

## **Final Draft**

### **HOW THINGS COME TO SETTLE ON THE EARTH**

#### **1. Introduction**

*"I am aware of the presence of people, past travellers, my walking patterns and the marks I leave are one more layer upon thousands of layers of criss-crossing, both human and animal."<sup>1</sup>*

In 1988, British Artist Richard Long walked along the Sahara desert. He has made walking into sculpture, first creating *A Line Made By Walking* in 1967 and subsequently picking up stones along the way to slow down his walking (Long 1988). The more he walks, the more visible the marks become that he leaves on the landscape. The more stones he gathers in one place, the more visible their form becomes on the landscape. The tension between visibility and invisibility become elemental in the narrative of his works. In *Stones and Flies: Richard Long in the Sahara*, film director Philip Haas accompanies Long as he walks lines, circles and places stones in the dry and fly filled sands. Intermittently, Long stops in a location chosen by feeling or light and starts to clear the landscape of stones, placing them either in a line or forming a circle. These sculptures are momentary "stopping places along a journey, where the walk meets the place" and captured by a photograph before the stones are returned to where he found them. Long is not the first person to walk the Saharan sands, nor will he be the last. The landscapes that drape the surfaces of the Earth have long been walked by people, animals and monsters. I imagine how many times the circumference of the Earth has been travelled, as human and non-human species are born in one place and die in another. Long writes in his first statement *Five, six, pick up sticks Seven, eight, lay them straight* published by Anthony d'Offay Gallery in 1980 that "I like the simplicity of walking, the simplicity of stones."<sup>2</sup> But I can't help but think that Long's experience of the landscape captures a place in the time-line of the Earth's history that exists within one kind of knowing. Walking is not simple. Walking is a privilege. Stones are not simple. Stones are a testimony of time. If I am to be a part of that time, then I need the rocks to testify.

I too, can walk across the moor, or place a stone on the ground (Long 1980). On a recent walk through Bodmin Moor, a granite moorland in Cornwall, I am struck by the numerous mounds of granite protruding from the landscape. Everywhere, rock is being vomited from the depths of the Earth. I am mesmerised by their insurmountable numbers. The area right beneath me is part of what is known as a *Ley Line*, an idea developed by the wealthy businessman Alfred Watkins in his native Herefordshire in the 1920s. It is believed that the prehistoric communities erected structures on these ley lines, straight alignments between historic structures, to connect with the Earth's energies.<sup>3</sup> Captivated by their presence, the energy is pulling me towards the rocky forms of the Hurlers and the Cheesewring Tor scattered or rather strategically placed on the landscape.<sup>4</sup> A woman appears on the horizon, returning from a hike on the moors. I notice that she is not walking alone. Being new to the moorlands, I ask about the landscape and she tells me about the Shamans that come to these parts to reconnect with the natural world on days like Winter Solstice. *Nature Spiritualists* travel to such heterotopias to connect with the "idealised matriarchal nature friendly religions of the Pre-Christian past."<sup>5</sup> There is an amassed energy of Millennia of ritual gathering that can be felt here. The many walking paths of peoples' journeys across the moorlands are almost a formality. Strikes through the landscapes symbolising a passing of time across geographies from one edge of the moor to the other and back, sometimes people summoned in a given place to bury or to remember the dead. The energy field is generated by the reciprocal exchange between the landscape and its visitors. They are passages that host the human and non-human species who have the need to communicate with each other and with the rocks themselves. In a way, the energy at these places is a

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<sup>1</sup> *Stones and Flies: Richard Long in the Sahara*. (1988). Philip Haas. dir. Harrington Park, NJ: Milestone Films.

<sup>2</sup> Wallis, Claire. Ed. (2017). *Stones, Clouds, Miles: A Richard Long Reader*. London: Ridinghouse. pp. 294.

<sup>3</sup> Lucas, P.C. (August 2007). Constructing Identity with Dreamstones: Megalithic Sites and Contemporary Nature Spirituality. *Nova Religio: The Journal of Alternative and Emergent Religions*, 11(1), pp. 42.

<sup>4</sup> Bodmin Moor has a dense population of prehistoric structures; the site known as the Hurlers is the collective name for a group of three stone circles and a pair of nearby standing stones located towards the south-eastern edge of the area and Cheesewring Tor nearby is the result of weather erosion on the granite strata of the moor over many years.

<sup>5</sup> Lucas, P.C. (August 2007). Constructing Identity with Dreamstones: Megalithic Sites and Contemporary Nature Spirituality. *Nova Religio: The Journal of Alternative and Emergent Religions*, 11(1), pp. 35.

cacophony of language forms between the space and its peoples that is felt and not always heard. Sometimes, listening is not an audible experience.

I draw on my fascination with the rock. The rock is responsive, grounded in a dynamic force. The materiality of the rock against the anatomy of my cell membrane is scientifically one of repulsion (Barad 2015), but the weight of it in my hand is a material representation of its history. I fabricate a dialogue between the rock and myself, between its chalky, grainy exterior and the palm of my hand. The rock responds through the act of repulsion, but by pushing me away, it draws me in closer. The science speaks of repulsion, the experience speaks of a reciprocal energy force. On a smaller scale, holding the rock mirrors the energy fields at the stone sites littered across the landscapes. The need to communicate with each other draws from a need to connect with our shared histories. For all the millions of years the rock has lived, I can't imagine being capable of retaining a fraction of its weight in memory. The pure mass of the rock's composition, the density packed tightly and solidly into imaginative forms, once part of a greater whole and with the weathering of time, letting go of its geological ancestors. But what of its human encounters? The rock is capable of outliving generations of populations, as it migrates from its origins, travelling and evolving from surface to tool to dwelling. With each transformation, the rock matter adds or subtracts layers to its outer membranes, altering the sensation against my skin. But one thing does not change, its sense of temporality is what makes me think about its material and metaphorical weight. The rock makes only the smallest of advancements over thousands of millions of years, slowly crumbling, altering the landscape over generations. It's way of communicating, to share the load of the cumulative histories that it carries with it, is through the constant friction between shared material states. Contiguity by repulsion.

The rock's exterior has much to reveal back to us. Not only is the surface of the rock too hard to permeate, the distance in both time and space from where the rock originated from feels inaccessible, unreachable. The pure nature of the rock mirrors my fascination with it. All the attributes that the rock embodies: the tough matter, the mysteries surrounding its origin and the trauma it has experienced during its birth from within the Earth's core and subsequent Millenia long travels to the surface, shape its very being. The attributes of the rock, its tactility examined by how it moves and responds to neighbouring matter and the visibility of the rock excavated from upon and within the landscape, help uncover the process of how the rock surfaces. The relationship between these attributes and how essentially things come to settle on the Earth is a way for the rock to accord its own place in the landscape.

Someone once told me to always be weary when walking the moorlands of the British Isles. A sudden cloak of mist can fall upon the landscape obscuring everything from view. A clear day can quickly demand more from your senses as you are forced to navigate through the murky haze. A compass will point you in the right direction, but your inner compass may ask you to drift towards the pull of the landscape itself. For it is the landscape for whom the prehistoric peoples chose to be guided by, edging closer to where the energy heaved from within the Earth's core and erecting megaliths to mark the areas most magnetic. The places where rocks have surfaced are testimonial to the deeper notions of materiality that is vast and dynamic, allowing us to acknowledge the complexities of the rock's histories and its relationship to time, landscape and memory (Wallis 2017).

The rock belongs to an ancient existence of time, contextualised through the appropriation and inclusion into ritual practices. It is an older and more profound expression of history that offers an alternative to tracking the passage of time than history has been able to document. Writer and Essayist Anne Carson introduces a prehistoric practice described as the onomatopoeic "*ololyga*," a ritual shout that does not signify anything other than its own sound, a high-pitched cry exorcised by females during ritual practice.<sup>6</sup> These shouts would be directed at the stones of Neolithic burial mounds, being reverberated and repulsed by the rocks themselves. I can only fantasise about the stories the rocks could tell. As I hold the rock, I am reminded that the rock is matter without an opening nor a whisper. For if a rock cannot speak, who shall speak for it? Who will make it speak? The writer, the historian, who documents, interprets and imposes their perspective on the events of history and who "makes the dead speak"<sup>7</sup> are the voices that speak for those who are not present. The testimonies of the rocks can be excavated through our relationship with the rocks themselves. Their attributes being the stakes of recognition in the process or life cycle of the rock, connecting the timescale of the rock with that of our own. The rock in my hand relates in time and space to that of my body in the landscape. It is a connection to an ancient time, one that has bared witness to events which have been dismissed from history.

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<sup>6</sup> Carson, A. (1992). *Glass, Irony and God*. New York: New Directions. pp. 125.

<sup>7</sup> Ricoeur, P. (2004). *Memory, History, Forgetting*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press. pp. 368.

## 2. The Embodiment of the Landscape

The Earth is a continuous mass made up of material states in constant friction with each other (Aristotle 300 B.C.). The contiguous rock has manifested knowledge as it rubs matter against matter with things it encounters. Yet unlike water, it is resolute in its resistance. It represents an ancient kinship structure which has remained outside of the patriarchal family, bearing material witness to prehistoric histories and appropriations for social practices. Though even through all the layers and layers of historical fabric so profound in its material experience, the rock refuses to perform itself. The notion of time and space which the rock physically and consciously embodies is vast however our own contiguity with the rock challenges our understanding of how it connects to our bodies. The human body is made up of 50-65% of water. Our lung capacity can hold up to 6 Litres of air. But the types of stones that can form in our bodies are inimical. If the rock is to testify and likewise be heard, how do we enter each other (Neimanis 2021). Through the gesture of walking the vast landscapes, we exert our bodies, loosening the muscles, releasing the tensions that manifest over time to then rebuild and strengthen our core. The rock too is birthed from the core of the Earth. It builds up and breaks down. The cycle to reach the surface is an arduous struggle. Our common ground is the constant friction between the material states of the rock and my own material state that is contiguous. The space in which we enter each other is in the act of building and re-building ourselves outside the binary constructs of the cultural landscape.

The testimony of rocks tell of birth and death, as all things that have come to settle on the Earth will ultimately return to the Earth (Hazen 2013). Archaeomythologist Marija Gimbutas further draws on this link between the past and the present imagining it to be like the cycles of the organic world, "where new life grows from the remains of the old"<sup>8</sup> and where this transition from life to death to life again can be interpreted as being embodied in the landscape. The cycle is written in these stones, as their earlier histories spanning billions of years was never recorded, we have to look to the stones themselves. Our human memory has only survived written and oral traditions and even that only captures by whom and what was recorded.

My experience with the rock records a revisionist history. As I begin to cultivate a relationship with the matter, the means in which I immerse into and within the rock uncovers a deeper understanding of time and place. It is the testament of the rocks that likens to the sensory experiences we have to engage with them. As the body brushes against the surface, as we acknowledge their forms across the horizons and as we listen to the murmurs of the ground's tremors beneath our feet. It is these collective bodily interactions, "one more layer upon thousands of layers"<sup>9</sup> made by the creatures who have roamed the Earth that leave the marks onto and within the landscape itself. It is this amass of layers of becoming with the landscape that shapes the body of the mountains, the girth of the river banks and the shallows of the boundless moorlands.

Memory and history are two measures of time existing on the same plane. The "interrelation between rhythms of material life and fluctuations of human history"<sup>10</sup> is explained by how lived human time and the passing of landscape time are connected by matter. This embodied experience between the human and the landscape helps us better understand the world by materialising our encounters and subsequent memories of it (Tilley 2007). The embodiment defined here is a form of listening to the rock which is revealed through ritual practices engaging with or appropriation of the rock. An experience which connects with the landscape, respectively the rock, that penetrates deeper into the core of matter is an active form of listening which reaches far below the surface (Oliveros 2005). What encounters can be deciphered through the excavation of rock matter? How have humans embodied the landscape? Gimbutas has produced some revolutionary protests for a matriarchal Neolithic culture, her excavations on sites of the communities of Old Europe<sup>11</sup> have revealed imagery of Mother Goddesses on rock and clay vessels (Marler 1996). I would like to develop some of these concepts by observing the typologies of Megalithic stone burial sites from both archaeomythologic and archaeoacoustic perspectives. By observing the sensory influences on the embodiment of the landscape as claims for an alternative historical narrative, we have the potential to unearth the stories which have not (yet) been told. The tales which have not yet surfaced are the untold stories that the rocks have been material witness to. The frictions which occur between the rocks in the landscape and the polyphony of species over time and space renders a possibility for matter to be felt now in its unpresence (Neimanis 2021). These energy fields at the stone sites are a testimony of the rocks lost time connecting with our bodies in the landscape, which I believe, collectively have the potential to alter the materiality of the rock itself.

Gimbutas argues that the Neolithic cultures processes of death and rebirth were cyclical and that the role of the rebirth was celebrated through both ritual practices and the architecture of burial sites. "In the cycle of life, the feminine force

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<sup>8</sup> Gimbutas, M. (Ed. Dexter, M.R.). (1999). *The Living Goddesses*. Berkeley: University of California Press. pp. 55.

<sup>9</sup> *Stones and Flies: Richard Long in the Sahara*. (1988). Philip Haas. dir. Harrington Park, NJ: Milestone Films.

<sup>10</sup> Tilley, C. (2017). *Landscape in the Long Durée: A History and Theory of Pebbles in a Pebbled Heathland Landscape*. London: UCL Press. pp. 9.

<sup>11</sup> Marler, J. (Fall, 1996). The Life and Work of Marija Gimbutas. *Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion*, 12(2). pp. 44.

- the goddess - not only manifested in birth, fertility, and life sustenance, she also embodied death, decay, and regeneration."<sup>12</sup> The mystery behind all that woman is gifted in creating is the link between the illusion of death and the enigma of birth. This riddle continues to this day, however the space for us humans to acknowledge it have escaped the modern landscape. It is the rock, the granite foundations, that were used to construct the burial tombs of Old Europe between 7000 and 3000 B.C. that remind us of a time when the *feminine force* engendered the landscape.

Can it be that in a world where the predominant voice is male, there are stone sites where the rocks have absorbed the shrieks of women during ritual practice from the times of Old Europe and carried it with them to the present day? The geological containers have become the amalgamation of the prehistoric female gender in rock form. Perchance, in the context of the megalithic burial mounds, the dead are the ghosts of a matriarchal history, once absent and now made visible.

Interactions with the land "explore the relationships between time, distance, geography and memory,"<sup>13</sup> creating life cycles of time that stretch across trillions of years. In an era known as the Dreaming, the Aboriginal Pintupi in Australia believe that their ancestors, animal, human and monster, roamed the lands before them giving the landscape form. The elements which have become the lakes, mountains and trees are creations of their movements. However these formations are not the impressions made by their existence, "they rather metamorphosed into the forms of the landscape as they went along. Ever present in these forms, their movements are congealed in perpetuity."<sup>14</sup> This concept gives much more meaning to the expression "turning to stone" which can be interpreted as something freezing in time, instead it becomes an event that is situated in our world and remembers the Otherworld. The Pintupi have in a way cleared the opening for us to access the interiority of the landscape by culturalising space and making out of an impersonal geography a place of memory (Ingold 2000).

What is the role of memory in space? In December 2007 the team behind the winning concept of part of the Berlin Wall Memorial, landscape architects Sinai, Faust, Schroll, Schwarz, architects Mola/Winkelmueller and ON Architektur C. Fuchs chose to erect tall, narrow columns of rust-coloured Corten steel, also known as weathering steel, to mark the gaps between the *real* parts of Berlin Wall (Harrison 2011). It is argued that these missing parts of the Wall should be filled by re-installing the original pieces, that the penetrable rows of Corten steel belittled the oppressively impenetrable Wall. The original Wall was erected using steel frames, not unlike the Corten steel, to hold up the massive concrete. By stripping away the concrete, the remains of the steel act like the memory holding up to the past. Similar structures are the *dolmens*, or megalithic stone sites, in the granite moorlands of Britain. The standing stones and capstones are made with indigenous stones taken from the surrounding landscapes and are erected into new architectonic forms used for burial sites. These stone structures originally covered with Earth, created a silhouette more like a hill or mound. With time, the less permanent soil has eroded away, just like distant memories do, leaving behind the foundations of the structures themselves. The steel is like the stone; revealing the ancient processes of the architectural spines which formed part of a series of histories that once stood here.

### 3. The Stakes of Recognition

What the rock has unearthed is not linear time. There is an analogy to be made between the matter, the rock, buried under the ground and the space we have chosen to "depose of the remains of the living who return to dust. It is an act, the act of burying."<sup>15</sup> We bury what we want to forget, but place a rock on top of the ground to remember. It is the simultaneous remembering and forgetting that is the death of history. But it is the rock, an impenetrable substance of material history, that we can hold in our hand and embrace as a capsule of the events of our times. The rock's undeniable presence within the landscape can speak through its materiality, how it occupies space and by the agency of our actions.

To dig up the past, and to recognise events of history, we are to carefully and intricately bear witness to that which we have before us - the remnants of the past that are still visible to us today. These make up the backbone of earlier life that since have laid dormant in the skeletons of the landscape. By observing the rock as matter and as spatial assembly, we are given the stakes to be able to awaken and recognise histories that may have been edited out from time, and subsequently from memory.

Matter is a form of energy. It exists along a space/time continuum. When I touch a piece of matter, I am actually not touching it in the sense of my hand enveloping a rock and I can feel the rock on the inside of my hand. Instead, an

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<sup>12</sup> Gimbutas, M. (Ed. Dexter, M.R.). (1999). *The Living Goddesses*. Berkeley: University of California Press. pp. 19.

<sup>13</sup> Wallis, Claire. Ed. (2017). *Stones, Clouds, Miles: A Richard Long Reader*. London: Ridinghouse. pp. 13.

<sup>14</sup> Ingold, T. (2000). *The Perception of the Environment: Essays on Livelihood, Dwelling and Skill*. New York: Routledge. pp. 52.

<sup>15</sup> Ricoeur, P. (2004). *Memory, History, Forgetting*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press. pp. 366.

electromagnetic repulsion between the atoms on my fingers and those of the rock are being repelled when the electrons come into close contact with each other (Barad 2015). The act of holding the rock becomes a negative point of contact. I am repulsed by the rock. By definition, the rock resists all things that it touches on its journey to the surface; air, soil, salt, species human and non-human. All these interactions, rubbing off of each other as they migrate between the past and the now. Yet, not all these events surface like the rock, some have been repelled from history.

My relationship with the rock evolves. A relationship that has only been built in a short amount of time actually has a much longer history. The rock, a remnant of the Giant Impact from over 4 billion years ago makes up much of the Earth's crust, it was either gradually pressed into layers of sedimentary rock or was molten magma that rose from the Earth's mantle forming igneous rock as it ascended. Either way, the rock's history exceeds any amount of chronological time that I have encountered with the matter. It's been over a year since I picked up my first intentional stone on the rocky shores of the Maasvlakte II, Rotterdam's man-made port, and for me the rock's opening is still closed up. Each possible beginning coincides with its end (Irigaray 1999). It is an abyss of mystery. I cannot grasp it. There is something quite tragically poetic in the mirroring of rock and human, navigating between the struggles of recognition and the testimony of existence. It is a story about surfacing, to take up space and embody it. The cycles begin at a point of entry into the world, the place where matter comes into being and emerges onto the surface of the landscape.

What is seen does not necessarily acquiesce to what is testified to. Is the rock's "being and thinking of the same matter?"<sup>16</sup> or where else can I begin to excavate the clearing for its opening? Irigaray asserts her position on the element of air as being the forgotten element in contrast to the much debated and celebrated Earth. The soil densely packed beneath our feet is a constant reminder that without it we would sink. The air is all around us, crucial to our existence. However as dematerialised matter, it is something that no longer exists, something inevitably forgotten. I imagine air bubbles caught between the minutiae of the soil and the rocks deep below the crust of the Earth. Can the air breathe if it is not free? Is the air dead? Or is it very much alive and only waiting to rise to the surface where it will take a huge gasp and exhale. I squeeze the rock and remind myself to breathe.

Matter is never static. It is an energy force in constant flux drawing in and pushing away particles of invited and uninvited visitors spanning across places and points. Today, it is common for someone to pick up a rock at the beach and put it in their pocket as a token, a figure of the dead and of the memory of the dead. The rock exists as a figurative moment to remember, not of a time but of the historical legacy of the remembered. The transformation that occurs as one holds the rock, allowing the fingers to tangibly touch the cold hard nature of the rock matter, is one of connecting with a non-living object or thought. The dead is only alive in the memory. For something so intangible as memory, and likewise the ghost, it manages to depict an emptiness and materialise it. Memory, like matter, is a form of energy.

*"After the end of history the spirit comes by coming back, it figures both a dead man who comes back and a ghost whose expected return repeats itself again and again."*<sup>17</sup>

Jacques Derrida states that a moment in time is "a spectral moment, a moment that no longer belongs to time."<sup>18</sup> Like memory, it is not fixed to a time in history but can be linked to many moments across many histories. Therefore, the structure of time is not a structure at all, but a moment that neither belongs to the past nor the present, and that can be lived and remembered again and again. I am reminded of the rock in my hand. The repulsion of atoms between my hand and those of the rock can be compared to the spectral moment. If the spectral moment does not belong to time itself, it is possible that it is repelling the past/present time and existing only as a memory representative of a moment not of time but of history. History is both simultaneous and sequential. Like memory, it can exist both in the past and the present, just like the dead man and his ghost. The dead man rejects the ghost, as history rejects the memory of past events. The burial mound once enveloped the stone site to cloak the dead, with the site revealed the stones become tangible. Like the air that travels to the surface, are the stones now free?

Anterior to the burial mounds eroding away, Gimbutas' archaeological excavations revealed that the images of Mother Goddesses were not only found on artefacts in the tombs of the Neolithic Age, but that the tombs themselves resembled the shapes of the female body. "The tomb as womb"<sup>19</sup> has been deconstructed; the tomb's passageways evoking

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<sup>16</sup> Irigaray, L. (1999). *The Forgetting of Air*. In Martin Heidegger. London: The Athlone Press. pp. 3.

<sup>17</sup> Derrida, Jacques. (1994) *Specters of Marx: The State of the Debt, the Work of Mourning and the New International*. New York. Routledge. pp. 10

<sup>18</sup> Derrida, Jacques. (1994) *Specters of Marx: The State of the Debt, the Work of Mourning and the New International*. New York. Routledge. pp. XIX

<sup>19</sup> Gimbutas, M. (Ed. Dexter, M.R.). (1999). *The Living Goddesses*. Berkeley: University of California Press. pp. 55.

the birth canal, the narrow passage resembling the vulva leading to the Dolmen stone structures covered by mounds of Earth representing the womb (Gimbutas 1999). The structure of the burial site made up of pieces of the female anatomy coming together to form creations of Mother Goddesses. These megalithic monuments became the sites of ritual practices celebrating death and regeneration, where the bodies of the dead were subsequently returned to the womb to be reborn again. It is during these rituals, often taking place during seasonal cycles, that the dead man and the ghost align under the guise of the female form. The tombs symbolizes the entrance into the underworld and simultaneously becomes the place of rebirth back into the natural world. This sacred relationship reflects the centrality of women in cultural life (Gimbutas 1989). The megalithic tombs were places where the Neolithic peoples could return to again and again, performing rituals to honour the cycles of the seasons through the embodiment of ritual practices performed for the dead - becoming a place of healing for the living and for the dead. These ritualistic cycles celebrating death and rebirth, place an emphasis on performance and ceremony that enforces a feminine body onto the land. Through the recognition of the feminine role into the cycle of history, it is then seen not as outside of, but belonging to time.

A place that belongs to the living and to the dead is a place that evokes history and memory. Thus inserting the feminine into the discourse of both history and memory. Time and space are united by the cycles of the past and present, simultaneously and sequentially being celebrated by awaking the spirits and celebrating the events that took place there. It is said that "mounds attract mounds,"<sup>20</sup> that these burial sites from the Neolithic Age attracted the peoples that came after them, choosing to bury their dead in places where the dead are already buried. The act of piling the mounds upon mounds made these sites more and more distinguishable creating a lasting visibility in the landscape where *Nature Spiritualists* continue to gather for ritual. "Through repeated use, the sites are believed to have built up a powerful spiritual atmosphere that enables easier access to wise ancestral beings and nature spirits,"<sup>21</sup> with participants recounts of female priestesses or 'women in white' appearing before them laying out the dead in preparation for the soul's journey into other realms (Lucas 2007).

Air that was once trapped beneath the surface of the Earth becomes dislodged as it rises. It now exists independently of the rock which coddled it tight beneath the ground. Its relationship with the rock too, evolves. It now lives freely, floating amongst the atmosphere, carrying with it particles of past encounters. What was once a space tightly connected between elements, is now fragments of separation, influences of each other still present within and around the air and the rock. The air will continue to leave its marks on the rock through wind and salt that it carries with it from the ocean. And with each millimetre of movement, the rocks will push the air to the side to take up its new position in the landscape. It is a symbiotic relationship with each party taking responsibility of their materiality on the other; a dance between the visibility of the rock and the ghost of the air.

In Ursula K. Le Guin's novel *The Dispossessed*, Le Guin has linked the past and the present by developing a narrative that tells the story in both a linear and cyclical fashion. Making the present visible through the ghost of the past. By mirroring the manner in which she has written the narrative with the content of the story itself; she links her style of writing with the journey of the main protagonist *Shevek*, a physicist moving between the two worlds of Anarres and Urras. In doing so, the story begins to exist both sequentially and simultaneously<sup>22</sup> and becomes a story where "the overall structure of the novel directly reflects the protagonist's philosophical ponderings over time and space."<sup>23</sup>

It is through *Shevek's* observations, being the first from Anarres to return to Urras in over 150 years, that we begin to decipher a story that plays both in the present and in the past. *Shevek* feels that his scientific practices in Anarres have begun to stagnate and looks to find a way to further his explorations in the utopian Urras. However, he soon realises that Urras is not as progressive as he had imagined. It is the parallel between the two planets and two timelines, that history starts to play a key role. Le Guin's interrogation of time presents Urras as in a state of stasis, obscuring the utopic dream in lieu of Anarres which has revealed itself as a place where history has not yet stopped being written. This is the moment that sparks *Shevek's* consciousness into recognising that each and every individual plays their part in the revolution that keeps society moving.

The sequence of events that happened at one time begin to form the narrative of another character, in another time simultaneously – bridging the past and the present. If both these realities were to exist within the same universal realm, how would they be able to be explained? Le Guin renders her theories between the *sequential* and the *simultaneous* in her narrative with the support of a number of motifs. The mobiles made by *Takver*, *Shevek's* wife, are the most visually compelling; made

<sup>20</sup> Fontijn, D. (March 2007). The Significance of 'Invisible' Places. *World Archaeology*, 39(1). pp. 73.

<sup>21</sup> Lucas, P.C. (August 2007). Constructing Identity with Dreamstones: Megalithic Sites and Contemporary Nature Spirituality. *Nova Religio: The Journal of Alternative and Emergent Religions*, 11(1). pp. 35.

<sup>22</sup> Sequential: [adj] of, relating to, or arranged in a sequence vs Simultaneous: [adj] existing, occurring, or operating at the same time; concurrent. (Merriem Webster Online Dictionary)

<sup>23</sup> Klarer, M. (Spring 1992). Gender and the "Simultaneity Principle": Ursula Le Guin's "The Dispossessed". *Mosaic: An Interdisciplinary Critical Journal*, 25(2). pp. 110.

from pieces of wire that when flickering in space, appear and disappear between shapes of lines and concentric circles. The use of an artistic medium like the mobile to represent a theory such as the interpretation of time allows for a complex matter to be distilled into poetry. The mobile could be interpreted as a form of concrete poetry, a visualization of a text or in this example a theory, used to depict a certain rhythm that the text would audibly create. The mobile is a visual metaphor for the burial mounds that scatter the moorlands. Throughout the Neolithic age, the mounds were impregnated time and time again as more and more of the dead were buried there. Time and space made the dead visible markers on the landscape, giving meaning to the spirits and their followers to come.

And come they did. Philip Lucas and his contemporaries in the fields of Archaeology, Cultural Theory and Ecophilosophy like Adrian Ivakhiv, Paul Devereux, Michael Dames and Marija Gimbutas have researched ways in which we have embodied the ancient landscapes. Contemporary communities of *Nature Spiritualists*, the modern Pagans, Neo Shamans, Eco Feminists and others have recognised that there is something to be said about reconnecting with the natural world and fostering activity that also protects it (Lucas 2007). It is at these stone sites that they find the openings to journey to sacred worlds. Each community of *Nature Spiritualists* seek their own form of escapism and connection to unadulterated times. My journey with the rock has led me here too. But for me, the opening to these sacred worlds isn't through the philosophical doctrines themselves, it is rather through the spatial logic that such practices produce. By unifying the collective embodied experiences between the human and non-human species that have touched these stones, we begin to see how these interactions have the possibility to alter the materiality of the landscape itself. The chasm between our ordinary world and the Otherworld can be made audible with the rock as we begin to crack it apart.

Carson speaks of the 'ololyga' shrieks particular to women, a shout that can be heard during the occasions of ritual practices or climatic moments of child birth, but also performed at festivals and gatherings of women. The sound can be interpreted as both intense pleasure and intense pain. A woman capable of exorcising mystery from her *two mouths* (Carson 1992); the one that speaks and the other that gives life. These 'harsh barbaric sounds' are a "bit of autobiography (having) a totally private interior yet its trajectory is public."<sup>24</sup> The public space of the Neolithic burial site transcends the societal order we know from today, becoming one of the last bastions of a matriarchal culture where the landscape and its peoples are given the opportunity to co-exist outside the self, so Carson.

Ritual has the possibility to summon an experience of memory, awakening the events of past histories through sound as it travels across surfaces and territories. The field of archaeoacoustics is the acoustical study as a methodical approach within the practice of archaeology. Artist and researcher Paul Devereux leads the *Landscape and Perception Project* in partnership with RCA, London and is undergoing a series of experiments to observe and listen to the prehistoric landscape, with their primary study area focusing on the Carn Menyn ridge in the Preseli Hills of South-West Wales, known as a source of the Stonehenge bluestones. In addition to the series of audio experiments at Carn Menyn, randomly selected megalithic chamber sites across England and Ireland were tested for their natural or primary resonant frequencies<sup>25</sup> "revealing that all the investigated chambers were found to have a natural primary resonance frequency in the 95-120 Hertz band, with most at 110-112 Hz – this despite variations in sizes and shapes of the chambers." What is surprising is that 110 Hz is the frequency in the range of the second lowest level of the male singing voice also known as the baritone range. Devereux and his team thus speculated that gatherings of men chanted during ritual practice within these tombs.

The archaeomythological theories presented by Gimbutas speak of an egalitarian matriarchal culture which embodied the feminine within the landscape and ritual practices in the Neolithic megalithic stone sites. However the archaeoacoustic studies started by the *Landscape and Perception Project* have revealed a link to the possibilities of the presence of a male voice within these burial chambers. The architectonic structures of the burial sites studied today however are only the ghosts of their burial pasts. Where once were Mother Goddess figures made from layers of Earth covering up the burial sites are now bare rock structures and where once Mother Goddesses themselves gathered in rituals of rebirth are now *Nature Spiritualists* emerging from the vibrations of our modern world. Is it possible that the millions of years of *mounds attracting mounds* together with the multiple gatherings of ritualists from the Neolithic Age to present day have altered the body of the rock, thus potentially transforming its gender? What if the continuing encounters of materiality, visibility and modulation produced a spatial embodiment of the collective interactions with the stones? There was a time and place within history that recognised the resounding role of the *feminine force*, expressed through the spatial forms of the burial mounds at the intersection of the cycle of life and death. The overwhelming visibility of the Mother Goddesses as artefacts and in

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<sup>24</sup> Carson, A. (1992). *Glass, Irony and God*. New York: New Directions. pp. 130.

<sup>25</sup> *Landscape and Perception Project* (2012) Available at: <http://www.landscape-perception.org/archaeoacoustics/index.html> (Accessed: 22 January 2021)

architectonic structures created a collective power of the matriarchy which forcibly shaped the environmental and societal landscape. Consequently, inserting themselves into historical memory. So, what if the sounds of the stone sites were those of the *ololyga*, the female voice crying out both intense moments of pleasure and those of intense pain. The death and rebirth of life entering and exiting the tomb as womb as all humans undergo a regeneration between history and subsequent memory - simultaneously and sequentially being the past and the present. The dead man's ghost is the voice of the female both living and dead.

#### 4. Conclusion: To Be a Body in the World

Clarrie Willis' introduction to *Stones, Clouds, Miles: A Richard Long Reader* describes Long's work as "about his own physical engagement, exploring the order of the universe and nature's elemental and cosmic forces. And in this sense it is about being a body in the world and about measuring that world."<sup>26</sup> Our bodies and movements stroking the surfaces of the land causes a friction between particles of matter, carrying and depositing them like lint as they settle on the Earth. These crumbs of existence are our way of being and embodying the landscape. It is fundamentally and by definition *the* order of the universe that we are measuring, with each step, with each rock which is placed. But one could argue that the order which has prevailed, thus what we measure ourselves up to, has recorded a history which testifies to only a fraction of our memories. An order which has created spaces outside of time, where histories have been left buried in the landscape. Long writes in *Five, six, pick up sticks Seven, eight, lay them straight* that a "pile of stones or a walk, both have equal physical reality, though the walk is invisible."<sup>27</sup> Something is only invisible if you choose not to see it. The stone likens to the dead man and the walk his ghost. The visibility of the walk is revealed through the interactions with the landscape. The walk may only be the spectre of the physicality of the footsteps that once roamed the Earth, but the memory of the event still exists in the material things that have settled on the surface.

What the rock declares and how we respond to its forces emitted in the landscape is its way of communicating with us and the world. The repulsion between the rock's matter and our own forms the basis for discourse on how to make space for a collection of testimonies which have not yet had the opportunity to surface. Thus, the rock represents the possibility to live outside of an entropic societal culture. To be able to embody a spatial existence depictive of a more profound and ancient time before documented history and social appropriations. How we connect to the rock's meaning is made imaginable through our walking over and within the landscapes, breaking down and rebuilding ourselves to be more resolute and impenetrable. By surfacing with the knowledge of a more desirable and attainable history and responding by validating our collective memory.

As I look out beyond the window from where I sit, I can see the cliffs of the Jurassic coast. Made up of billions of tiny particles of rock matter that have been turned to stone over millions of years. The sedimentary rock is built up by over 195 million years of pressure from the layers which have formed above it. The wind is howling, a storm is bending the trees over, keeping them permanently slanted along the horizon. For fossil hunters, these storms are magical, as they are *nature's* way of excavating the histories out of the rocks themselves. Hidden beneath the layers and layers of mud, clay and limestone are remnants of the early Jurassic period. The early life forms of ammonites and belemnites which existed in that time, have been fossilised in the depths of these layers. When the tides recede into the ocean, the fossils become visible amongst the sands and pebbles of the beach. It is on a coastline much like this one, where my journey with the rock came into being. What began as an electromagnetic repulsion between the atoms on my fingers and those of the rock, has evolved into a consciousness excavated through my embodied relationship with the matter itself. Before my understanding could materialise, I needed to see the rock. I needed the rock to see me. By identifying with the rock's journey to the surface of the Earth, I have also been accorded a time and a place in the vast landscape of its history.

As humans, we only inhabit the Earth for a moment in time. There have been millions of years of histories before any of us appeared. These layers and layers of lifetimes of ancestors, animals, humans and monsters, like the sedimentary rock, have formed themselves into the landscapes they inhabited. With each rock that wears itself away, moments of history are carried away with it. It is these moments, these particles of things that migrate across landscapes, that come to settle on the Earth. Buried deep in the Earth's crust or floating high above it, the dead man and *her* ghost meet on the surface where we live our lives.

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<sup>26</sup> Wallis, Claire. Ed. (2017). *Stones, Clouds, Miles: A Richard Long Reader*. London: Ridinghouse. pp. 13.

<sup>27</sup> Wallis, Claire. Ed. (2017). *Stones, Clouds, Miles: A Richard Long Reader*. London: Ridinghouse. pp. 296.



