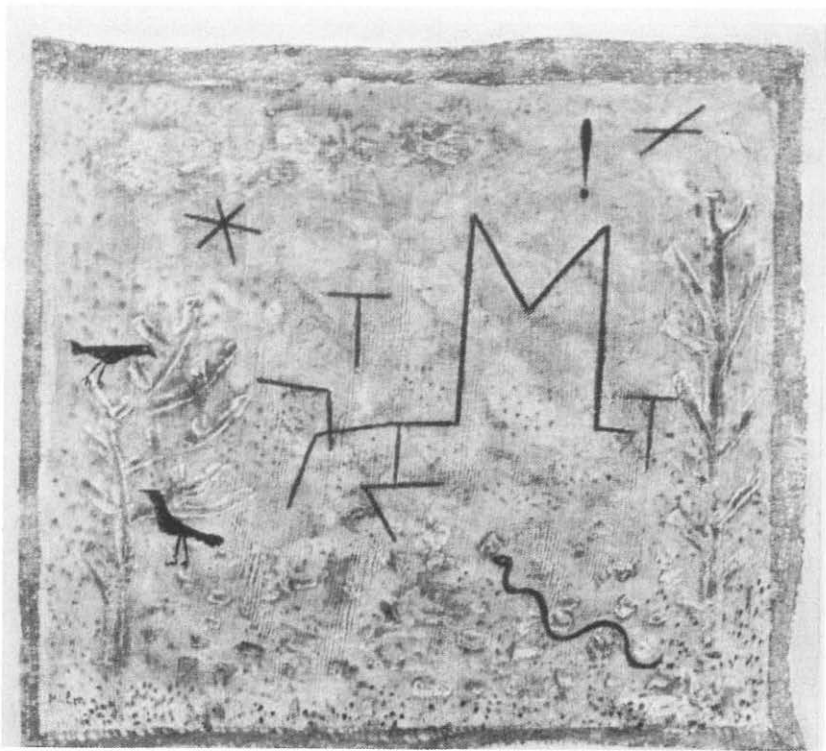


Figure 12. Klee: *Garden Gate M* (*Gartentor M*). Oil and gouache on muslin. 1932/M 15. Richard Doetsch-Benziger Collection, Basel.

(1932), he transformed the T into a plant-sign without altering its original shape in any way. In *Garden Gate M* (1932; Fig. 12) the T is joined by the M of the title to form the entrance to a paradise garden, complete with a schematic serpent and birds of hieroglyphic simplicity.<sup>7</sup>

In 1938 Klee began to alter the shape of the letters so that they suggested representational images by themselves without any landscape setting. In the *Studies of Active Figures* (1938; Fig. 13) letters of the alphabet have been reactivated by extensions suggesting the arms and legs of scampering figures. *Signs on the Rocks* (1938; Fig. 14) recalls the mysterious petroglyphs that serve as reminders of a primitive past in isolated regions throughout the world. We seem to watch the very creation of the alphabet as schematic figures, reduced to simple and barely recognizable forms, merge by degrees into conventional symbols. At the

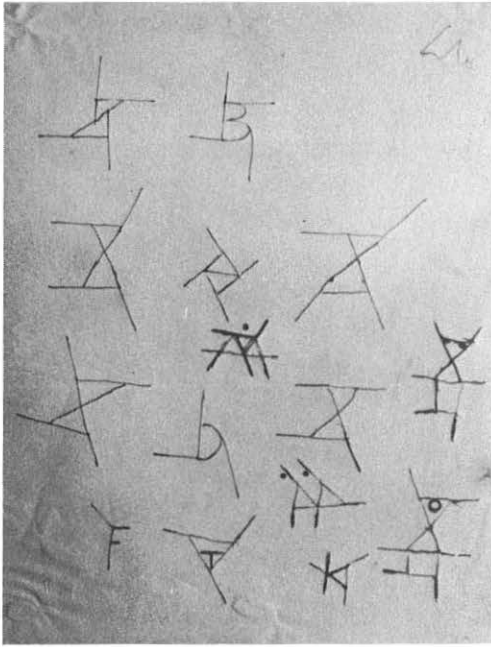


Figure 13.  
Klee:  
Studies of  
Active Figures  
(Studienblatt  
mit bewegten  
Figuren).  
1938/L 16.  
Klee-Stiftung,  
Bern.

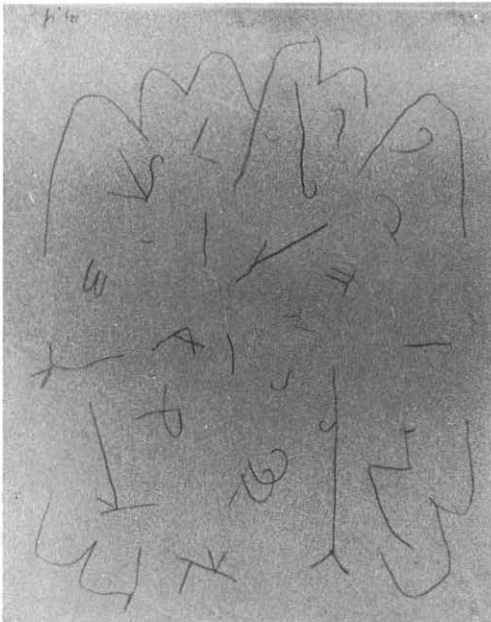


Figure 14.  
Klee:  
Signs on  
the Rocks  
(Zeichen  
auf Felsen).  
1938/R 11  
Klee-Stiftung,  
Bern.

lower left, the shapes of a bird and a long-eared beast are resolved in the letter K. The letters P and A emerge from the abbreviated forms of walking figures. The most systematic of all these alphabetic transformations is the drawing *Children and Abstractions* (1938; Robert Rothschild Collection, N. Y.) in which the schematic figures of children are transformed by regular stages into the letters Y, T, and X.

Klee also reanimated the Kufic alphabet. The long, snaky characters and the profusion of diacritical marks lent themselves even more readily to reconversion into pictographic images than the roman alphabet. For anyone who does not read Arabic, a Kufic text seems alive with little animals, people, and ships. It takes little imagination to see, in the specimen of modern Kufic characters reproduced in Figure 15, a snake wearing a hat (lower left), an ancient trireme (next to the “snake”), and, at the extreme right, a child with a curly lock on his brow. Klee, for whom “each formation, each combination,” had “its own particular constructive expression, each figure its face—its features,”<sup>8</sup> must have seen such faces looking out at him everywhere during his trips to Tunisia and Egypt.

The figures in *Group W* (1930; Fig. 16), drawn about a year after the Egyptian trip, must have been suggested by the overlapping, interlaced characters of the ornamental inscriptions Klee would have seen in Cairo (Fig. 17).<sup>9</sup> The “Kufic” pictures of 1938 (Figs. 18 and 19), in keeping with Klee’s bold late linear style, are derived from the more commonplace script without overlappings. Klee made good use of the dots, dashes, and curls—cues which serve as diacritical marks, transforming them into schematic animals, plants, and facial features.<sup>10</sup>

Other works of 1938 and 1939 appear to have been directly inspired by ancient pictographs. Reminiscences of the hieroglyphics encountered on the Egyptian trip and pictographs reproduced in Klee’s copy of Weule’s book may have prompted the assemblages of disjointed human anatomy that abound in these years. The chunky shapes, particularly the disembodied heads and arms characteristic of the series (Fig. 20), are remarkably similar to the Hittite inscription reproduced by Weule (Fig. 21). The disembodied frontal eye used in such works as *Fragmenta Veneris* (1938/x 1)<sup>11</sup> is often found in Egyptian inscriptions.

قَوْلُ الْفَتَى فِي الْعَمَلِ كَمَا فِي الْكَلِمَاتِ وَمَا مِنْهَا

Figure 15.  
Modern Kufic writing.  
From David Diringer,  
*The Alphabet: A Key to  
the History of Mankind.*)



Figure 17.  
Epigraphic frieze from  
Madrasa Hasan Sadaka,  
Cairo. (From Hautecoeur  
and Wiet, *Les  
mosquées du Caire.*)

Figure 16. Klee: Group W. 1930. Location unknown. (From Paul Klee:  
*Über die moderne Kunst*, Verlag Benteli Bern-Bümpliz, 1945.)

W. C.





Figure 18. Klee: Interim near Easter (*Zwischenzeit gegen Ostern*). Oil on burlap. 1938/v 2. Staatliche Kunstsammlungen des Landes Nordrhein-Westfalen, Düsseldorf.

Figure 19. Klee: *Insula Dulcamara*. Oil. 1938/C 1. Klee-Stiftung, Bern.

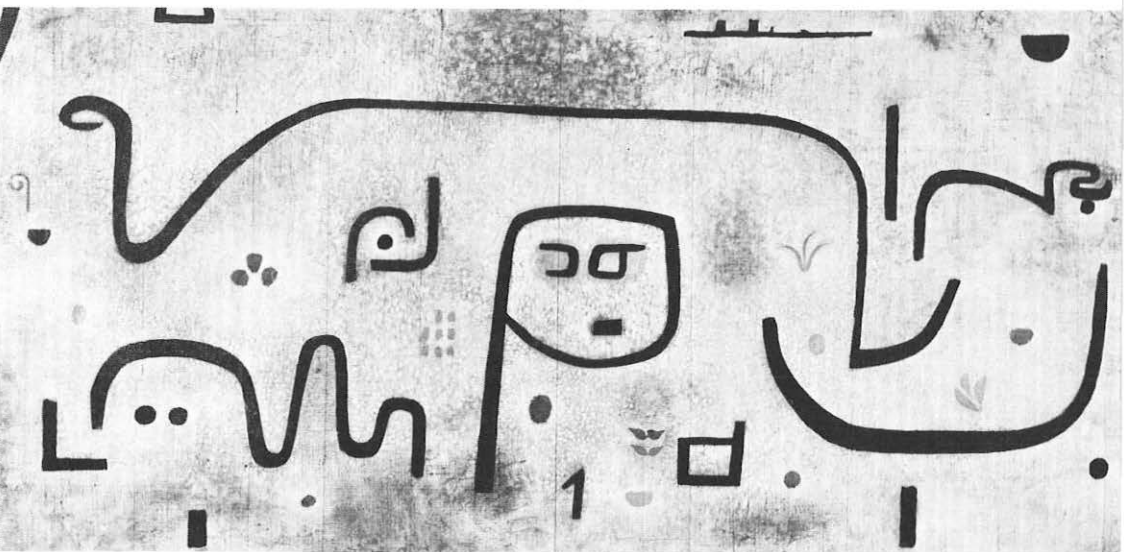




Figure 20. Klee: Outburst of Fear III (Angstausbruch III). Watercolor. 1939/M 4. Klee-Stiftung, Bern.

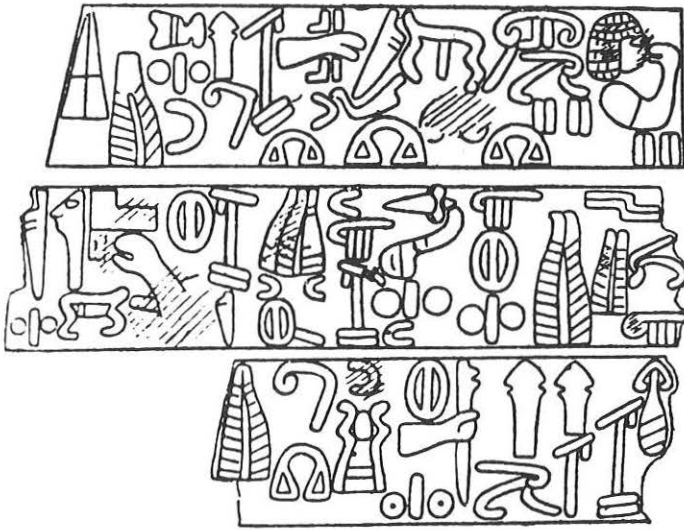


Figure 21. Hittite inscription from Karl Weule, *Vom Kerbstock zum Alphabet*.

More important than these superficial formal similarities is the method of communication by the addition of discrete units, which is fundamental to both the late works of Klee and ancient picture writing. Klee let a picture form itself, piece by piece, without a preconceived plan. In the alphabet he found a set of units ideally suited to his method, but the letters, while they might provide an aura of meaning and sometimes might be used for their special connotations, were essentially abstract and, when used alone, lent themselves more to formal play than memorable imagery. In the ancient pictographic systems, however, Klee found units which were not only suited for part by part construction but, unlike the letters of the alphabet, were also natural signs, charged with universal meaning. Furthermore, their meaning, as he would have read in Weule's book, could be altered by the addition of other independent units.

In the section of his book dealing with Chinese characters, Weule reproduces the old Chinese ideogram for "to see" (Fig. 1), an eye on two legs. From the combination of two independent schemata—the eye that sees ( $\circ$ ) and the diagonal legs that move ( $\text{厶}$ )—a new concept is presented through a visual metaphor describing the act of seeing. Klee used the very same elements in his

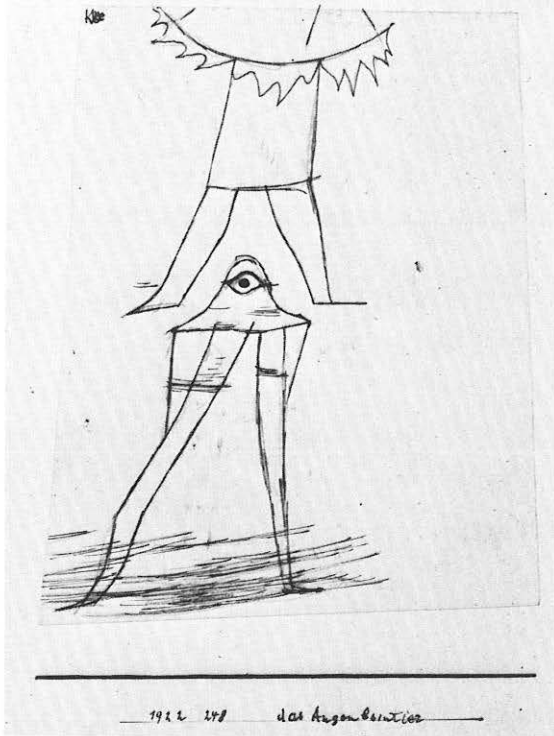


Figure 22.  
Klee:  
The Eye-Leg Animal  
(Das Augenbeintier).  
Pencil. 1922/248.  
Klee-Stiftung,  
Bern.

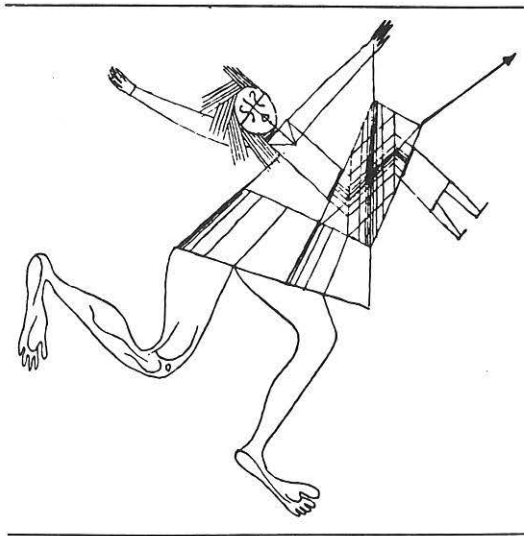


Figure 23.  
Klee:  
Untitled drawing.  
1928?  
Location unknown.  
(From Will Grohmann,  
*Paul Klee*, Éditions  
Cahiers d'Art, 1929.)

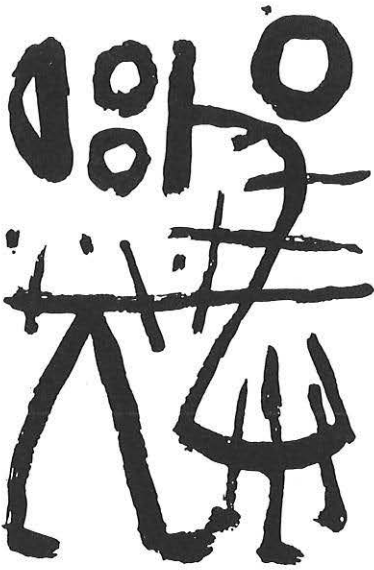


Figure 24.  
Klee:  
Assault and Battery  
(Tätlichkeiten).  
Paste with black  
pigment on paper.  
1940/F 20.

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*Eye-Leg Animal* (1922; Fig. 22) and the same method in a drawing of the late 1920's (Fig. 23), in which a pair of running legs is linked with the image of a gesticulating woman to form an ideogram standing for abduction in general, rather than any particular rape, such as the rape of Europa or Persephone. These were subjects which the classically-educated Klee probably wished to evoke without illustrating any specific myth.

In his last years, Klee became absorbed in the creation of such ideographic pictures. Ideographs (or ideograms) are images that convey concepts in visible form. They are poetic inventions, not simply schematic reductions of visible objects. The drawing *Assault and Battery* (Fig. 24), made the year of Klee's death, is not a representation of a particular fight between two individuals but is a universal image of rage. As in the old Chinese ideogram for "love" reproduced by Weule (Fig. 1)—the tender union of the separate pictographs for mother and child—two figures are juxtaposed to suggest a general emotion, but the expression is one of hatred rather than love. These figures—a man and a woman composed of powerful diagonals and exploding fragments—are confronted rather than joined. They are going at each other "hammer and tongs."

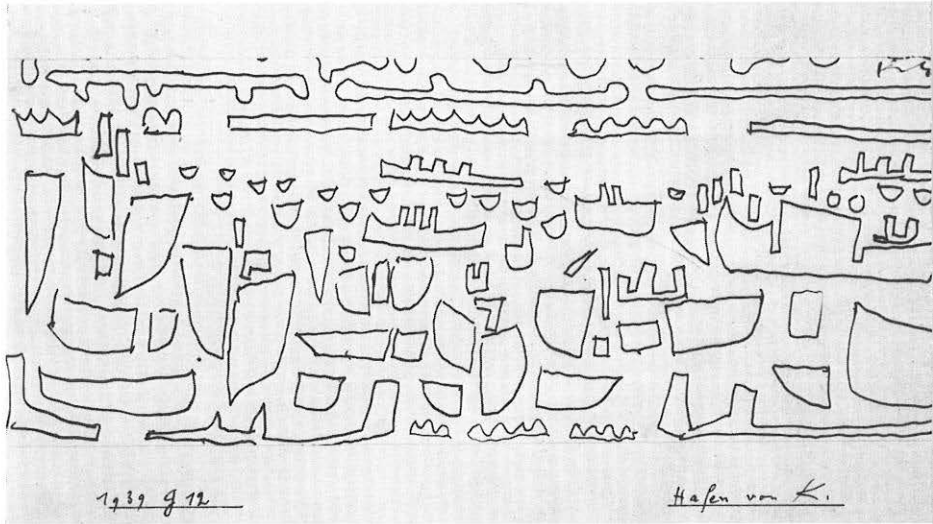
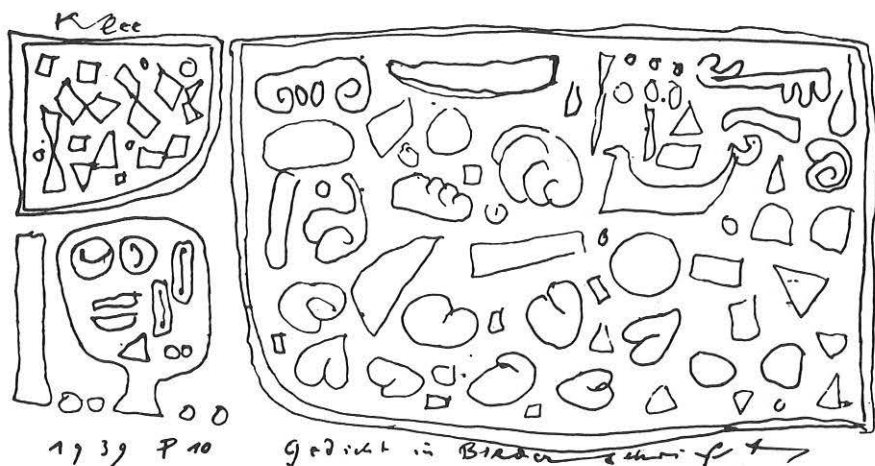


Figure 25. Klee: Harbor at K (Hafen von K). Pen. 1939/G 12.  
Klee-Stiftung, Bern.

Such ideographic drawings should be distinguished from both simple picture writing and those drawings representing a specific scene, however schematic. *Harbor at K* (1939; Fig. 25) is so abbreviated that signs resembling the Egyptian determinatives for “water” (𓂏) and “foreign land” (𓂏) are found, but it is still the representation of a particular harbor, at K. *Poem in Picture Writing* (1939; Fig. 26) is more completely pictographic. Spatial continuity is done away with altogether. The *Poem* also seems to involve a boat, but the boat is not shown in a seascape. It appears in the company of a number of separate little signs that suggest objects without defining them. This was undoubtedly one of the special charms which the pictographs of antiquity held for Klee. As certain pictographs became more widely accepted, they became more and more abstract; representational detail became less important than speed of execution. Klee used such semi-abstract signs, not for this prosaic purpose, but because of their poetic and almost magical powers of evocation, suggesting many things but defining none.

Klee was intrigued by the similarly equivocal character of the early schematic drawings of children. Although the evolution of



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Figure 26. Klee: Poem in Picture Writing (Gedicht in Bilderschrift).  
Pen. 1939/P 10. Felix Klee Collection, Bern.

the pictographic forms of writing toward brevity and simplicity generally reverses the development of children's schemata toward more complex figures, there is a point at which the schematic figures of young children are very much akin to the abbreviated forms of pictographs. The child-like pictures of the 1910's and 1920's were inspired by the more elaborate drawings of older children. The laconic works of the 1930's reveal an interest in the more schematic drawings of younger children which is in keeping with Klee's absorption with pictographs and ideograms.

Children, in their earliest efforts at representation, use a single simple schema to represent many different things: a schema used to depict a tree trunk and branches may also be used to represent the relation of arm and hand, or a sun schema may be used for a lightbulb or an eye. Klee found these formal analogies pleasing in their own right and would often let a picture emerge from a chain of such formal associations, analogous to the stream of consciousness technique of contemporary literature. These visual associations might arouse kindred forms of feeling. The zigzag of lightning described in the "little journey into the land of greater insight" from the *Creative Credo* stirs up startling emotional as-

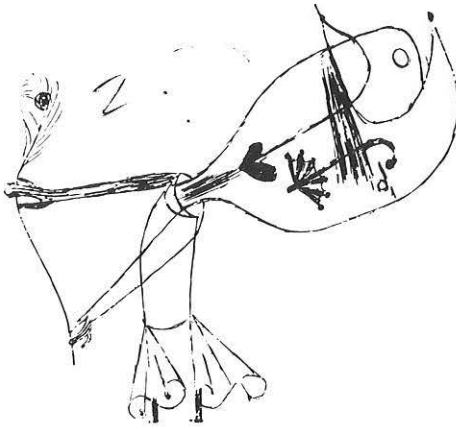


Figure 27. Klee:  
Dance of the  
Mourning Child  
(Tanz des  
trauernden Kindes).  
Pen. 1921/186.  
Klee-Stiftung, Bern.

sociations: "The lightning shaped like the fever curve. Of a sick child . . . long ago."<sup>12</sup> The zigzag of the lightning and the zigzag of the fever curve arouse similar emotions of sudden fear. The intrinsically exciting nature of the zigzag, made by abrupt shifts in direction, adds even greater force to the association. The *Creative Credo* is full of suggestions for the presentation of objects, actions, emotions, and ideas by such simple discrete formal motifs—in other words: pictographs and ideograms.

In the late works, Klee makes use of the ambiguous nature of simple schemata which are similar to those of children, but he arranges them in ideograms which are far more meaningful than the schematic drawings of any child. They are marvels of brevity exploiting formal and emotional analogies by reducing objects to the simplest common shapes. In the 1920's, for example, Klee often used the heart sign as both heart and lips in such drawings as the *Dance of the Mourning Child* (1921; Fig. 27), an ideogram of sorrow composed of otherwise discrete and formally unrelated signs: the heart-lips, the umbrella, and the rain of tears. In the late *Love Song by the New Moon* (1939; Fig. 28), however, the heart sign is repeated in various transformations throughout the entire composition. By reducing forms to variations of a common shape, he creates a forceful ideogram of erotic love. Buttocks and breasts become the very symbol of love.



Figure 28. Klee: Love Song by the New Moon (Liebeslied bei Neumond). Oil and watercolor on burlap. 1939/Y 2. Klee-Stiftung, Bern.



Figure 29. Klee: Untitled and uncataloged brush drawing, usually called "Glance" (Blick). 1940. Klee-Stiftung, Bern.

Paradoxically, Klee was able to develop such evocative double images and visual metaphors by reducing his means to the simplest two-dimensional mode. As Mies van der Rohe would have it: less is more. Only a few brushstrokes were used to make the very late drawing reproduced in Figure 29, but the lines are so fused that one schema seems to grow from another. A fawn becomes a child. A bush becomes a waterbird, and a bough with a pendent fruit becomes an omniscient eye. In this ideogram of creation, the face of the Creator is formed by the very elements of his Creation. The parts are so similar and so closely interrelated that a single line may represent many things. It is impossible to tell whether some lines are animal, vegetable, or mineral; they may be all three. Is the A-shape at the upper left a letter of the alphabet, a running figure, a tree, or a hillside? Every schema has more than one meaning in this two-dimensional realm where forms can shift and one thing becomes another. Klee brought movement to a static art; everything is quite literally in flux. Since only one aspect of each double image can be comprehended at a single

moment, it is quite possible to see several different pictures in this single configuration of lines. The fawn, the bird, and the fruit tree will dissolve if the lines forming them are seen as a face; and the face will dissolve, in turn, when the little spook is discovered in the lower right corner. Surely at the end of his life Klee penetrated to "that secret cavern," of which he spoke, "where the primal law is hidden; where the central organ of all temporal and spatial movement . . . the brain or the heart of creation . . . makes everything happen . . . in the bosom of nature, in the primordial source of creation, where the secret key to everything is kept."<sup>13</sup>

Klee was concerned with becoming rather than being, with the universal forces that form nature and man, rather than with the outward form of any particular moment. Natural growth and movement were the essence of his method and the ultimate content of his work. It is proof of Klee's greatness as an artist and a man that he recorded his feelings of his own death with the same detachment and in the same universal terms as all other natural forces. The final ideograms of death are the natural conclusion to his work.

Death is met face to face in *Death and Fire* (1940; Fig. 30), but his image fluctuates before the eyes. The features of Death are formed with the three letters of his name in German. One thing dissolves into another but all are joined in Death: his shoulders and arms are the River Styx, his hand the horizon beneath the setting sun. And toward the horizon, glowing with fire, walks the soul of the dead.

Even the Egyptians never created such a forceful ideogram of Death and certainly nothing comparable can be found in the history of Western art since the Renaissance. The Cubists and Futurists, although they represented objects as if seen from a variety of viewpoints or as seen in successive stages of movement, still presented a scene, a picture of a specific place or event. But Klee, guided by the schematic art of children and man's first efforts at writing, created richly evocative ideograms, visual metaphors unbound by time or place, which through the simplest natural signs gave visible form to things only felt before. For Klee, "Art does not reproduce the visible but makes visible."<sup>14</sup>



Figure 30. Klee: Death and Fire (Tod und Feuer). Oil and paste color on burlap. 1940/G 12. Klee-Stiftung, Bern.

<sup>1</sup>See, for example, the basic surveys by Will Grohmann, *Paul Klee* (New York, 1954); G. di San Lazzaro, *Klee: a Study of His Life and Work* (New York, 1957); Carola Giedion-Welcker, *Paul Klee* (New York, 1952); Werner Haftmann, *The Mind and Work of Paul Klee* (London, 1954).

<sup>2</sup>*Tagebücher von Paul Klee*, ed. Felix Klee (Köln, 1957), p. 148, n. 496.

<sup>3</sup>*Paul Klee: das bildnerische Denken*, ed. Jürg Spiller (Basel, 1956), p. 516. This compilation of Klee's theoretical and pedagogical writings was published in English in 1961 by George Wittenborn as *Paul Klee: the Thinking Eye*. The pagination is uniform with the German edition.

<sup>4</sup>"Le Principe Cinématographique et la Civilization Japonaise," *Cahiers d'Art*, V (1930), 31f.

<sup>5</sup>*Tagebücher*, p. 52, n. 136.

<sup>6</sup>Spiller, p. 79.

<sup>7</sup>The exclamation mark above the garden gate M retains its conventional symbolic meaning. It had been one of Klee's favorite symbols since 1918. By adding only two marks, the most forceful two lines anyone can make, he could supercharge any image with sudden emotion. The exclamation mark has such universal and immediate impact that in Switzerland it now stands without words as the road signal for "caution, danger ahead." In this way, the land of Paul Klee's birth honors him with memorials more numerous than those for any national hero except William Tell.

<sup>8</sup>Paul Klee, *On Modern Art*, trans. Paul Findlay (London, 1948), p. 43.

<sup>9</sup>The W-shapes in the inscription in Figure 17 are the final letters of "Allah" read from right to left.

<sup>10</sup>Klee was not the first to make use of such transformations; Kufic script is so "lively" that Arabic scribes themselves had occasionally pressed the characters into such representational patterns as the ark of Noah.

<sup>11</sup>Reproduced in Spiller, p. 452.

<sup>12</sup>Spiller, p. 77. The sick child was certainly Klee's son Felix and the fever curve the daily record he kept during Felix's long illness in 1909 (see *Tagebücher*, p. 413).

<sup>13</sup>Felix Klee, *Paul Klee: His Life and Work in Documents* (New York, 1962), p. 177.

<sup>14</sup>Spiller, p. 76.



Calendoli Composer, 1893 (#81).