The mythopoetics of stone, rocks and mountains is archaic, universal and ambivalent.

The mythopoetical meaning of stones depends on a person’s way of life and on his/her relations with the environment. Stones are enemies to the tiller, and soil provides him with food. Stone is lifeless and also dangerous to life – stone is both a weapon and means of punishment. A stray person is stoned to death; he is turned into a stone statue or locked up in a stone cell. At the same time stone has assumed preserving role of life – a fortress on a rock is a safe shelter, hearthstones keep warm, millstones grind grains.

Stones, rocks and mountains mark the sanctification of place, they are the core of it and at the same time a boundary between profane and sacred, everyday and eternal world. As such, they are setting up the cosmic order, as well the phenomenal order in our lifeworld.

Among the natural materials stone is lasting, strong and durable, but also rigid, static and constant as well. As such, it is a means of bringing the time flow to a standstill, halting a moment and spacing the time.

Stone is the bearer of cultural memory, the supporter of both body and place memory, the means of recollection, reminiscence and memorialization. Mortal body finds immortalization in stone, and will lead its eternal life as a peace of sculpture; stone buildings are the reflections of history; gravestones, monuments and stone mounds prevent life from sinking into oblivion.

A recurrent subject in arts and myth is that of bringing a stone figure back to life. Stones support the belief in incarnation and re-incarnation. In art and religion has stone made it possible to turn imperceptible into perceptible, invisible into visible.

Stone immortalizes mental values, be it from mythical, religious, political, social, artistic or other forms of cultural consciousness.

Stones are things, and as such natural occupants in a landscape. Horizons and pathways delineate movements in environment, stones bring about fixation and focus there.
“The role of things in places is curiously comparable to that of the lived body. The body and things both lend a distinctive density to their surroundings; and as body is central for the experiencing and remembering subject who pivots around (and with) it, so the things are pivotal points in a given place, constellating it by their presence.” (Casey: 205)

Stones put the past into place; they are the primary source of its concrete implacement in memory. Stones help to make place memories a part of our memorial lives.

Human perception of the environment is an active process, it “is the looking, listening, touching and sniffing that goes on when the perceptual system is at work.” (Ingold: 166)

Perception is a mode of action, depending of the kind of activity in which we are engaged with our lived-in environment. To perceive a thing or event is to perceive what it affords. The context of perception is thus our practical activity in environment. Meanings are not attached by the mind to objects in the world, rather these objects takes on their significance – in James Gibson terms, they afford what they do (Gibson: 127–143).

Our perception of the environment is embedded in practices of engagement, with the more conventional alternative that such perception results from the reconstruction of naturally given realities in terms of metaphors drawn from the ideal realm of culture (Ingold: 10, 166)

In his “The Origin of Art” Martin Heidegger gives the example of stone as mere thing in the interpretation of thingness of the thing.

“This block of granite, for example, is a mere thing. It is hard, heavy, extended, bulky, shapeless, rough, colored, partly dull, partly shiny. Thus we acknowledge its characteristics. But still, the traits signify something proper to the stone itself. They are its properties. The thing has them. The thing? What are we thinking of when we now have a thing in mind? Obviously the thing is not merely an aggregate of traits, nor an accumulation of properties by which that aggregate arises. A thing, as everyone think he knows, is that around which the properties have assembled. We speak in this connection of the core of things. The Greeks are supposed to have called it to hypokeimenon. For them, this core of the thing was something lying at the ground of the thing, something always already there. The characteristics, however, are called to symbekōta, that which has always turned up already along with the given core and occurs along with it.” (Heidegger: 149–9)

For Heidegger the self-contained block of granite is something material in a definite if unshapely form. Natural stone can acquire the status both of commodity and cult item depending of the milieu and the meaning of the context, which it has assumed in a certain culture. As such, it acts analogically to a work of art, bringing forward the truth of Being. Only the thing not perceived is a