

## Transformations II: Man to Bird

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### Jesse Earl Warner

Like the previous presentation, this will also be just a brief introduction to this particular aspect of transformations. The difference in the types of symbols between this and the previous categories of man-to-animal and animal-to-animal transformations evidently suggests a difference in the cosmology between those who chose each of these subjects to represent their intent. The fact that there are many more suspected animal transformation figures on the cliffs than man-to-bird also suggests this difference in philosophies. Another factor that may have some significance is that many examples of what we suspect as bird representations are involved with solar observation and shadow interaction. To date, after having observed over 400 panels interacting, no figures that have included the animal transformation theme have been observed to interact with light or shadow. That does not mean that they don't, just that we have not yet observed any that do. Because the evidence is incomplete, no specific conclusions will be drawn until more information has been collected. The examples of transformation figures that use the bird forms as an object for their ecstatic experience are not only fewer than those which use animals, they also occur in only a very few categories of graphic expression. Bird examples are generally associated with either the head or face of the anthropomorph, and the hands, either held or as part of the hand.

Figure 1 illustrates representations of Basketmaker style "duck-headed" men. Even though there has been considerable speculation as to what they may represent, no one up to this point has thoroughly investigated all of the possibilities. In light of the other

examples, it seems possible that one of these explanations may be that it represents a specific and different cult for transformation.

By the way it is formed, the bird-like man in the hand of the Barrier Canyon style anthropomorph in Figure 2A suggests the soul of man taking flight. Whether it simply represents the ability of a shaman's spirit to soar or actually represents transformation cannot be certain, but consider the probability that several different philosophies existed and were popular. Figure 2B seems to represent a Barrier Canyon style figure caught in the process of transformation (Hedges 1979). Notice the exaggerated tail of the bird-like figure ends in two human-like feet (Figure 2B).

Figure 3 illustrates several figures whose arms are probably intended to represent birds. The figure from Capitol Reef may or may not represent this same type of idea, but it has been included for comparison. In Figure 4A notice the open beak of the bird is actually the arm of the anthropomorph on its right. The feather-like attachments on the bird's head look like the man's fingers. Also, this bird's forked foot is attached to the middle finger of another figure's hand. Figure 4B leaves no doubt that arms and hands were intended to represent birds. This specific example demonstrates the principle that with every category of more stylized symbolic expressions there will usually be a more naturalistic representation to help identify the concept. Figure 4D shows that these concepts could have persisted down into proto-historic pueblos in New Mexico.

Figure 5 contains several bird-like masks that combine the attributes of birds with face-like features. Figure 5A has the head of each bird as the eyes of a head formed by two butt-joined quadrupeds, evidently a doe and a buck. This may be another fertility or generative symbolism. Notice how the feathers on the wing-like arms of Figure 5F are attached to the top of the head of an abstract somewhat bird-like figure. Along with other transformation symbolism, Figure 6 illustrates the possibility that a certain type of stacked headdress could be multiple combinations of stacked or emerging birds. Figure 7 contains several different but similar types of headgear. Nearly all of these relate to a similar graphic expression of category number 2—double entities, where the emergence is represented as out of the head (lines two and three Fig. 7). These constructions, however, contain aspects that are associated with birds as the "emerging" entities. The dotted areas within the heads illustrate possible encrypted human forms that are similar to the double entities in Figure 7. The arguments that these can and probably do express those possibilities have been presented in several other papers (Warner 1990, 1991).

These examples occur without a specific area of concentration. They occur over a considerable area within the same areas that the animal forms do, but not generally at the same sites. In the Dinwoody-Dubois area of Wyoming, however, there is a heavy concentration of transformation-like figures

associated with owl-like birds (Figures 8A and 8B). Some have the human form incorporated within owls that also exhibit the "shamanic" x-ray quality. Other figures seem to represent anthropomorphized owls with power lines emanating from their heads and hands.

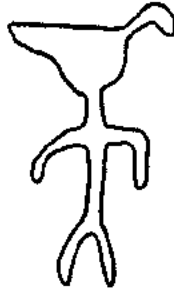
It is evident from the types of symbolism used in the man to bird category that another distinct type of transformation is being represented. Information is still being collected to help determine whether these are actually transformations or represent several other possibilities.

#### REFERENCES CITED

- Hedges, Ken  
1979 Paper presented to the American Rock Art Research Association.
- Warner, Jesse E.  
1990 An Examination of Double Entities, The Application of Symbolism. *Utah Rock Art*, Volume VII, Section 5. Utah Rock Art Research Association, Salt Lake City, Utah.  
1991 The Reversed U Bracket: Forms and Contexts that Express an Affiliation to Concepts Involving Double Entities. *Utah Rock Art*, Volume VIII, Section 6. Utah Rock Art Research Association, Salt Lake City, Utah.



San Juan River



Ind. Ck.



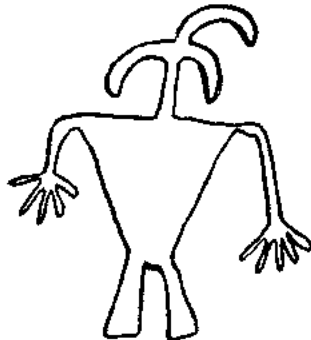
Moab



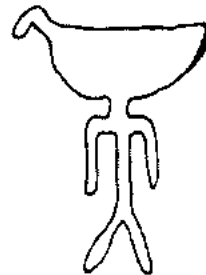
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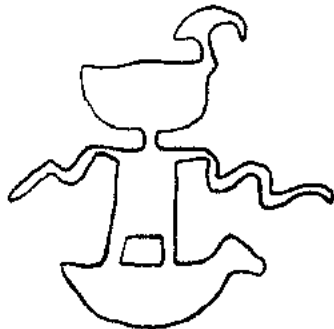
San Juan River



Ind. Ck.



San Juan River

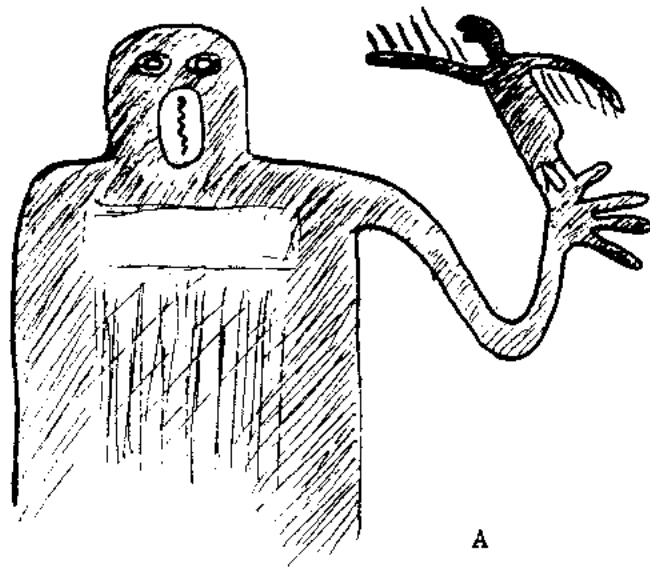


Canyon De Chelly

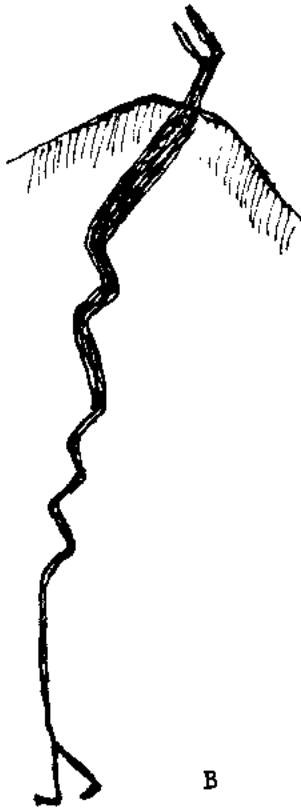


San Juan River

Figure 1

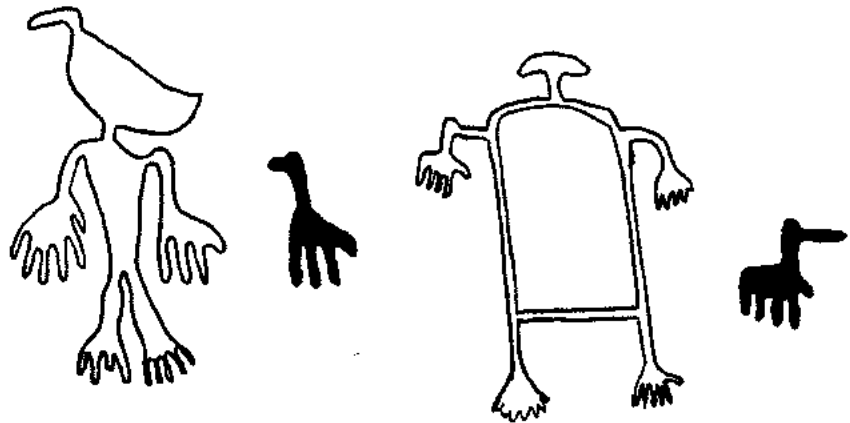


A

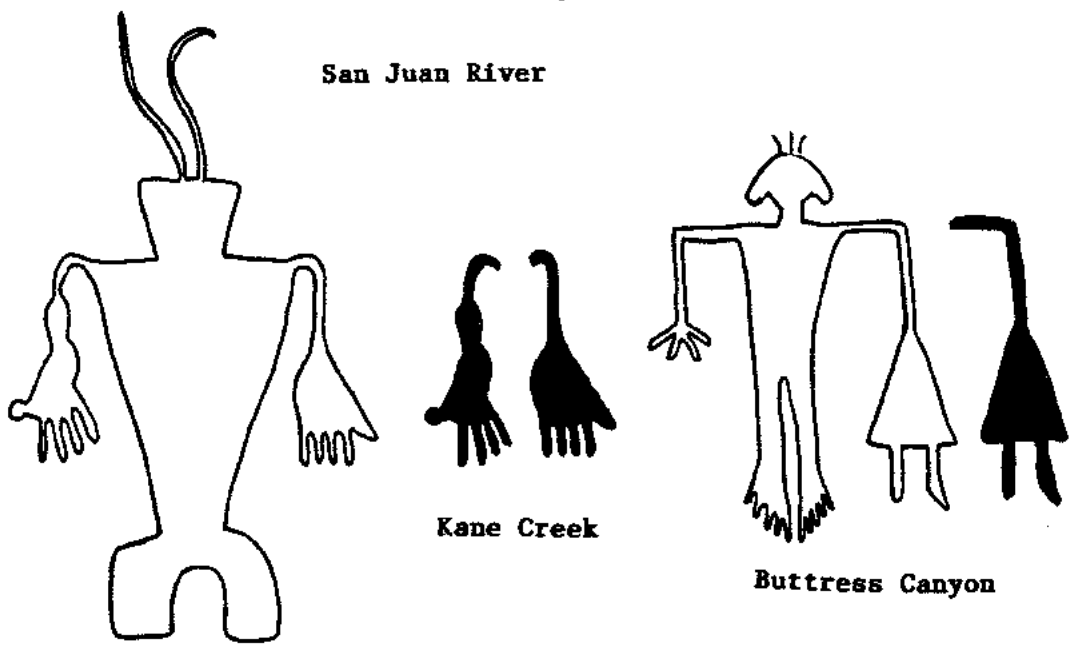


B

Figure 2

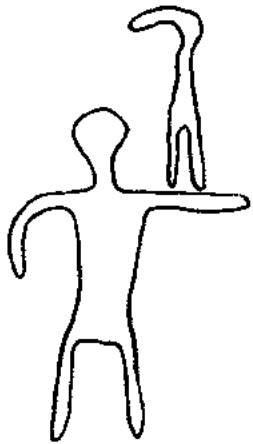


San Juan River



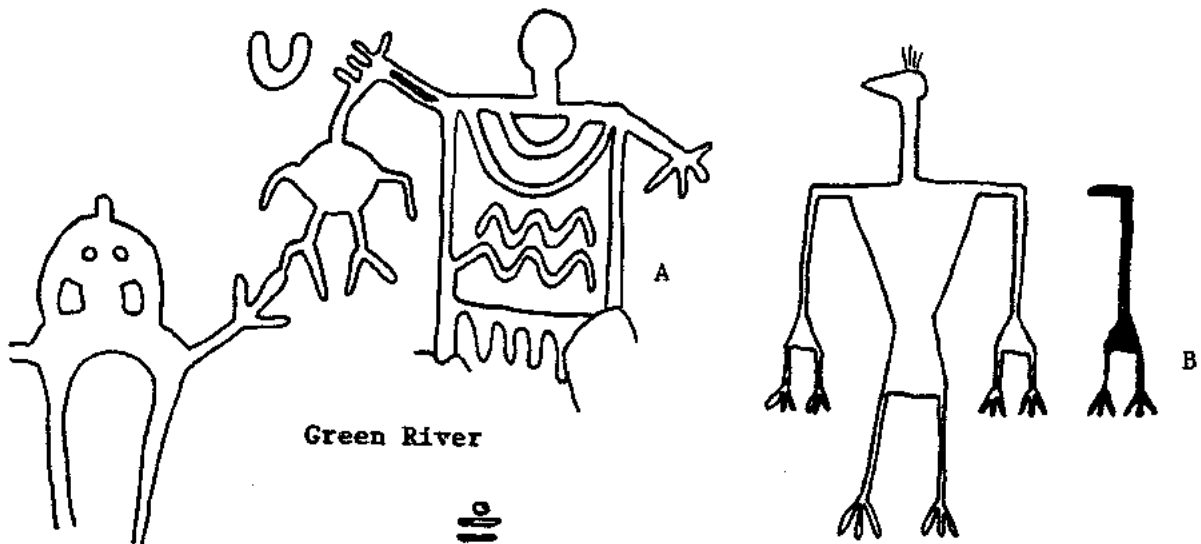
Kane Creek

Buttress Canyon



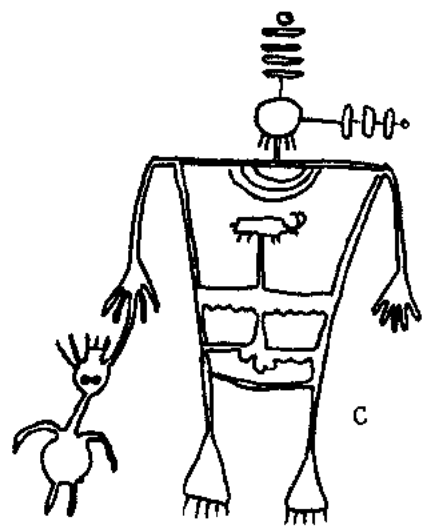
Capitol Reef

Figure 3



Green River

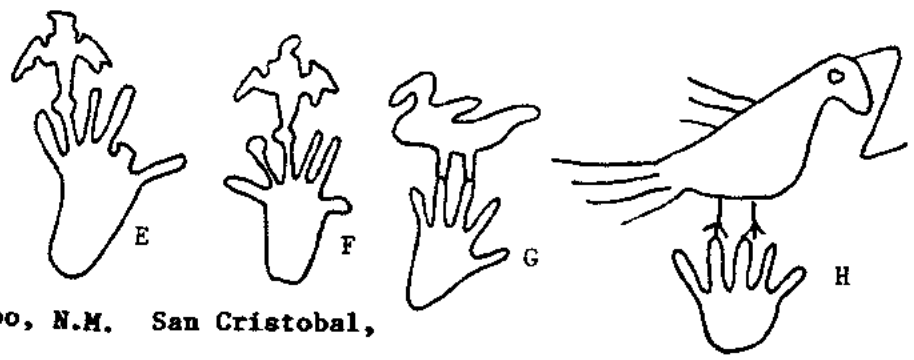
Tsegi Canyon, Az.



San Juan River



Abo, N.M.



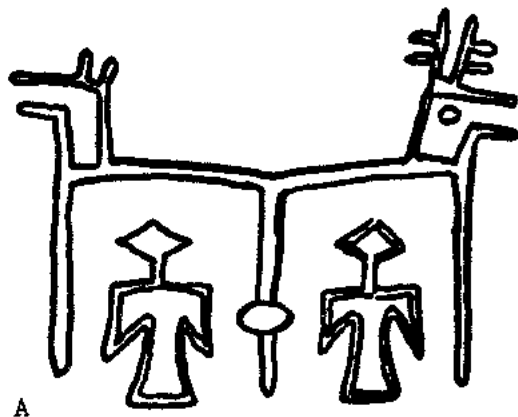
Abo, N.M. San Cristobal,

N.M.

Comanche Gap  
N.M.

Galesteo, N.M.

Figure 4



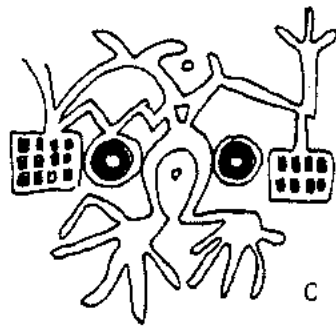
A

Chise N.M.



B

Hueco Tanks  
Texas



C

9 Mile



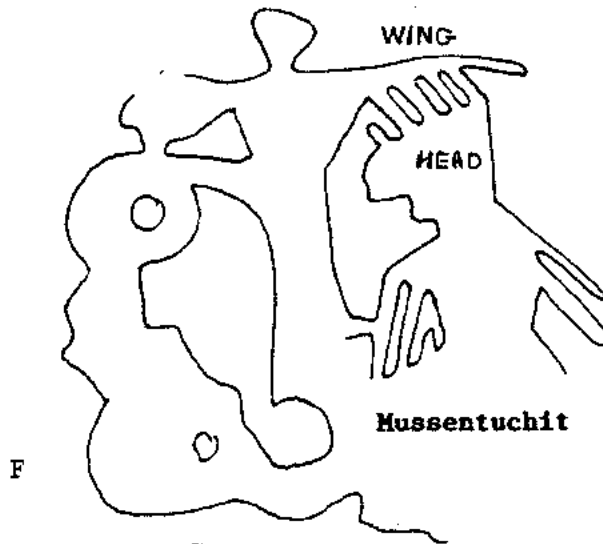
D

Cedar Fort



E

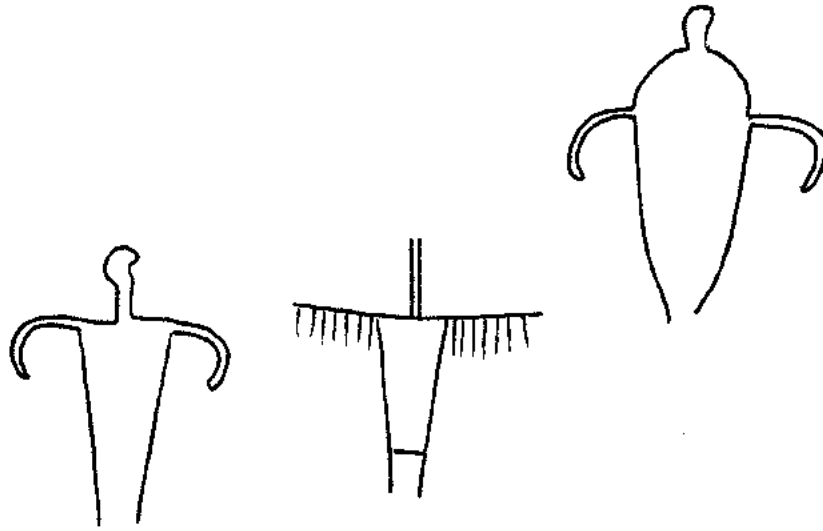
3 Rivers, N.M.



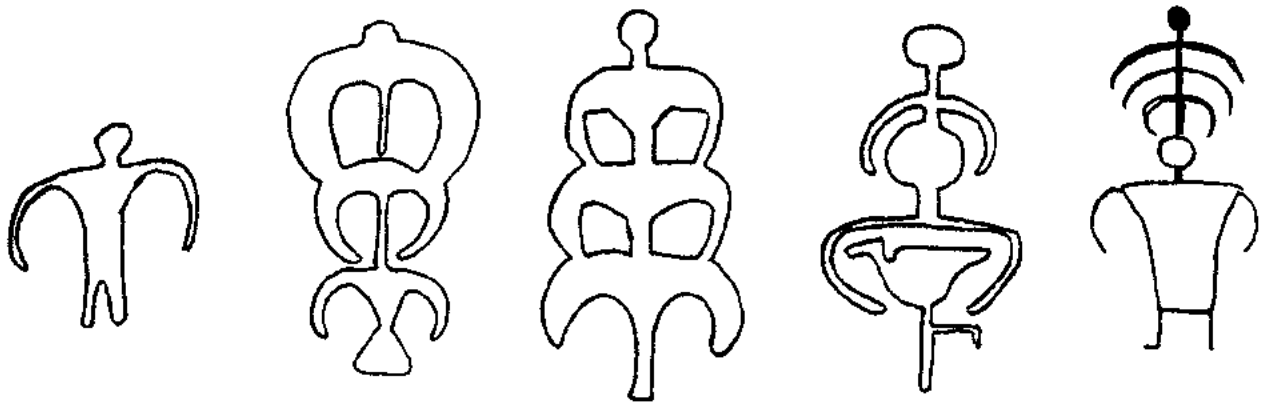
F

Mussentuchit

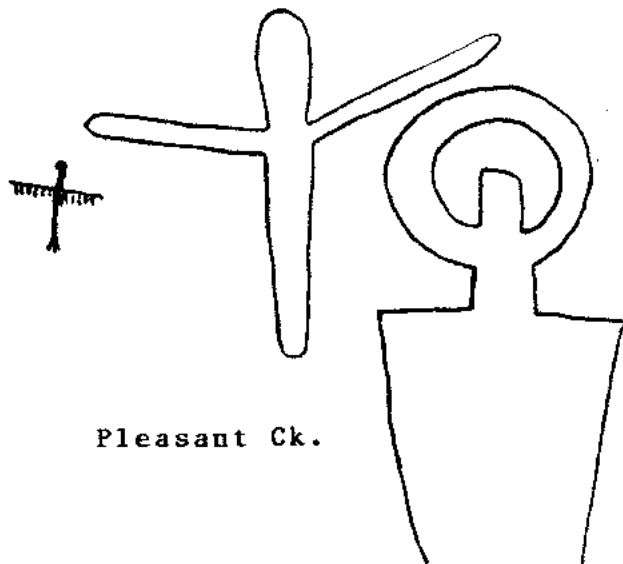
Figure 5



Indian Creek (in context)



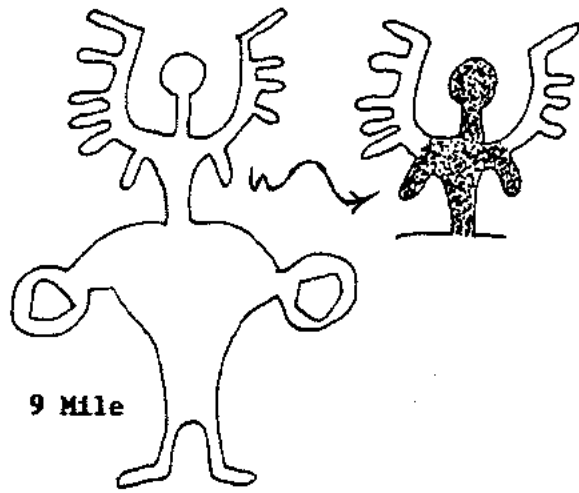
San Juan River (out of context)



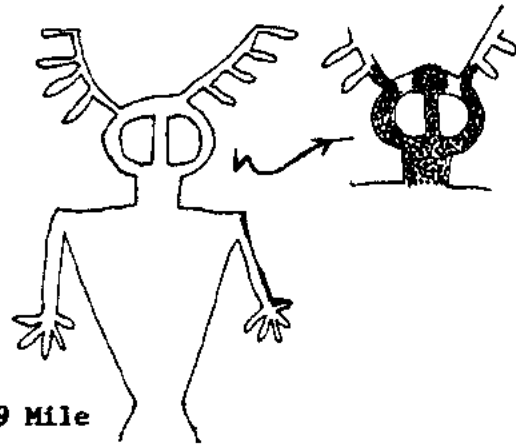
Pleasant Ck.

Figure 6

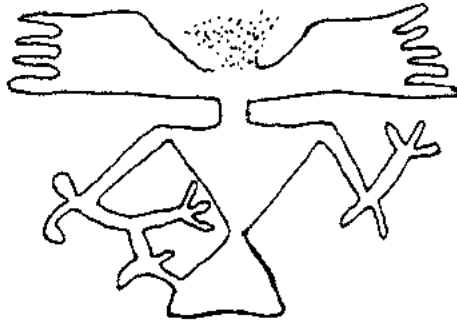




9 Mile



9 Mile



Braffet Can.



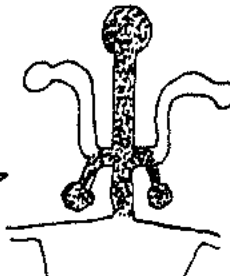
Moab



Pleasant Creek



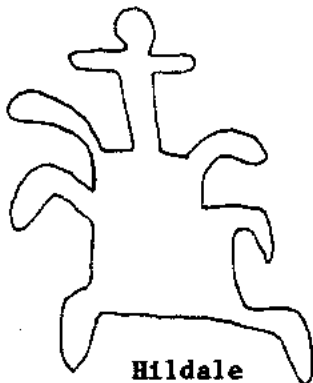
Petrified Nat.  
Forest, Az.



Capitol Reef



Moab



Hildale



9 Mile



Chew Ranch



Moab



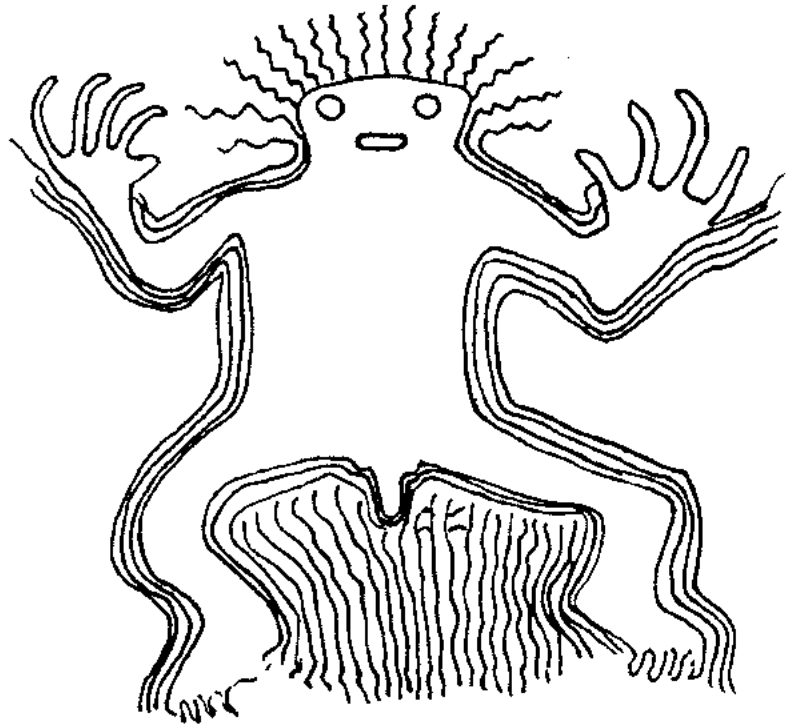
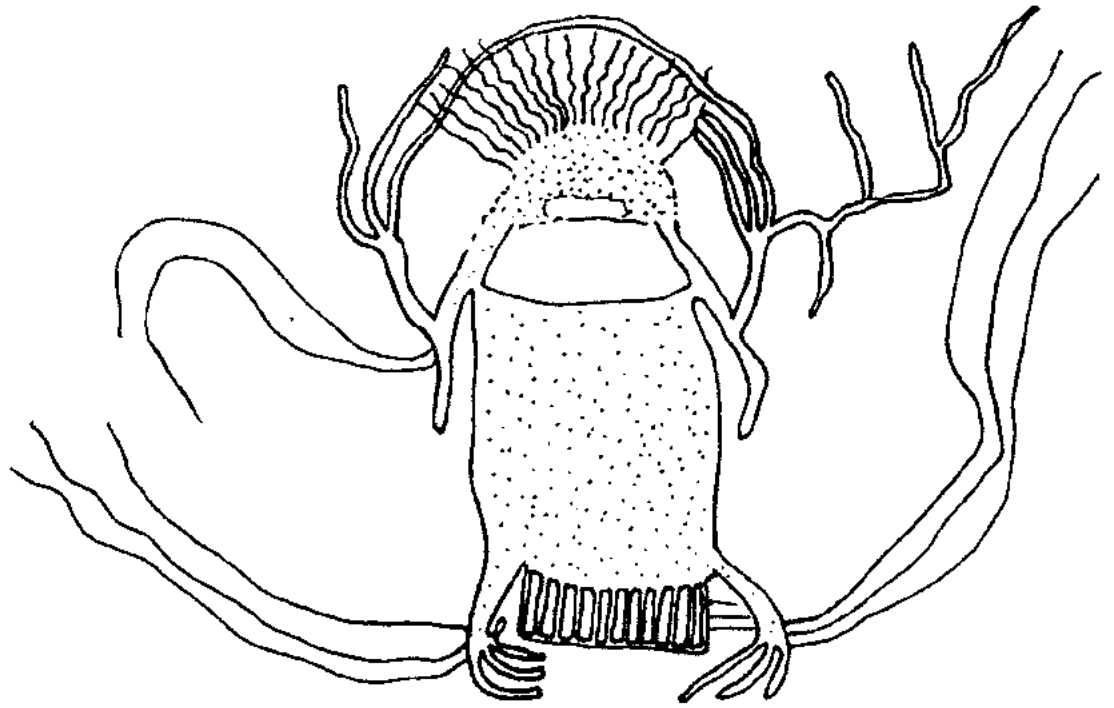
Montezuma Canyon

Figure 7



Figure 8A

Dinwoody area  
Wyoming



Dinwoody, Wyo.

Figure 8B