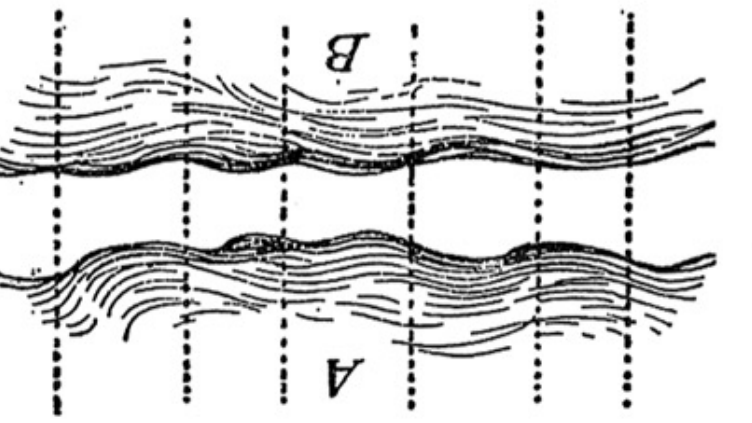


Mediating between thought and sound, language temporarily regularizes an imaginary relation holding the two in productive and dynamic tension. Its boundaries are porous, its constituents—liquid/ether—in a continual flow in which

What takes place is a somewhat mysterious process by which "thought-sound" evolves divisions, and a language takes shape with its linguistic units in between those two amorphous masses. One might think of it as being like air in contact with water: changes in atmospheric pressure break up the surface of water into series of divisions, i.e. waves. The correlation between thought and sound, and the union of the two, is like that.



2. Vibration

In the diagram, the materiality of our deep aquatic origins gets crossed by the pseudo-logic of longitude and measure: the sketch evokes an empty, elemental, chthonic time: "heaven and earth and sea" but not yet creatures in them. There's a mythic imagination here, a population marked by dotted verticals working overtime to perforate the screen separating them from the elements, blue poles laid over sky and sea.

the bar, the /, serves only as a fleeting stoppage or buoy. In the drawing used by the linguist Ferdinand de Saussure to illustrate this correlation (or, as Eduard Glissant might have put it, co-relation) appears as a void space transected by parallel dotted lines like the tear perforations on an old-fashioned sheet of stamps. Both air and water are drawn like so many wavy rresses attached to offshore curvaceous bodies A and B, lying beside one another or one suspended above the other in inexplicable humid levitation. Co-relation here presents an archipelago of two, an inverse of the oceanic descriptor as liquid masses are separated by "contact" marked as empty space (or—that pesky bar again—as full, neutral, extensive body): two sets of vibrations palpating a negative.

NEHA CHOKSI
JUDITH RODENBECK



TEARS IN THE SUN
PAVÉS

PAVÉS

—Judith Rodenbeck

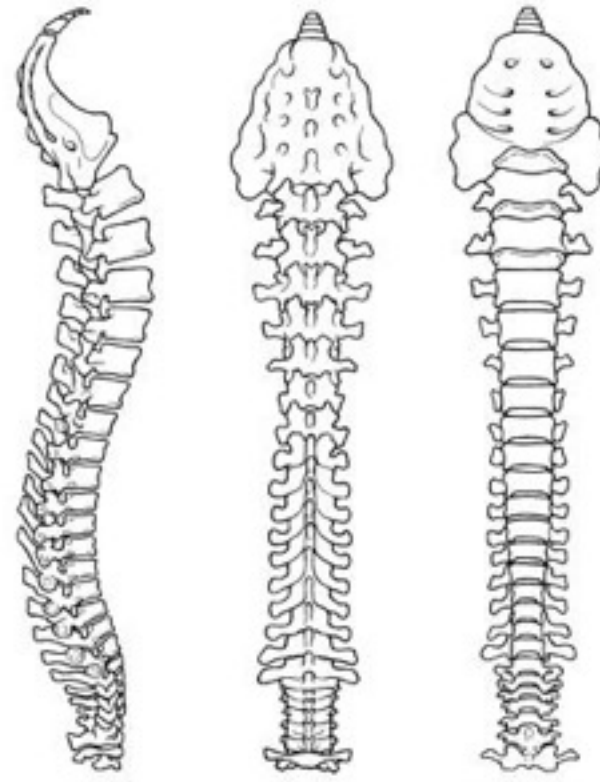
Rock me baby, rock me all night long
Rock me baby, honey, rock me all night long
I want you to rock me baby,
Like my back ain't got no bones
-- BB King, "Rock Me Baby" (1964)

1. Approach

Stretch out your arms and legs: your twenty fingers and toes attain in space a large rectangular frame or a circle – your starfish, octopus or gibbon's maximal hold on the world. Your active force and sensibility radiate at the extreme points of this figure. Let these rivets hold, and you no longer have any need for bed or hearth; you inhabit this square: place, dwelling, niche. Move your limbs, now, and feel form around you, starting from this flat frame, an invisible and mobile parallelepiped – cube, prism or large paving stone....

Michel Serres, *Variations on the Body*, trans. Randolph Burks (2012)

Approach. There's a flexion to the lead foot where the ground plane begins to tilt upwards; the body leans towards it, earthwards, first casually and then with inexorably greater strain and deliberation as movement tilts the spine from the habitual vertical



3. Prospect

Sweet verticality! Some say it's the reorientation of hominids from hand- and foot-dependent locomotion to bipedalism that made, say, "drawing" a human activity. To lift the gaze from the ground to the slow curve of the horizon—looking afar and affield—is to engage not just distance but the possibility of an elsewhere and another: visions of future-orientation (or disorientation) picks out the moving vertical most resonant with something it comes to understand as a body like its own: there is another, there, where this vertical I, here, am not.



Standing restacked our mineral maxis. The spine shifted its insertion point in the skull forward, and the skull rebalanced its weight; the pelvis shortened and rotated into a bowl, efficient leverage for walking coupling with the morphology required by human neoteny. The upright bipedal posture freed the hands and bared the genitals. And it loosened the musculature of the thorax, the diaphragm, so that these new beings could stand, look at each other, touch palm to palm, restrain that musculature towards an elegantly refined motor control of inhaled and exhaled breath—tuning pitch, volume, tone, expression—marking air with song as hands marked surface with images.

stack organized by the somatic rhythms of walking and reorients toward some other kinds of relation with gravity and the dynamic tensions of organismic motion.

In the physical interface between human and steep mountain face, the inexperienced climber proceeds on both feet and hands, repeating an ontogenetic shape in movement that permanently marks this curled over hominid as also-simian, also-organismic. The experienced climber, on the other hand (as it were), places the feet with sure and light care on precisely the same sloped surface, moving across it as if in perfect perpendicular relation to that plane. The crystalline architectures of the fully extended sensorial body pressed upon the fluid densities—igneous, metamorphic, sedimentary—of geologies are partially reiterated in this play of perpendicularity and parallelism.

TEARS IN THE SUN

—Neha Choksi

We already know how the curve, ridge, or bulge of a rocky surface of a cave wall was used to enhance, say, the belly of lion, or, the robust frame of a muscled bison. Such scrutiny of the parietal drawing surface was usual, habitual, necessary, significant, and inspiring.

But do we know when a human first drew a pebble, a boulder, a cave, a mountain?

Surprisingly perhaps, the cave paintings do not show a single landscape, no tree, no bush, no flower, no river, no lake, no cliff, no rock and no cave. There is no cosmic relation, no sun, no moon, no stars, not even clouds or a sky, in fact, there is no locating sign at all. The cosmos is erased.

*My words. For facts see Gregory Curtis, *The Cave Painters* (Knopf: 2006) p. 17

More exciting still, when did a human first draw a rock on a rock?

When did these three come together: rock as pigment, drawing surface, and subject matter.

Or even closer, rock as material and subject/object of sculpture.

--Pebbles cannot be tamed
to the end they will look at us
with a calm and very clear eye
*Zbigniew Herbert, *Pebbles*, translated by Czeslaw Milosz and Peter Dale Scott, *Selected Poems* (Penguin: 1968) p. 108

The self is still. The rock is opaque.
When did a human excavate the rock as body as substance
as holy as self?
The rock has been asleep for ages.
Awakening it is like awakening a giant. Or a ghost.

If the complex life of many people takes place entirely
on the level of the unconscious, then it's as if this life
had never been.

And so, in order to return sensation to our limbs, in
order to make us feel objects, to make a stone feel
stony, man has been given the tool of art.
*Viktor Shklovsky, *Art as Device* (1929 [1916]: 13); translated by Benjamin Sher in *Theory of Prose: Viktor Shklovsky* (Dalkey Archive: 1990) pp. 5-6

We play with the signs of loss.
The bed is empty. The body burns in invisible colored
smoke.
Tears in the sun lead to a deep darkness, a dark corridor.
We walk down the dark corridor.
The quarry is empty.

This rock here is a quarry.
This is an organization around emptiness--the gap, the frac-
ture, the fissure.

*See Bataille and Lacan.

This emptiness echoes the earlier lack of signs of emplace-
ment in the cave drawings.
This sculpture is its own landscape, its own cosmos.
We organize around the dark fissure.

The appearance of a notch is the appearance of a fissure in
whole ground, a fracture in whole body.
The notch is a slot is a shaft is a cave is a quarry is a mouth.
The mouth shares in the darkness of caves, in the darkness
of theaters, and in there the film-dream speaks.
How to speak the dead?
The stone becomes a fountain, the stone liquefies and spills
out and breathes and stains and speaks.
The tongue is a fire in the darkness. The tongue is a
shadow. The shadow is generous.

It is thanks to death that our lives become expressive.
*Pier Paolo Pasolini, *Observations on the Long Take*, translated by Norman MacAfee and Craig Owens, *October*, Vol. 13 (Summer, 1980), p. 6

How to die? Think of the tenderness of someone who
loves you. All bodies are violable, entropic, fated to die.
Even stony bodies. We are all "vulnerable, penetrable,
wasting and dying."

*Kenneth Gross, *Dream of the Moving Statue* (Cornell: 1992) p. 21 and 17

Is there a boulder that fits the void exactly? It rolls out
from the cave, leaving behind a gaping hollow, a tongue
torn from the mouth. Via negativa.

The most beautiful is the object
which does not exist

*Zbigniew Herbert, *Study of the Object*, translated by Czeslaw Milosz and Peter Dale Scott, *Selected Poems* (Penguin: 1968) p. 104

Time and the limitless interlock in a dance. Countless
universes and endless seasons pass.

I knock at the stone's front door.
"It's only me, let me come in."

"I don't have a door," says the stone.

*Wisława Szymborska, *Conversation with a Stone*, translated by Stanislaw Baranczak and Clare Cavanagh, *Poems New and Collected: 1957-1997* (Harcourt Brace: 1998) p. 64

If a wall has no opening, I shall make one. I am strong.
I have no fear. I have a vision. I can make hinges like
Hephaistos.



Works in exhibition

Ours is a City of Writers
Los Angeles Municipal Art Gallery
February 5, 2017 to March 26, 2017
Guest curators: Suzanne Hudson, Simon Leung and James Nisbet

Neha Choksi
Blank invitation 2
8.5 x 8.25 x 34.5 inches
basalt, pulverized basalt on linen, brass
unique
2016

Neha Choksi
Blank invitation 8
8 x 16 x 18.5 inches
basalt, pulverized basalt on linen, brass
unique
2016

Neha Choksi
Blank invitation 10
6.25 x 10.75 x 11.75 inches
basalt, pulverized basalt on linen, brass
unique
2016

All works courtesy the artist and Project 88
Photo credit: Brica Wilcox