Preamble

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Modernity and mining can be summed up in many disparate words: industrialization, modernization, exploitation, wealth and poverty, life and death, local rupture and global flow, backwardness and industrial triumph, nature as a resource to be technologized or aestheticized, all the way from the picturesque to the technologically sublime.

Mining in the nineteenth century, however, was also a locus of love. "Crystallization," Stendhal's illustrious metaphor for love, was conceived in situ at the salt mines of Hallein near Salzburg. Stendhal referred to the local custom—still practiced today—of throwing bare branches into the depths of the abandoned mines. When pulled back into the light months later, the branches were covered with sparkling salt crystals. This diamond-like filigree led Stendhal to a sophisticated theory of the stages of love, as presented in his 1822 treatise *De l'amour*

(Love): (1) Admiration; (2) "You think, 'How delightful it would be to kiss her, to be kissed by her,' and so on ..."; (3) Hope; (4) Love is born; (5) The first crystallization begins; (6) Doubt creeps in; (7) The second crystallization.[2]

The point is that love changes reality. The metamorphosis is an intervention as well as a phenomenon in the eye of the beholder—perfecting, framing, interpreting, and reinventing what is naturally and culturally given. Initially obscure, the treatise's first edition reached only a few readers, but Stendhal later reworked the material into the romantic short story "Le rameau de Salzbourg" (The Salzburg Bough).[3] Here, he elaborated his theory of crystallization in the form of a lovely piece of fiction that was included as an appendix in the posthumously published 1853 edition. Soon *De l'amour* became a classic.

The constellation of kissing and mining, love and chemistry, sudden death and promises of eternity appears to be a topos in modern fiction. Yet, in what Franz Kafka deemed the most wonderful story in the world—Johann Peter Hebel's 1811 "Unverhofftes Wiedersehen" (The Unexpected Reunion)—it is not so much the sad love story as the breathtaking temporalities unfolding that make the most memorable impression. Early one morning a young miner kisses his bride-to-be before leaving for work in his

black miner's suit ("a miner is always dressed ready for his own funeral"), and the same day the miner meets his foreshadowed fate. After the woman has spent more than fifty years in quiet mourning, the beloved's body is recovered from deep down in a mine shaft, perfectly preserved in ferrous vitriol, untouched by decay and as beautiful as the day he died. Thus the lovers—the male sleeping beauty and the old lady—are reunited, a convergence that introduces a twisted temporality into this story of faithful, if unfulfilled, love. Hebel's awe-inspiring marking of the passage of time from the sudden death to the temporally distorted reunion takes up a substantial portion of this (very short) short story and deserves to be quoted in its entirety:

"In the meantime the city of Lisbon in Portugal was destroyed by earthquake, the Seven Years' War came and went, the Emperor Francis I died, the Jesuits were dissolved, Poland was partitioned, the Empress Maria Theresa died, and Struensee was executed, and America became independent, and the combined French and Spanish force failed to take Gibraltar. The Turks cooped up General Stein in the Veterane Cave in Hungary, and the Emperor Joseph died too. King Gustavus of Sweden conquered Russian Finland, the French Revolution came and the long war began,

and the Emperor Leopold II too was buried. Napoleon defeated Prussia, the English bombarded Copenhagen, and the farmers sowed and reaped."[4]

Hebel's little piece of fiction thus brings us to 1809, when the body resurfaces from the rubble and the vitriol. One can only imagine how Stendhal, himself a master of literary ellipses and an astute eyewitness to world-changing political events, would have admired (and maybe he did) this sublime list of world-historical events infused into a local love story played out against the backdrop of the Swedish mines of Falun.

Stendhal's intricate theory of crystallization, on the one hand, and Hebel's conflation of distorted temporalities and a hyperbolic world-historical panorama on the other, spring to mind in relation to Peter Zumthor's architectural interventions at the abandoned nineteenth-century zinc mines at Allmannajuvet, close to Sauda on the west coast of Norway. In Stendhal, the chemical process crystallizes dissolved minerals, transforming a natural *objet trouvé* into pure beauty. The time involved in the metamorphosis from nature to culture and the emphasis on the subjective experience of aesthetic, sensual phenomena are evoked in different ways by the four structures that are now installed in the dramatic

terrain along the old mining trail. Hebel's exposition of warped temporalities—the synchronizing of something personal, subjective, and out of sync within a factual, chronological framework—and the weaving of a local history into a world-historical fabric reverberate in the ways in which the new pavilions frame and evoke the invisible history of the place. Discoursing on love, both Stendhal and Hebel address profound questions of history, time, and temporalities in ways that bear comparison with the effects of Zumthor's contemporary elaboration of both the landscape and the cultural-industrial vestiges of the mines at Allmannajuvet.