

The psychic life of minerals

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By Denise Carvalho

Minerals are always in a state of transformation. They are fossilized matter that had been once under the sea, resulting from the destruction of vegetal, human, and animal material, consolidated through millions or billions of years in a process of constant decay. Rocks and shells are compounds of unreadable inscriptions and mimetic chaos, yet scientific analysis may trace their geological information as a basis for predictions and archaeological coda. Thus, outside this system, the millennial inscription of minerals is meaningless. Its knowledge is about lengthy stratifications and microscopic destructions that act in the present, propelled to envelope time and matter, embracing without nurture, turning captive without captivating. The knowledge of minerals pre-exist human language *ad infinitum*, but in its infancy, the exodus of humanity mirrored in its own biological strata the processes of the land, their laws of condensation and waste, compactness and induration. The echo of minerals in the human psyche is this making and unmaking, forming and unraveling, searching for beginnings, but continuously perishing. The law of decay predetermines the law of consolidation, as it sustains thresholds states, to enable openness and contingency.

The echo of minerals constitutes the flute that is made with bamboo or bone or the cello made of spruce, maple, poplar or willow. The music that these instruments play, which resonates the archaeology of sound of the natural elements (rain, thunder, wind, the waves and tides of the ocean, the sound of fire), is here transformed by the silent gesture. Equally transformed is the condensation of the elements—the chemical process needed for the formation of new rocks and operative aspects of the instruments' materials. Memory, a negative process rooted in the past and in its projection into the future, links these two negatives: the silence of gestures and the emptiness of matter. Like minerals, memory is always in a state of precariousness. Except in its automated form, as an appendage of the machine, memory is revived by momentum, by the imaginary. As the performer's fingers replay the musical sequence, he/she enacts a temporary intensity, changing the strata of the archive into an automated coda: the beginning of a new intensity, the tune without a tune. This is what happens when silence is played. Silence, another negative matter, preserves momentum while becoming a threshold to something yet unknown. Silence does not predict, it empties expectation, swallows desire. The silence of what is known is stronger than its expression. And the porous materiality of emptiness is the silence's momentum.

Rocks don't feel dislocation. In their displacement and disintegration, they don't reminisce in nostalgia or feel longing, they are not afraid to let go. But human land is created in memory, inherited from generation to generation, established as

hierarchies, felt in the guts of its people who fought for it, died and killed for it. The land represents the possibility of being remembered. The amalgamation of humanity in the land created the myth of continuity, but the land itself never ceases to dissolve into dust, into sand, into water, decaying, dying, and reappearing in a different place. Stones, on the other hand, embrace oblivion, fully, lost in the boundary, becoming the boundary that erases itself.

Yet humans need solid ground. The idea of solid ground is more important than the land itself, which is in a persistent state of disintegration through its cracks and thresholds. Like the land, the human skin is also porous, but the body's appearance as whole gives a sense of security, of permanence. Like the land, the body is also continually perishing. There is no such thing as a whole body or a solid ground. Even silence and matter are not whole. They are also constituted by the nature of elements and their relationships as they become content and expression, form and action. The architectonics of nature is always temporary, whether it is made from millions of years of geological crystallization or from the gap of time in the disappearance of a species. Whether the polarization is heterogeneous or homogeneous, its natural elements follow certain rhythms, determined internally or externally, or both. All depends on the degree of accumulation and segregation, on the properties (temperature, density, mass, volume, etc.), and the functional complementarities impacting them. Both these natural rhythms and their expressive gestures become part of a quasi-random endurance process. Its quasi-random quality is due to the internal/external forces affecting the process in time and space. Yet, chance, unpredictability, is inevitable. It is the unpredictable that greatly affects the potential outcome. Losing a home or a land can be projected into the future, as decay or illness anticipates disintegration or death, but the exact moment of death can seldom be predicted. The return of something that once existed is also impossible. Nothing can be returned or preserved permanently.

In the psychic life of minerals, the preservation of materiality is trivial and redundant. Contrastingly, truth resonates. When something is truthful, its momentum briefly echoes into idea-matter, an idea that materializes out of nothing. The moment of completion of an art piece feels truthful. No longer owned by anyone, the artwork shares the rhythms of who witness it and of its surroundings. It becomes the amalgamated rock, rolling down the hills, decaying into dust, subsumed by water, perishing now to be consolidated again in a different place and time. The truth of an artwork is silent and formless; its materiality is transitory. Its formal and conceptual attributes are intensities echoed beyond its appearance.