



Living vs Non-living and Existence of a Third Category

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Abstract

Scientific knowledge has led us to believe that the gap between the living and the non-living world is indisputable and no in-between category exists. However, naturally growing minerals cannot be ignored, therefore a third category of entities, between the living and the non-living, that may be called “para-living”, has been proposed. This ‘missing link’ (the third category) provides us with the exact observation on entities that grow during their formation. Further, it is an accepted fact that nothing in the natural world is formed without once having been derived from naturally growing matter. “Para-living” would refer to natural minerals that grow during their formation and undergo changes in their form, size, chemical composition, and internal structures depending upon various environmental parameters. Nomenclature and categorisation of certain phenomena such as these, not only helps to further scientific advances, but also provides a sharper focus and perspective.

Keywords: Para-Living; Crystallization; Anthropogenical Deterioration

Introduction

The scientific discussions and research have led us to believe that the gap between the living and the non-living world is indisputable with nothing in between [1-4]. It is an unquestioned area of knowledge where both present and future advances in science stick fairly closely to the theories that were propounded, as to where, when, and how, the differences are generated. The natural world is an ever-changing one that leads to anthropogenical deterioration and the final decay of matter. However, the activities that goes on in-between is worthy of scientific as well as academic attention. This will provide us with clearer insight into the dynamics of such phenomena. This broad classification seems to have become an everlasting guide for all future academics. However, as mostly all knowledge that has been gained, is revisited to be scrutinised again and again; this being the honest intention of the seekers of truth; it is important to look into the different layers of the above-mentioned distinction.

Discussion and Proposal

In this connection, I wish to reflect upon various aspects of the ‘in-between’ category of entities which have so far been categorised under non-living. The study of fossils and natural primary minerals reveals many aspects of both their origin and development. Since development and growth of any kind involves an implied kinetic condition that depends on inherent chemical interaction, there may be plausible interpretation and inferences made in order to revise the existing categories, namely living and non-living.

In academic practice, living things are defined as organisms that breathe, eat, grow, move, reproduce, and have senses; whereas non-living things do not eat, grow, breathe, move, reproduce, and have no senses. As already mentioned, the definition does not accommodate all entities that undergo growth and development and there is a good scope for further deliberation over certain phenomena in relation to the subject concerned. The first premise is that

naturally occurring minerals, that have been included in the non-living category, are constantly growing during their formation period. There is, as we all know, a slow and steady process for minerals to be formed. The process involves molecular movement and modification in terms of growth. The vertical and horizontal rate of growth depends upon the environmental parameters, such as depth of formation (crystallization), rate of cooling temperature, existing dynamic pressure, chemical composition of the fluid, availability of space, etc. Consequently, some grow faster, and others are slower before they reach a stage where conditions become unsuitable for any further growth. These are similar to organisms having different lifespan ranging from a few seconds to several years, acquiring similar morphology in similar environment, different sizes, etc. occurring due to environmental stress, and other factors. Twining in minerals; progressing formation of new minerals under a different set of environmental conditions during the process of crystallisation and recrystallization; are a few examples in support of the third category. As is well known, there are certain minerals sensitive to even slight changes in the environmental parameters, such as, transformation of aragonite from calcite. In fact, these very minerals are the integrated whole of many organisms.

In addition, there are many physical characters which we do not 'see', until the entity succumbs to a special situation in terms of exposure, or other environmental factors, and the changes may be observed only in the final manifestations. A good example of this is the seven colours of white light that become visible through refraction. With these convictions, I would therefore, propose a third category, which may be named as "para-living". Para-living is characterized by entities that grows during their formation, changes their form, size, chemical composition, internal structures, etc., depending upon various environmental parameters (mentioned above). They cannot be included in the established categories of living and non-living because they do not satisfy all the acceptable prerequisites.

Conclusion

It may be now safely concluded that nothing in the world is formed without having been derived once from naturally growing matter. In other words, today whatever we see must have been derived from a once living entity. Agreeing to this principle, we may settle for a theory that the world consists of a dump yard of dead material; derived directly or indirectly through transformation (through mechanical, chemical, or biological processes) of once living material. Any presence of inherently living organisms amidst the discarded debris of the dump-yard would be extremely low in percentage.

In the present world today, we enjoy the bounties of Nature as a priceless gift from God, without having in mind the background of naturally and also anthropogenically deteriorating transformation of once active (I would say living or para-living) entities that will ultimately bury all the extant organisms.

The purpose of creating the concept of a third category between living and non-living is two-fold:

1. To honour and value every entity, great or small, existing in the world. They may be the remains of the organisms (fossils), minerals or other natural resources. Every particle is a God particle.
2. To open up new frontiers of discovery about the nature of matter and encourage discussions amongst bio- and geoscientists for actively engaging in the redefining of other categories of classification for various known and unknown entities of the world. This may lead to an advancement of knowledge in many directions that would eventually enhance the unravelled aspects of life for mankind.

The proposed third category of 'para-living' entities is not a superimposition but will enable us to further trace the emerging patterns of evolution. It is my firm conviction that the absence of 'nomenclature' pushes back vital information and thorough investigation, which is the key to scientific discoveries. Hence, the present proposal may be considered by fellow scientists, in the supreme interest and pursuit of knowledge.

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