

Looking at Versus Seeing Rock Art; Its Artists and Its Recorders

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This paper combines principles drawn from art, medicine, philosophy, Eastern and Native American belief systems, and from Elanie Moore, Bill Strange, Clifford Rayl, and my grandmother who was blind. It is a synthesis of how they believe one can and should view the world around them. Understanding how these belief systems and persons *look* at something unfamiliar is to expand our own ability to *see*.

Try to describe something simple to a blind person. What they see is not what we describe. When the blind are given new eyes, what they see makes no sense to them because they have no visual memory of images for comparison and identification. That has to come with experience (Sacks 1995:108-152, also see the movie *Out of Sight*, based on Sacks).

When we describe the phenomena of rock art and its symbolism to the new rock art enthusiast, it is like describing something to the visually impaired. On the other hand, when first experiencing rock art the new rock art enthusiast is also much like the recently sighted, because it makes no visual sense to them. In both cases, this is what could be called *symbol agnosia* (Cytowic 1993:30; Sacks 1995:117, 136; Harris 1996:6; Warner 2002a). In both cases, with more experience and more stored images for comparison, the novice can see patterns emerging that begin to bring a comforting familiarity.

There is a difference between *looking at* and *seeing* something. To *look at* is no more than to accept an image into one's visual frame of reference, to exercise the visual sense. That takes no additional thought. To *see*, within this definition, is to place the image into a category of stored images, identified with forethought and memory, in a process of cognition. Outside the field of art and some sciences, very few have learned how to *look at* and then *see* what their mind is processing.

Many state that we see the world, and especially other cultures, through our visual paradigms (Classen 1993:5). The following are several quotes from a volume by Joseph C. Pierce (1974:5, 6, 34, 146, 178, 31, 85, 63, and 82) that questions our visual perception of reality:

“Any world view is arbitrary to an indeterminable extent. This arbitrariness is difficult to recognize since our world is determined by our world view.”

“Langer referred to nature as a language-made affair, subject to ‘collapse into chaos’ should ideation fail. Threat of this chaos proves sufficient stimulus to insure a ready granting of validity to the current views.”

“We impose our categories on what we see in order to see. We see through the prism of our categories.”

“Langer points out, as did Jerome Bruner, that we live in a web of ideas, a fabric of our own making. ‘The activity of imagining reality is the center of experience, she claims. The average man,

though, picks up his symbols and ideas for imagining from 'those that know.' He may never analytically understand the workings of the various disciplines that shape his time, but he senses the general frame of their references, and becomes very much aware of the drift of their conclusions."

"Any world view organizes a world to view."

"The given postulate can in turn change world views and worlds to view."

"Man's mind is a mirror of a universe that mirrors man's mind."

"Answers are shaped by the questions demanding them, just as the question is finally shaped by the nature of the answer desired.... A question is a seed of suggestion, which we plant into that continuum of synthesis I have called autistic thinking. The question's germination takes place in ways unbelievable to conscious thought, but only in a ground prepared and nourished by conscious thought."

"The technique determines the nature of what is found."

Claude Barnard admitted "facts" are necessary, but suggests it is the manipulation of "ideas given form by facts", by experimental reasoning, or theory, that establishes and builds science. It is the idea that moves scientific reasoning.

We look at a *realized fact* that is not a part of the former scheme of things, and insist that fact must have always been there; as *what*, we may ask. The atom did not exist for the ancient Greeks or Renaissance scientists as it exists for us today. Many individuals had to find correspondence, until the existence of the idea of the atom could be made. If not visible to the eye, it had to be at least possible, or even necessary, to create a framework based on the acceptance of the idea of an atom. The idea may be what brought about the facts to support it. This does not mean rabbits can be pulled from hats whether or not there is a rabbit in there. It means that we must question the nature of rabbits and hats (see Pierce 1974:91-92).

Sacks (1995:36) states that the perceptual-cognitive process is both physiological and personal. The world that we perceive or construct is part of our perceptual self, which may fall apart, creating chaos in orientation and self-identity.

These few quotes help unprogram our minds from what we were taught by our culture. Old paradigms are often a part of a comparative value system or moral judgment (Pierce 1974:28, 35, 40, 68, Gordon 1965:11). That is part of being human.

The visual sense was used by most religions to intensify the devotee's experience (Samuels and Samuels 1982:28, Campbell 1988:179, Classen 1973:55). There was little belief in the all-knowingness of the gods. The ancient inhabitants of the Near East understood that *looking at* or watching something was not necessarily *knowing*. They reported events to their gods, even though those gods were supposed to be all-seeing and all-knowing. Also, they had to be sure that the gods *heard*, as well as saw.

According to Gordon, it was also often the case that the gods, far from being omniscient, were constantly being duped because they were as ignorant as mortals (Gordon 1965:126, 232). Even the Prophet Isaiah took Sennacherib's letter to the Holy of Holies to read it to the Lord to tell him of the Assyrian king's intentions to capture Jerusalem. In Isaiah 37:17-20 he states, "Incline thine ear, O lord and hear, open thine eyes...." To the Inca, even though sight is given precedence over sound, they need to complement the world of sight by hearing. They do not see the world; they hear it (Classen 1993:55, 73, 79, 187).

After all, to see is supposed to mean to know. "Ah, I see," is to know, as in, "Yes, I understand," but is it to know that you know, with full metacognition (knowledge and regulation of perception), to see and understand everything? Of course not, that's too much to

expect.

The Renaissance reformer John Huss believed he knew the truth, but said he would drop any belief proven false, and asked to be taught. No one could provide him with a better answer, so for his convictions he burned at the stake, for the truth as he *saw* it.

Jerome, a contemporary of Huss, also believed he knew the truth but he recanted. His life was spared but he had to remain in prison. He was too confident in his own brilliance, confident of the gospel as he *saw* and interpreted it.

There are rock art researchers who see rock art as Huss saw it, and interpret the gospel of rock art accordingly. And there are others who see it as Jerome saw it. Later I'll explain more about how these two reformers relate to rock art researchers. Even though they ended up differently, in the beginning they both saw the gospel and its symbolism just the same.

That analogy is to illustrate a fact of rock art research. Though many researchers and enthusiasts don't take their knowledge about rock art seriously, many do. Rock art research is not just a matter of life and death, to some it transcends mortal concerns. Would you put your life on the line for your convictions or interpretations, or even the gospel of your rock art mentor? A better point of view would be to not believe anybody until one point of view or another could be substantiated.

These may sound like absurd questions. But there are those who are dead serious and very adamant in their beliefs. Is that good or bad? It might seem to depend on whether they are right or wrong.

Many who feel so adamant are believed by others to be wrong; most of the naysayers seem to be the ones that feel their beliefs threatened by these strongly-held beliefs. Remember that if we are dead serious, and can't laugh at ourselves, others will.

What one gains from the rest of this paper may enlighten one's view of how ancient glyph makers saw, and researchers see, and we can see. We would be better off understanding why people see things the way they do, whether they are right or wrong. The important thing is that we don't have to agree with them.

When looking at rock art as an early initiate to this mode of rendering symbolism, we really see nothing. But those who are more attuned to abstract thinking (or autistic or primary process thinking, see Pierce 1974:11) can understand some of what is depicted, with a little effort. For the rest, it takes a lot of exposure and experience before we notice the symbolism is beginning to look less strange. And for some, that never happens.

When and if one achieves the right state of mind, it will seem that the symbols are making some kind of contact. Then there is a connection with the faces that previously looked back at us in silence (Elkins 1996).

It is interesting to know that to the Inca, silence was death. "The land of the dead was the land of deaf-mutes" (Classen 1993:36). For a long time, rock art has been mute to us. Researchers, for the most part, have been deaf but not themselves so mute. That is how most of us are with rock art. Now, though, these ancient symbols are beginning to come alive again because they've found new ears willing to listen.

And we can be a willing one if we learn to see rock art with our ears or listen to rock art with our eyes (that will make more sense later). If you do not hear the glyphs look back at you, listen to them till they do. To the Incas, they must first hear before they are able to see (Classen 1993:38).

We believe that light is to sight as sound is to hearing. Many nonliterate societies seem, in a way,

to believe that *light* is from hearing and *sound* is from light. In most cases it is the preference of sound over sight (Scholem 1969:20).

Franck, a famous artist who wrote many books in the field of art, said that to the artist who *learns to see*, everything contains all the riddles of life and death. He said that *what we see* when we look at it is the most important thing in the universe (Franck 1973:xiv). Remember what the extended index finger meant in the movie *City Slickers*. When you reach that point you are no longer looking, you are seeing.

Bill Strange tells those who want to learn, "Don't think, just listen as you introduce yourself to a site and let it reveal itself to you." Clifford Rayl said, "Each time you revisit a site you see it with new eyes." That means to let it talk to you as you familiarize yourself with it. Let your eyes roam around from whatever grabs your attention to the next thing. See it with your ears and listen to it with your eyes. Let it teach you what it will now offer up to you.

Franck says, "Let your eyes caress it without thinking." Forget the rest of the world around you. Let your mind digest what your eyes are processing. Just be alone with your eyes. He continues, "You only succeed if you feel you've become that which your eyes process, regardless of what your mind tells you" (Franck 1973:17, 58-59, 92). Pierce (1974:121) tells us to cut off our brain chatter so our subconscious can concentrate on that process.

Franck cautions us not to be like the person who loved geraniums, grew them for 30 years, and still never knew what they looked like. We need to ponder that. How many times do we have to look at how many geraniums for 30 years, and still not know them well enough to give a detailed description, let alone draw one? How many times have we seen certain popular rock art figures, like our URARA cross-eyed owl logo, and still do not know what it looks like or what it really is (see Figure 1)?

After thinking about that and comparing thoughts with others on field trips, like myself you may wonder if we've been deceiving ourselves or have been deceived by others (see Franck 1973:xv-xvii). Are they, or we ourselves, leading us down the wrong path? If so, what is the value of our convictions?

We are out of touch with the truth. We are separated from the truth by our habitual use of labels. The desire to break through the labels that enclose us helps to rediscover the importance of visualization. (Samuels and Samuels 1982:23, 19). If we place labels on things, we recognize everything, but we really see nothing (Pierce 1971:51; Pierce 1974:135; Franck 1973:4, 18; Bord 1997:96-98).

Franck compares it to knowing the labels on the bottles but never tasting the wine. Society restricts our ability to see; that is part of our cultural programming. It wants to see for us, to make us conformists with biased eyesight. Thus we never really learn to see (Pierce 1974:28, 35, 39, 40, 63; Franck 1973:3-5; Classen 1993:70, 146).

And those that do see, such as ascetics, often live at the outer limits, on the fringe of society (Campbell 1988:199, Williams 1992:162, 180). We want to learn to see, but do not want to be social outcasts. Some who teach others to see tell us we do not need to be a hermit in a cave on a mountain (Williams 1992:180-181).

When we learn to see, we understand that rock art elements define themselves by the way they look; we do not need to have someone tell us an element is this and not that. It may be neither or both at the same time, or at least one at one time, and the other at another time. If that doesn't make sense, there is more to learn.

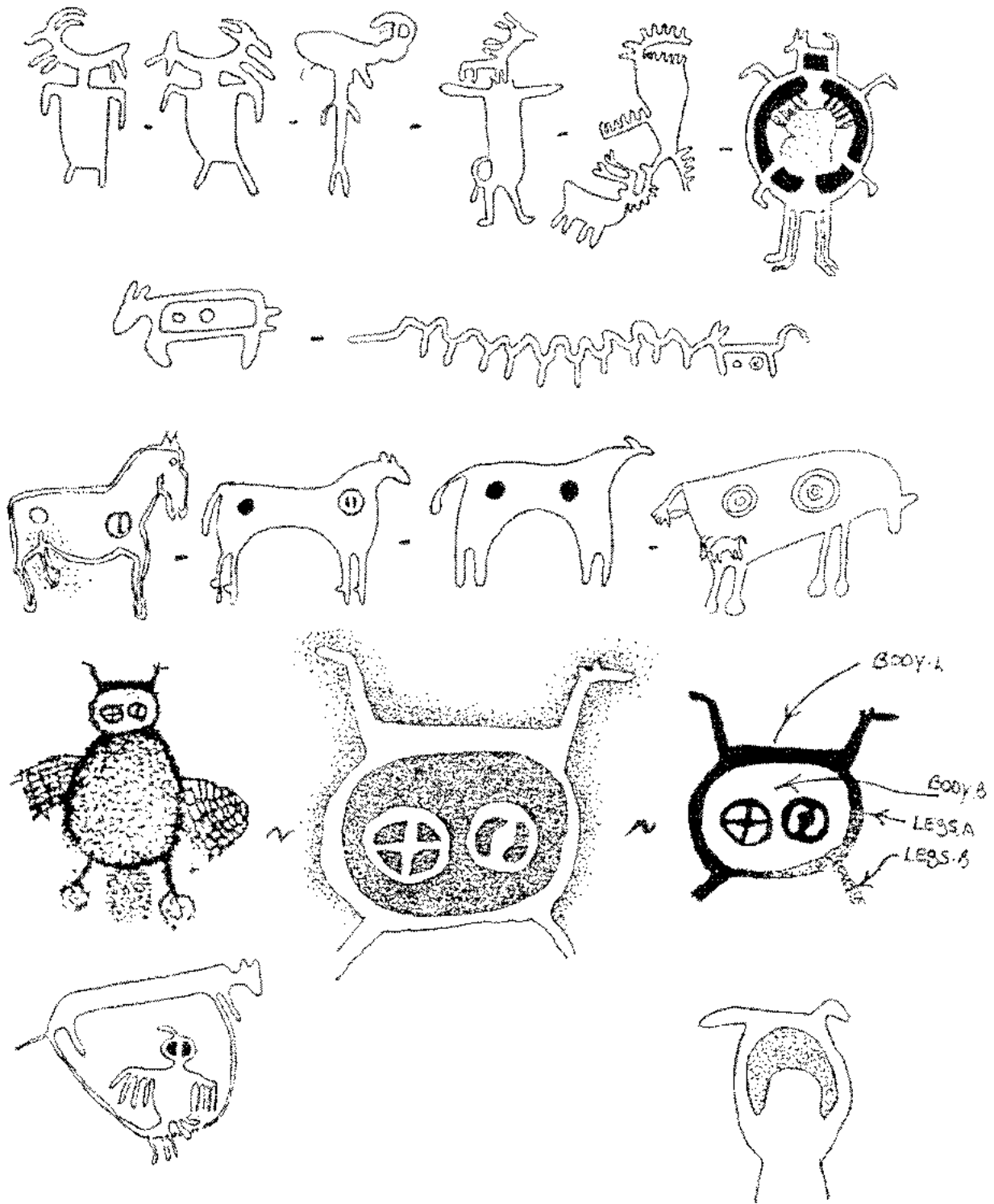


Figure 1

Both looking and seeing start with sense perception, but the similarity ends there (Franck 1973:5). When we look at what has been placed on the rocks and label the phenomenon that created it as part of the symboling process, we usually make immediate choices, instant appraisals. In doing so we say, "I like this," "I won't take a picture of that," "This is good," "That's crude," "This relates to that," "That's exciting," and "This is nothing." We see according to its usefulness, meaningfulness, and significance to us. Read the works of Bill Strange and notice how much he derives from the seemingly insignificant (Strange 1986, 1987, 1989, 1990A, 1990B, 1992A, 1992B, 1992C, 1993, 1994A, 1994B).

To really see, forget the ego and what it is that makes you yourself. Be all eyes. Lose yourself in the symbolism's reality or lack of it. Once you stop being yourself with it, labeling, categorizing, defining, and interpreting it, it is easier to become one with it. A Chinese sage said that, "Choosing is a sickness of the mind" (Franck 1973:6).

Participate with it, and then meaning seems less important (Williams 1992:22-23). Have an affair with the glyphs. Then a psychiatrist might justly ask you how the relationships are going with the rock art you have been seeing lately.

This is one advantage that the Zen practitioner, or the "authentic artist", has over other less astute artists or simple observers. Unless we have really drawn it, we have not really seen it. But the trick is that first we must really see it to draw it accurately.

Get intimate with the rock art. If we do not have a deeper experience with it, what we draw is just a cutesy, artsy, sketchy thing that does not accurately represent its real beingness. It is our non-seeingness of it. When we really see it, nothing is ordinary, because the ordinary becomes sacred and the sacred becomes sacrosanct.

Many rock art sketches out there are not all that accurate, but unless someone knows they aren't, they will take them as correct and misinterpret them in their own research; others will then propagate those errors. There is a clue there. If at all possible, we should verify the validity of any drawings by other persons we intend to use. This may not be possible, which points out the importance of accuracy in drawing.

Seeing is more than just a pastime, it is a discipline of awareness, of complete and undivided attention. It is a pursuit of understanding ourselves, and how we perceive the world around us. The eye is the lens we focus for the pictures our hearts take. Yes, that is subjective, but so is so-called objective research when it deals with rock art, unless all we do is quantify. But beware, once we label it or draw it, even with the simplest of terms, we are being subjective.

In this sense there is really no difference between our seeing, our being, our art, and our religion, because in finding one's place in the larger fabric of which one is a part, there is no difference between them. Whether of the spirit or the test tube, it is whatever is given the observer to see the world with (Williams 1992:13).

It is said that one who knows does not speak, and one who does not know, speaks. That means that those that speak, and thus do not know, lead others into ignorance and illusion. And if we do know, it's that we don't know that we do.

Such a statement is self-incriminating, and insulting to other researchers as well, but that belief exists beyond the philosophy of Zen. I came face to face with it long ago with a Navajo singer.

The following may help you understand. "Hopi songs are not easy to understand. They are stylized and often defy simplistic logic. They often consist of several layers of meaning

which produce mood, or an understanding, as only a complex system of symbols can provide” (Geertz and Lomatuway’ma 1987:9). Trying to put into words an understanding of Hopi songs is impractical. They need to be sung, lived, and experienced, to be understood. Poetry, like songs and rock art, is like the secret place in one’s heart where there are no words to describe whatever the “it” is, even though one senses an understanding.

Carnegie stated, “If you are going to prove anything, don’t let anybody know it. Do it subtly, so adroitly, that no one will feel that you are doing it.” He quoted several famous people from throughout history to exemplify that (Carnegie 1982: xxii, 124):

“Men must be taught as if you taught them not. And things unknown propose as things forgot,” Alexander Pope.

“You cannot teach a man anything; you can only help him find it within himself,” Galileo.

“Be wiser than other people if you can, but do not tell them so,” Lord Chesterfield.

“One thing only I know, and that is that I know nothing,” Socrates.

“If you teach a man anything he will not learn,” Bernard Shaw.

These quotes show that the ideas being discussed exist beyond Zen. Notice how these ideas are rephrased throughout this presentation.

If one is ever to learn what can be learned, one must overcome the misconception that he or she is “the valid center of observation of the universe,” that is egocentrism. “It is a radical turn-about. A DIRECT PERCEPTION OF AND INSIGHT INTO THE PRESENCE, INTO THE TRANSIENCY, THE FINITUDE THAT I SHARE WITH ALL BEINGS” (Franck 1973:14; capital letters in original). Relate that to calling the game we kill *Thou*, thanking it for its sacrifice, and thinking it superior (Campbell 1988:72-78, 112).

It is a radical experience to realize that neither I nor anyone else will fully understand this ancient symbolism. It is transient, and like its authors we, too, are finite. They left themselves on the rocks, we leave ourselves on these pages, but still, that is not infinitely lasting. And what we understand, say, and write about it is even more transient.

A person once asked a master, “I call that a cat. What do you call it?” On field trips people ask, “What is that?” Any answer is whatever our egos have us say. But is that the truth of it? What was the master’s answer? “You call that a cat.” Why such a seemingly-absurd answer?

In labeling a cat or a rock art element, one has not answered the question, let alone understood all there is to know about it. So what is in our answer? It is simply a reflection of our ignorance.

Once we are able to detach ourselves from our egos and our cultural paradigms, our eyes are able to see without labels and without interpreting the symbolism in terms of labels. It allows us to see things as they are. Nothing is a symbol of anything but itself. A rose is not a symbol of love, nor a rock of strength, nor a U-bracket a vulva, nor a spread-winged bird, nor thunder. When a symbol is not a symbol it is a sign, and that sign says it is not a symbol. Often we interpret elements in a myth or a panel with too much symbolism when none exists (Boylan 1999:13).

To the authentic artist, a rose is a rose experienced in its suchness. When it is observed or drawn it is to say, “Yes,” to its existence there, and to our existence here. But in rock art, when is a rose, or anything else, any more or any less than the product of a person’s programmed point of view? What it meant to that person is only part of what it meant to other people in his

culture, or in a different time or space. That is only part of why we will never be able to accurately interpret much of rock art, and never all of it. When one really understands that, one can see that there is no universal symbolism. Some symbols may be more or less universal, but how they were perceived by their authors and used can be vastly different than the norm.

Campbell said, "I try not to guess...we have a tremendous amount of information about this subject, but there is a place where the information stops. And without writing [so-called *rock writing* isn't being referred to here - jw], you don't know what the people were thinking. All you have are significant remains.... You can extrapolate backward, but that is dangerous" (Campbell 1988:71).

But if we let our eyes be the windows of our understanding, rather than a picture like the ones we compose as we look through the lens of our camera, then we will understand that seeing is the art of unlearning about things. It is the undoing of our selves.

To really see, as in the, "Ah yes, I understand, you-ness" of seeing an element, you really learn nothing about the element. But if you can really say, "Ah yes," you have unlearned a lot about it. Part of that is knowing what it is not, in its there-ness. If we let that element reveal its "elementness" to us, we will know it deep down inside without being able to put words to that knowing. That knowing is the not-knowing that we know. Remember he who talks about it does not know, but he who does not talk or cannot, knows. To see it in its there-ness is to understand it, but only in its there-ness there. Did that make sense (Franck 1993:25)?

It is best if you can be a little synesthetic and see with all of your senses. I believe most of this symbolism was revealed to a mind in a ritually synesthetic state, a mind in an altered state of consciousness, or in an out-of-body-experience (Franck 1993:25; Classen 1993:79-80, 152, 185; Cytowic 1993:78, 121-125).

Franck adds that, "When there is revelation, explanation is superfluous, and curiosity is dissolved in wonder." If you can see, you can see with your nose, and smell with your ears, and Gregorian chants have the scent of incense, or apple blossoms (Franck 1973:28, 29). I might add that rock art sounds and smells just as sweet.

I believe that many, if not most, rock art panels have their own melody, but that is another paper. But note that what was said about Ilopi songs pertains equally as well to rock art. While out rock arting with Bill Strange once, he gave me a set of tapes by the Irish Chieftains. We share a Celtic heritage. He told me to listen to them. He smiled, and said they would help me better understand rock art, which I believe they have.

To fully understand the nature of the symbolism or its music, one has to let it become self-aware within. That does sound a bit strange at first. But so did Bill; however, what he said now seems perfectly logical. Remember what Galileo said, that one could only help another find it within himself. That is the art and task of the Zen master or spiritual leader. If truth hurts, you have found yourself. If it makes you cry you know the truth of it. For a man to cry is not un-macho if one understands. The more he can grasp the more he can cry. Helping someone to find the *it* within is to teach without teaching, to let a person be a self-teacher. In Navajo, that is one who answers his own questions. Hopefully the following will explain this a little better.

Do you understand what is called Buddha-nature? A ninth-century sage was asked, "What is the Buddha-nature?" He responded, "The cypress tree in the courtyard!" Was that a riddle? Franck continues to explain that Jesus said, "Split the tree and you will find me and lift the rock and I am there" (Franck 1973:30). Shiva said that everywhere an erect lingam is,

he would be there (Danielou 1995:14). The degree of how a tree or rock becomes self-aware within us is also the degree to which any symbolism will be self-aware within us, as well.

Romans VII:22 says, "The eye accepts it fully and is delighted in the law of God after the inward man." Our thought is of the symbol, of being the symbol, one with it – but being it *there* versus somewhere else. That is important, because the same symbol somewhere else is not necessarily the same symbol as we have learned. And to understand it *here* is not to understand it *there* ... but when you understand it *there* you will be more apt to fully understand it *here*.

This is a principle that will always confuse the unaware. A symbol can be extended from its form and source where it means one thing, and be applied to mean something else in another context, either with little or no change in its form, or changed sufficiently that we might not recognize it.

Upon viewing the symbol of a cornstalk, do you feel your toes as roots digging deep into the soil, gripping the bosom of Mother Earth? Do you feel the struggle against all the threatening forces the cornstalk endures? Do you feel yourself reaching up to the sun, your leaves rustling in a slight breeze? Do your fingers like cobs probe the sky?

When you do, the nature of the symbol may be revealed to you. Roots not only penetrate Mother Earth, they reach up into the sky of the underworld. The corn plant becomes man, mancorn, mankind, God's offspring, and sacred (for the importance of corn read Florescano 1999).

We come to understand the corn plant in what a man is, what man is made of, from the creation to "we are what we eat". It does not matter if you agree with the necessity of believing that or not, unless you want to understand the Native American point of view and the peoples' symbolism. It is that simple. And is not that really why we are all here, after all?

A grain of pollen drifts down to a tassel, another finds itself on a leaf; an insect eats; a leaf withers, dies, and falls to the earth. Man eats, lives, and dies in what has become the great circle of life and the tree of life itself, the *axis mundi*. We are part of that cycle, eat of it, and become that tree. The answer to the riddle is that there are ears in our seed and seed in our ears, and they are numerous. Now give me the question. How many seeds are in an apple, and apples in a seed, if we are that tree?

Try to interpret the Navajo cornstalk by Ganaskidi in Largo Canyon (Figure 2, see next page). I doubt Martineau's concept of conflict or war will help much with the opposed triangles if it can also be a vulvaform and a butterfly (compare Warner 2000). Is another concept more applicable? Consider what they all have in common; all are an act of penetration, an action of passing through, of becoming more than they were before.

We thus become a part of the sacred landscape of every composition we understand, because we have become "one with it." When we've done that, we have earned it, it is ours, and it becomes a part of us. Maimonides stated, "the three words *ro'oh* – *to see*, *habbit* – *to look at*, and *hozoh* – *to vision*, are applied to the sight of the eye, and he said that all three of them are also used figuratively to denote the grasp of the intellect" (Schwartz 1994:68).

It is said also that to see it is to take possession of it. If to see is to know, and to know it is to have an intimate relationship with it, did Ham in seeing Noah's nakedness take possession of his vitality as some have interpreted the Biblical symbols to mean? There are interpretations of that incident other than a homoerotic one (Schwartz 1994: 254).

Are our Biblical stories any different from what we call the myths of others? In one sense rock art is their myths on the rocks. So how can we interpret rock art as its makers did?

Standing there in that harmony, in our mind we draw the composition with all its ele-

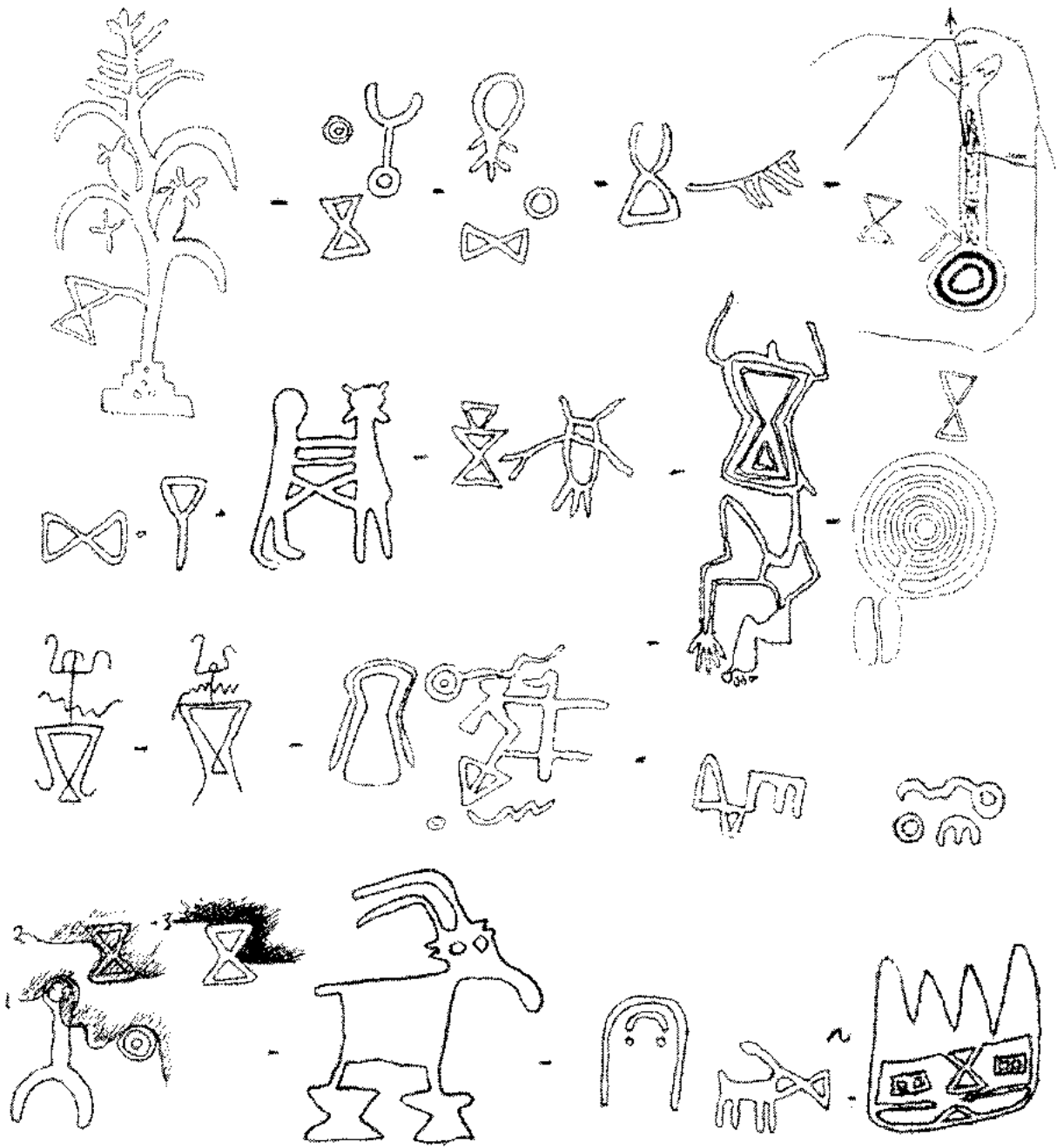


Figure 2

ments as the process of leaving out things – like importance, the presence or absence of significance, or those things not significant now (Franck 1973:30, 37).

Atmospheres are created out of the countless, imperceptible, micro-details from within the composition, the incorporated and interrelated details of the rock's surface, the placement of the panel in the site, the setting of the site in the terrain, the terrain in the larger landscape, and the larger landscape's place in the mind of the ancient artist as part of the total composition. All of the details beyond the image itself are what are out Beyond the Edge of the Rock (a paper to be submitted to the next *Patina* volume) that few record, and site reports do not ask for that kind of information. Most of these aspects are important for grasping meaning, and they are seldom, if ever, looked at.

All too often, they are fleeting details that the conscious mind finds imperceptible. But the eye and the heart pick them up, feel them, and become part of them through experiencing them. Having done that, we can tell the psychiatrist we have got a good relationship with our rock art. And then we will walk through the landscapes of those compositions in our minds forever, knowing what geraniums really look like, and wince at their awful smell.

Each symbol, hiding its own secret, was placed into context, with clues to reveal itself. Is a deer just another meal, a symbol of fleetness, our brother, a messenger from God, or God himself? There are clues there to tell, if we do not ask too many questions. To find out the answer to that and any other questions, we need to ignore our cultural biases, standards, scales, rules, or dictionaries of symbol meanings, as to what this or that is or what it means. Otherwise it will only be a deer, we click our shutter again and go on down the trail never knowing we missed the Panorama Point or Kodachrome Flat of meaning. The spirits at that place weep with sorrow for such persons, that they never saw or understood.

Each element has its relationship to the whole. Each is beautiful, and there is even beauty in those that may seem ugly (Freidel, Schele, and Parker 1993:377; Fluorescein 1999:88). Each is significant to the structure that supports the being of the element's meaning and intent, just as each nuance of tone of voice, facial expression, hand gesture, or other body language can contribute to what a person is saying, otherwise a glyph is totally meaningless.

How does one see all of these jumbled parts? One has to give the eye time to become accustomed to unfamiliar presentations of ideas, and overcome the panic. Let the eye calm down and move through the seeming haphazardness from relationship to relationship (see Frank 1973:44). By doing that, alien forms do not stay alien for long. Each element and its part in context: the composition, its relationship to the irregularities of its canvas, the rock face to the site, the site to the immediate terrain, and the terrain to the larger landscape, as mentioned, is all part of the whole in the mind of the author-artist, but not necessarily to us.

The whole of that is his creation, not just the simple element alone. But we do not see it all unless we take time to become one with it and let it speak to us. Only then do we have moments of enlightenment in which we really see, but how much beyond *looking at* do we really see? If it were enlightenment to us, that degree of enlightenment would have to be in direct proportion to how much of its light we reflect. The more we become attuned to what is there, the more we really see and the more we reflect. In thinking deeply about that, or long enough, one will eventually understand the reason why the whole truth or story never comes out of one mouth on the Navajo Reservation or other reservations (Warner 1997), or from other ascetics (Franck 1973:13; Scholem 1996:95; Campbell 1949:381; Campbell 1988:63, 67).

The Navajo believe if one sees and hears something and fails to reflect it in his actions, that one

is out of *hozho* (harmony) and will not only bring himself, but also the teacher into harm's way. That is part of becoming socialized through cultural programming.

One learns through seeing principle-by-principle, precept upon precept, one glimpse at a time. One cannot understand the division of symbolism unless the addition and subtraction of it are learned first. But there are some out there who will see much more than that. There will be someone who will see the Combinatorics, the Boolean algebra, the Automata theory, the Loydes Fifteen puzzle, the Petersburg Paradox Box, the Monty Python problem, the Chaos game, or even the Fermat's Last Theorem of it. Will it be you? Do you believe that it can be? What you see is what you say, what you say is what you get. You know, *GIGO*, garbage in, garbage out. Or is it good in, good out? It's up to you. What do you see?

Then if one can say one knows that one really knows, is it to say one sees that one really sees, in the sense of understanding that which one really understands? I wish I could understand all I know, but how much do I know, like Socrates, really know? That will always be highly subjective and unscientific.

At a symposium, if a person criticizes another on not being scientific, he may be right. But, in defense, many papers are pretty darn good. In some cases, like those of Nal Morris and Clay Johnson, they are close to being as scientific as possible. Read Curtis. 1995:19-44. But we all go off the deep end somewhere, sometime. That is just human nature. Even the most objective person becomes subjective when it comes to rock art, sometime, somewhere (see Cytowic 1993:58, 73-74, 121, 128, 167, 173, 220). There is no one out there who can cast the first stone.

That is why we need to go to rock art like Harold Tuchsins the Navajo singer, who told his grandchildren how to go to learning. He said, "Go as a warrior goes to war, or a hunter goes to the hunt, as if one's life depended on the outcome." If we take it that seriously, like Huss we will catch the atmosphere of each element and all of the little nuances, up to the largest aspect of the physical or metaphysical landscape. We will see all the different aspects, the relationships each has to the rest, and their part in the greater fabric of truth in the universe.

As Franck put it, one will realize that Rome cannot be mistaken for Paris. That will be no more than understanding that a hunting scene can be taken for an ecstatic experience. But after all, both Rome and Paris are just cities, are they not? And, hunting is just hunting, is it not? But what is hunting? Those who never experience a first kill will not know that it is an altered state of consciousness, aside from the quest for light and knowledge one gains about his relationship to his fellow creatures.

Knowing that we have made a rift in cosmic reality by suddenly snuffing out the life of another living thing is the penultimate lesson. *Seeing* blood pumping out onto the body, guts spilling out onto the ground, and butchering of the body, is a shock to any inexperienced and unprepared system. The novice needs to be ceremoniously prepared for it, and then taken through the experience in an appropriate manner for it to be fully appreciated, especially for that *seeing* and that *experiencing* of it to then be the *understanding* and then the *knowing* of it.

The truth of it, on the other hand, is the young gang initiate just after his first kill. He has not been ritually taught in the same manner as the young hunter, who is ceremonially prepared to know that the animal his victim, "The least of these," is God, you, and he himself (Campbell 1988:174). The initiate gang member does not understand that. His victim is nothing more than just a victim. He is not an equivalent to anything, least to the animal, to God, or to himself.

Animals as hunter's quarry and God, coming here to give themselves to us, are all part of the

plan. Without the gutting, butchering, and eating of the quarry, and ritual preparation, respectfully eating of it as a sacrament, and ritual deposition of what remains, that the gang member does not get, he does not learn his sacred responsibility to life and his victim. His (the animals, the *Thou* of the hunter's beseechments) life is to be taken reverently, and the body treated and disposed of with devotion and respect (Campbell 1988:67, 102; Bingham 1984:41-45; see Geertz and Lomatuway'ma 1987:79 and V, 41, 91). The gang member is empty and void of devotion and respect.

To eat without praying is slaughter. "Killing is not simply slaughter, it's a ritual act, as eating is when you say grace" (Campbell 1988:73). And you must know all of this, which is to say to know that you know what your beingness is, in relation to its existence, before you can then go out to stalk the stag that is God for spiritual enlightenment. An altered state of consciousness is just one key to an out-of-body experience, the *ultimate* in enlightenment.

Are we really that different? Or that much alike? Do we not eat and drink the emblems of the body and the blood of our God as a sacrament (Campbell 1988:74, 173; Fluorescein 1999:78)?

Do you see, feel, and experience all that, which is to understand it. when you see an archer and an animal on the rocks? In other words, bows do not mean hunting any more than vulvaforms mean sex. Attitudes are created out of innumerable, imperceptible little details from within the composition and the rock, features of light and shadow they incorporate, and celestial bodies acting out the roles of long-forgotten plays, around the edge of the rock that the composition points to or interacts with, whether it receives a solar flare or not (Warner 1999). These are little details, often too fleeting for the conscious mind to pick up, but the eye and the heart feel and experience, and then the body knows that it knows. The eye makes the observation and the body makes note of it, if the mind does not get in the way.

Enlightenment is relative to how much one already knows, and how much any moment takes him beyond that. Enlightenment only comes in the doing and in the becoming. This could be applied to learning a language, swimming, or playing the piano, as well as to understanding rock art. You can't really say you know till you get wet. And even then it takes a person sufficient time to become proficient. Remember that practice does not make perfect, only better. There comes a point where things begin to fall into place. That is the moment you know that you know.

But how much enlightenment can one stand at any certain time? The spirit burning the untruth out of you is hard to endure. At times one might feel one might not even survive the ordeal.

If we are told to look at an element till we *become that element*, not what that element is in general, but the exact element that we are looking at, from the context in which it looks back at us, then we will become part of that element. We may think, "Sure, that makes sense." If we look at anything long enough, and do not move, eat, or drink, we will see whatever we are programmed to see and believe just about anything.

It may be easier to think about becoming one *with something* from the following examples. When we become experienced at driving a car, we've become part of the steering wheel and even the car itself. When we can shoot without aiming, the weapon is an extension of our mind and body. Once we understand that, we can see we can become part of things, and they become part of us. The process takes no more thought than breathing.

Then we may see an element apart from all the other elements, yet see its relationship

within the whole. We may feel within ourselves the stresses, the emotions, the pain, the crying for rain, for knowledge, and for food. Feel the ecstasies in which the figure in the panel is immersed. In a Comanche horse feel the muscles ripple in the neck, and its power exaggerated. Feel its strength between the legs of the warrior astride. Then we will better understand (Freeman and Warner 1995:97).

Be the sheep, or the deer flashing its tail in fright and warning. Turn your head to look for an escape route. Is a horse just a horse, a sheep a sheep, or a deer a deer? Know the character of the animals, their egos, their epithets and euphemisms. "Birds are all ego," Franck says. How many birds sit in bushes of paper in your bird file, sketchbook, or mind? When you have been each bird you see on the rocks, labels seem less important. With some, you will have been a psychopomp (a leader or guide of souls), too.

But to be sure, someone will come along and label them all for you. This is a duck. That is an eagle, but now it is a thunderbird, or maybe it is an owl because it looks forward and not to the side. And is an owl ever Spider Woman, or if so, when? And what is each to being a psychopomp? And first of all, know that simply asking for identification is to label. It would be easier to identify it and its meaning if you had been it once, or maybe killed and eaten it, or even had sex with it, but not if you had not offered it salt (see Simmons 1942:235-7), or even drawn it. If you had, on the one hand, or hadn't, on the other, you'd never forget.

Ever had to eat a magpie just because you killed it? If you had, you'd never forget a magpie. These experiences are the ones that become the real teachers (Franck 1973:58), the kind of lesson where talking isn't necessary to teach. To teach without teaching, or the teaching of not teaching.

We see naked men and women on the rocks, yet the native artist never drew from the nude. Isn't nudeness just the nakedness inside our clothes? Does the absence of clothes make us nude? Not in rock art.

Each paper at a symposium or in one of these volumes is the revelation of the nakedness of the author against the mirror of reality, the reflection of his or her enlightenment, where getting naked means baring one's soul. When one gets naked, it is the face that is the most naked of all. On the rocks not only is the face most often absent, but also the body language holding the meaning for the nudeness of the figure. It's your face, its mask of facelessness that you have to come face to face with. The nakedness of the face and its body is part of the symbolism hiding the persona. It is this you must come to terms with, and identify this being on the rock as its own author, who or what it is, and who or what you are to it.

The real nude is the personality we hide in our naked flesh. Look at the human-beingness of the anthropomorph. It is its spirit that gives movement to the pose, and meaning to the form and stance of the appendages, and whatever the anthropomorph has a relationship with on the rock. Ever get nude and dance with a crack?

Just like the nudes that today's artists draw, their rock art counterparts are not only a body, an abstract symbol. No doubt many are often actual people, if they are not just ideas in the mind of the artist, either of time or *illio tempo*. An abstract characterization not even recognizable to some researchers as humanoid is an anthropomorph just the same, and very representational no matter how many call it part of a nonrepresentational style (Buckholder 1992, Warner 2002a).

That is no different than, "When an artist draws a mandala-like shape it is as objective a portrayal of an inner experience as a bird picture is of a bird" (Samuels and Samuels

1982:248). This person *was*, and because he was pecked on the rock, he becomes an *it* in our language. To the Native American, he is still very much a part of their reality. Not just because, in Navajo for instance, he, she, and *it* all have the same pronoun, *bi*. Does that mean that the *it* that is really a *he* is alive? Yes, both the *it/he* to them and the *he/it* to us live.

Is it enough to know that the person pecked on the rock *is*? No. We need to take that person into our perception and understanding. By doing that the artist can express what and who they are through us. That is part of its becoming self-aware within us. Do you understand the ramifications of that thought? In a way, that thought terrifies both the Navajo and the Hopi. Because if they do that, they make contact with the dead, ergo many of the kill marks (ritual defacement) we see on rock art. Science makes a moral judgment of that act, making the perpetrator inferior, superstitious, and primitive. We have to understand more than we do to understand why the dead need to become dead again and then again (see Ewing and Warner 1995). They that were, then-and-there, are now here in our minds and in our hearts.

The Native Americans believe that a person is in the here-and-now, just as much as they were once in the then-and-there. Yes, they are bound to time, yet because they are on the rocks, they are timeless. With every sunrise and sunset they witness, they are timeless; they are beyond their death in the flesh, and in their birth on the stone (see Warner 1997:19, 2002c, 2002d).

Like many others, the Native Americans say that, once created by the hand of a person, a drawing has a life of its own (Geertz and Lomatuway'ma 1987:V, 32, 41, 63, 65, 86, 91; Herrigel 1997:86, 87, 92; Freidel, Schele, and Parker 1993:177, 179, 214; Fisher 1995:9, 143; Scholem 1969:137, 158). How do they define life? Differently than most of us do.

There is a saying that drawing the naked body shows up every incompetence, sloppiness, imperfection, vulgarity, infantismalism, lovelessness, and callousness; not of the model, but of the one who draws it (Franck 1973:68-72). The same principle is true with our research and our sketches of rock art. All our ego, conceit, arrogance, peeping, all our looking and non-seeing are caught red-handed. "Show me your nudes," says Franck, "and I know who you are." Show one who *sees* your rock art sketches or your research, and that one will just as easily know who you are. And in doing that will also know what you are not. A man, like an element, is better defined by what he is, rather than what he is not. The one that knows will know what controls your mind, and what you haven't yet learned to see.

Rembrandt saw the human dewdrop evaporating before his own conscious, mortal eyes. Because of that, to him life was so transitory and so precious. That was his greatness (Franck 1973:73). What do we see?

I wonder at something a Hopi friend of ours once told Judy and me, trying to dissuade us from pursuing rock art research because she thought our lives were in danger due to the violation of a witchcraft site. She said that, in a way, drawing these elements is a re-enactment of the makers' prayers, or if they were witches, curses. According to her, our photos and reproductions provide bodies for them to inhabit, just like the rock art does, with eyes through which to look back at us after they died, as they watch us (Warner 2002c; Geertz and Lomatuway'ma 1987:63, 79). Ergo, more kill marks.

Franck (1973:78) stated something similar in a little different way. He said that to an artist drawing the right subject (as in rock art) is a pleading, a prayer, and an adoration. If that is so, then isn't studying it, talking about it, and understanding the pleading, the adoration, the prayer of that ancient artist, let alone redrawing it (as in our Hopi friend's point of view), bringing it back to life and giving it more power, as the Native Americans believe (Warner 2002c)? Do you believe it

could be a reenactment, or a re-empowerment, another offering of the original emotion and intent of that ancient evocation, good or bad (Franck 1973:78, 90)? Most traditional Native Americans don't agree with those of you who answered no to this question; if you said no, you don't understand rock art.

Mary Dennison believed this, and as a result refused for a long time to weave a rock art figure (see Warner 2002d) for Ody Chapmann at the Escrito trading post.

As your head turns and your eyes move across a panel, each element on which you focus seems to come to life for a moment. Several Navajo people I've taken to rock art sites refused to look at a panel any more after they identified an element as witchcraft-related, because that would reactivate the intent of the image, bring the image back to life, giving the curse its validity. You may think it a primitive point of view, but compare it with the Biblical expression of getting what you speak (Capps 1976; Gordon 1965:166, 192). In that sense, our tongues hang us. As much as our focus attaches to an element, it comes to life for us.

Some believe that as we imbue the figure with our attention and emotions, it not only lives on through us but also thrives on the power given it. Witchcraft is likewise based, in part, on the empowering of symbols. It is spoken into existence. When our attention leaves one element to look at another, the last one fades back into the rock as the next one awakens.

Each element is likened to ourselves; both are awakened in the eye of the creator, the sun as it passes over sees us or the glyphs, shines on us (evidence of mental awareness), and then we are shrouded in darkness again till the glyphs or ourselves are seen, and then "we again see the light."

On the other hand, choosing one element on which to focus in a permanent sense, as in drawing it, takes it out of its animated setting to become a static entity. We capture its fleeting movements and actions into a static, less meaningful, picture of the power and life it manifested in its context. The panel and its images in our mind are full of anima. But in our illustrations or photos they seem relatively lifeless, though that is deceiving. In reproductions we seldom catch the drama of it.

Some artists like Elanie Moore are able to catch the manyness, and at the same time, the oneness of a panel, no matter how complex. That kind of work is almost as much an ecstatic experience to her as it was to the original artist (Moore, personal communication; Warner 2002e).

To the master artist, once a picture is finished, it is forgotten. It is a memory, an experience. It's not a thing, it's an act. It's their witness to the reality of the moment. It's not meant to be interpreted. For Dali, like other artists, the books that describe their art don't interpret the symbolism that weaves throughout all their works. The plasticity of form, ants, wheelbarrows, crutches, repetitions of shapes, landscape faces, disappearing or transforming apparitions, sailors, exploding heads, x-ray scenes, exaggerated and deformed appendages, and the blood and gore of Dali are vivid examples. Or how about the color orange, African features, young girls with older women, cats, wild hair, of Fini, and the fact that she almost always paints women? By flipping through page after page of their work, one can grasp the obsession they had with certain symbols as masks hiding their inner nakedness.

In that respect, when Dali, Fini, O'Keefe, or any other artist ancient or modern painted a picture or pecked a glyph on a rock, it is as if there are different layers of masks hiding what the artist really was, felt, and meant to portray, or exactly what he or she was thinking when doing what he or she did. As we look at those works, gain more exposure to their symbolism, and understand more about their lives, we begin to see a little better through their eyes, and

then finally feel a part of the work. Then, and only then, curtain after curtain or mask after mask begins to fall away.

Sometimes it's only after a few masks vanish that blocks appear to any further enlightenment or understanding. Usually it's one final mask that remains, that can't be removed. The closer we come to the artists, the more we become one with them, see through their eyes, and see what they were seeing (though the oneness never actually happens, it only seems to). The better we are at removing the masks or at least seeing through the veil, the easier it becomes to understand them and their works, and thus the harder it is for symbolism to hide all of their beingness. Notice I didn't say meaning, or that we would really understand, it's just their beingness.

And anything we say or write creates another mask. Sooner or later we will find ourselves there, staring back at us from out of their work. That is no less than saying if we read scriptures or self-help books we will find ourselves in there somewhere. Can you do that from off of a panel? Yes, but a better question may be, "Will you ever try?"

Many artists themselves cannot interpret their own works into words that relate meaning, so that we can understand without experiencing what they experienced. Is rock art any different? Some believe they can "read" what it has to say. Many who claim to read rock art read it differently than others do who also claim to read it. All some can see is hunting magic. All others see is shamanism. And all that still others see is sign language. Others can't see anything, and all it is to them is nonrepresentational scribbling. In reality, how can we read rock art? We can feel of it, but never all of it.

Some may feel that a certain site is sacred and holy as any temple or synagogue, while another may think that the same site is evil, feel threatened and sickened inside, and can hardly get out of there fast enough. These are two reactions to the Great Gallery in Barrier Canyon. What makes the difference? With our present-day mentalities we want to know, right now, "What does this mean?" But the way we come to it gives us very different meanings. No matter how hard we try, how much we believe in ourselves, how good we think our scientific techniques are, there still remains that last mask. No matter how hard we try, there is no removing it, no knowing it all.

If the mind judges, there's only frustration. If the mind is not allowed to judge, moralize, criticize, and yes, interpret, the eye accepts that last mask in gratitude as representing its being. We accept our relationship to the rock art with peace of mind knowing what we know of it, of what it is, and of what we are with or to it (see Franck 1973:91-3). Beneath the last mask is the expanse of the universe. And if we were allowed to see beneath it, there would be more than the mind of man can comprehend. Remove the final mask and one falls into the Otherworld. That is the moment that we discover our own true nature and then devour ourselves.

Knowing what we know is like the persona of an actor in a play. Seldom is the full character of the role immediately acted, or the plot immediately revealed. Plots change and thicken as their actions come to a boil, and new aspects show themselves. Each element is an actor or an ingredient in that stew. As each different mask is removed, the plot joins other seemingly-unrelated plots in quite surprising ways, as just another mask. All the masks, their roles, their stories within the story like dreams within the dream, make up the entire person, the real personality, the persona, the character of the play. All are various layers of the reality and meaning of that life or element. That is the artist's role in expressing his or her nakedness, the real truth they do not want to reveal in their panels (or be interpreted), but are forced to express.

If that isn't bad enough, just as the critics and the professors who teach theater arts read

between the lines and put words into the mouths of the authors, so do we with rock art. Thus not only the playwrights and glyphmakers create the masks, but also the critics and rock art researchers. Some researchers have been asked to re-teach some Native American groups about what rock art means, but are hesitant because of the horrendous responsibility that creates. Others take advantage of some Native Americans who seem to believe everything they are told.

The masks we create are the reflections of the I/me, the ego, which we see in the panel and its play. What we say about it tells others more about us than it does about what we talk about. That's why when we talk about rock art we stand there butt-naked for the entire world to see. I should have said buck-naked, but that is one of the symbols that died a long time ago and refuses to be buried, even if it is still the appropriate term. There is a lesson for our research, if people can really *see*, rather than just sense the nakedness they're *looking at*.

We, like the original artist, expose ourselves in our work, and hope there isn't any one that can really see our nakedness; but we wait to see who it is that can. Instead of being our greatest enemy, one that can really see us can be our best teacher, if they really can see rather than just think they can. If we can tell the difference, and if we are willing to lose our ego and listen to them, our nakedness can become beautiful. If we go against the naturalness of our human nature, then we will learn. Our pride and embarrassment often prevents us from learning because we will not admit that we cannot read it all, or might be wrong.

There are those who stand before a panel of rock art and feel confirmed in their most intimate intuitions about the symbolism. At first we think it is like going to a strange country. Later on it doesn't seem all that strange after all, if we realize we know what's around the next bend, and we know the people in the road. But if not, how do we know if what we think we really see is the real reality (the real truth), or just another mask (or our truth for that moment, the pseudo-reality), hiding the ultimate or highest level of truth from us?

Some artists are trickier than others. Some make the real point the least obvious. And many of us take the more obvious symbolism hook, line, and sinker down a false trail away from the highest level of truth. That's when it becomes an allegory.

Ordinary observers have ordinary thoughts and thus make ordinary researchers. Enlightened thoughts come from enlightened observations, learning the real lessons from our experiences, listening to the right voices that talk to us, doing our homework. And then those of us who are willing to stick our intellectual necks out and wait for the sword to fall will make enlightened researchers. And those who know the difference are the masters. They are the ones who know that to some, an ordinary thought is enlightenment, and know that the other side of that is that not all enlightened thoughts are enlightenment. It's relative to how one stands in front of a panel, or whether one has ever stood in front of the panel. That is part of the Buddha Nature.

How do we know if our remarks, or those of another, are enlightened or not? In reality, it isn't important. But for those who believe it is, ask yourself, "To whom is it enlightenment, and to whom isn't it?" To one, it is one who knows more; to the other, it is the one who knows less, but often doesn't know others know more.

This illustrates our pride in a pre-conceived level of achievement that is like a different view of the elephant, the tail or the trunk, rather than more exposure to it. The tail isn't more important or on a higher level of understanding to the concept of elephant than any other piece. Only in gathering as many pieces of the puzzle as possible will we approximate a more complete picture, allowing us to see and thus understand more.

There is one problem, though: we will never find all of the pieces of the puzzle. There are several

reasons for that. One is we will never find all of the repetitions having better clues. Another is that symbols change, and over time cultures forget the way the old stories used to be told (Freidel, Schele, and Parker 1993:208). But we must realize that we don't know how to read exactly what the elephant really is and what it represents. Is it just an elephant, or does it represent something beyond an elephant? It could represent the circus, or is it the Hindu god Ganesha? Or is it really just a tapir and God B? The elephant can be the finger the master points to the moon, or it can be the moon the master's finger points to.

We are all on the same road to understanding, or increasing our awareness of reality. The Navajo would say that one is higher up or lower down on the ladder of education. Where one is now, another once was, or others will be later on. What the first one may yet learn, the second may learn sooner or later, or even pass him up. Then can he rightly say, "Now I am a Master"? Not really, if his ego is under control.

Once before, I stated it is not so much who is right or who is wrong or if there is such a thing, versus *better* or *not as good as* (Warner 1993:15; Hopke 1997:167). If it's your truth, and I have a different truth, is that like Huss and Jerome? If we both think each other wrong, what are the chances we are both right to differing degrees, which is also wrong to differing degrees? If you learned anything said previously, the only answer is that both are right and both are wrong, no matter how much. *The rightness or wrongness is not the case here and we should not make it the case.* Within each symbol, there is a hierarchy of different and more complex symbolisms and truths.

An analogy of understanding is passing through life as if moving up through an X. At the bottom, the widest level of the X, is the lowest level of understanding. That is also where those whose reactions to, or compliance with, what they know is the most lax. There the understanding of spiritual laws (like rock art interpretations) doesn't apply like it does higher up in the more restrictive, more enlightened area below the junction. The place of enlightenment is at the apex of the lower triangle, the junction of the X that few reach. That's why I dare say no one is ever totally right. Through that portal we enter another area of laws that is the reverse of what we traveled through below, as we continue to unlearn more and relate new levels of understanding to everything we have previously experienced. Don't ever learn anything that you will eventually have to unlearn. And it is only the master that knows the difference.

To a Zen Master, those who don't come as close to the higher levels of truth as others haven't worked as hard as those who have a greater understanding of it, and thus don't deserve to have the same truth (the differences in their interpretations), until they have *earned* it. Does that relate to those who go out and ask, "What does this mean?"

That's why we can't ask that of a Native American, when he had to earn his understanding of it. And especially if he swore a vow of secrecy about what it really means. Asking him the meaning is in a sense an expression of our arrogance, a slap in his face. Some societies swear by their lives never to reveal their level of truth to the noninitiated (see Lefkowitz (1996: 94-5). Does that mean there are mystical schools or systems with a secret curriculum of initiation? Yes, it does.

Therefore, what anyone knows for that moment is their truth, their level of understanding, until they have *earned* a better, greater, more advanced level of truth. Each has their own truth because for each, like Huss and Jerome, there is a truth, and it is their truth that their interpretations reflect (Warner 1997:11-22).

How can we tell if our remark is enlightenment? Only if we know that we know we don't

know the answer. Then at least we know our statement isn't all of the answer, but only a small part of the great mystery. And what about the degree of enlightenment in the statement of another? Did you learn anything, become a little more enlightened? "I call it a cat. What do you call it?" "You call it a cat!" That should need no further explanation, but because I am not a Zen Master and you are not Zen apprentices, if you'll be patient a moment longer, I'll explain so there will be no misunderstandings.

What one says about it, thinks it is, or calls it, is their truth about it, based on their labels. For that reason, we don't have the right to argue about it; there is really nothing to argue about if I should not call it a cat. We are both on the same road, but the labels at the bottom of the X, way back down the road, don't exist on more advanced levels closer to the top or farther up the road. But to come to the real truth of it, we need to be open to the thoughts of others. On their behalf we need to accept their level of understanding and acknowledge their truth (their level or degree of advancement) without conceit.

Why do it that way? Because we may think we know more than we really do. And if we now know more, we once knew less. On the other hand, we may have the same amount of knowledge as the other, except each has different pieces of the puzzle. First find out what part of the elephant you have, the trunk or the tail. Once you know that you have the trunk, you know that he then must have the tail, or maybe it could be a leg. The next logical thing is that each can share with the other, if that sharing is warranted, or if they are open to each other.

The next problem is that the types of questions one can ask depends on what one believes. Some questions must be answered before other questions are even imaginable (Schwartz 1994:73). Some are afraid to ask if God has a big toe, others ask if God has a phallus. Some are advanced enough to realize that, in one sense, that is the same question (Warner 2002b). Some are even bold enough to ask if God has a belly button (Schwartz 1994:72, 78-80). On a particular topic, the lesser, lower level in which one person believes makes the seemingly-higher or more advanced level in which another person believes all the more significant (and more true). Is that logical? Rephrase that and ask yourself, "Does understanding what some call the 'wrongness' of a lesser level of understanding about something I know more about still help me understand more about what I know?" Yes, because it may be more than simply a comparative example. That's another aspect of the principle of knowing what something is by knowing what it isn't, only a part of the unlearning of what we thought about it.

When a Navajo talks to someone in Navajo, in a way they bounce him off of the ceiling, language-wise, so they know his level of competence within that X, and can then talk to him on his level. The more skilled Navajo speaker cannot talk to someone who knows less Navajo at his own level of experience, because the novice would not understand. That is us, trying to understand their rock art. Here is a large part of the arguments about differing interpretations. Knowing more and testing someone doesn't make a person better or smarter. Native Americans appreciate our struggles and endeavors to learn what they know. They are like rock art researchers who appreciate the struggles that one who knows less made to get to where he or she is, and then they help groom the novice to a higher level of understanding, through Galileo's principle of letting him find it within himself.

Wherever anyone is, is one's level of truth at the moment, all that one can understand at that moment about the Navajo language, or rock art. It is not anyone's fault that he knows more, or the novice's fault that he knows less. What one knows is what one has earned, all

that he possesses and thus reflects at the moment. Without establishing the common ground of the novice's level of understanding, there can be no real discussion or communication. This is part of the etiquette of learning. A researcher who is at a more advanced level has to come down to the level of the less advanced for a common level of communication. Apply that to understanding a person who knows more about rock art. Even though you may disagree with someone, what is there to argue about? Maybe it is because the less learned one is simply on a lower level, rather than not on any level of reality at all, just plain wrong or totally missed the boat.

An example from my experience as a radio operator in the Special Forces will explain this a little better. Let's say we have five sticks (squads) behind enemy lines. The minimum level of proficiency with Morse code for a radio operator is 13 words per minute (wpm). Nearly everyone else in those sticks is also cross-trained in code in case something happens to the radio operator, so the mission won't fail. The minimum acceptable speed is five wpm.

Proficiencies may range from group one with a proficiency of five wpm, group two with 10, group three with 15, group four with 20, and group five with 25 wpm. To send a message so all can receive it, I would have to send it at five wpm. If I only wanted group three to receive it I could send it at 15 wpm.

Here a person's proficiency with code is analogous to one's proficiency at understanding rock art. Very few know 25 wpm in either code or rock art. That means that you may know the code or the rock art, but not that fast, or in rock art within a particular situation. What level are you on? Do you want to increase your proficiency? You can if you want. Remember that a person with a five wpm proficiency in rock art will not understand a 25 wpm concept.

That also goes for the level of gospel they teach from the pulpit in a church. Many faithful will go to that church all of their lives and learn no more than the five wpm level of the gospel that was being taught. That principle allows the least of the flock to learn something. It's sad because God wants us all to pass the 25 wpm level. Only a very small percent ever does. Another sad thing is that too many ministers don't themselves know more than that five wpm level.

It's difficult to talk to a person who knows less but thinks he knows more than the person who really does. If possible, talk to him on his level. agree with him if he doesn't want to learn, congratulate him on his understanding, and some day he may find that you really do know more. If not, it doesn't matter because if he didn't believe you in the first place, why should he in the second? In trying to teach me that it's not right to take any one down if they are "wrong," Clifford Rayl would say, "Others can tell who is where" (Warner 1993). That's a hard lesson to learn, but we need to learn it.

Bill Strange is a person that can bounce someone off the ceiling, so to speak. I've observed him determine several persons' level of competence in symbolism, and will never forget his doing that with me. Then he knows what analogies to use to best help one grow, like Navajo singer Harold Tuchins did, by giving the student a piece of information to think about, rather than answering his questions. I've also seen Bill blow off someone obviously arrogant, who had no interest in learning what Bill knew. He only wanted to tell Bill what his own lesser knowing was, thinking that would be profound or enlightening.

When one finds someone he can talk to on his own level, there is a free flow of information. To participate in that is almost an ecstatic experience, one when silence is as much a medium of communication as any other, when the absence of words, like a picture, says

more, as he points to an element that illustrates what was or wasn't said.

A layperson *sees* a technical schematic of a cube as a see-through solid. This is his truth, his reality, based on his sensory input. It's analogous to his reading of a rock art panel. It's the "I call it a cat", and in rock art it is often "you'd better call it a cat, too, because I know how to read it." That is as far as he has become one with it. But a physicist sees a cube in a different way. The physicist *sees* it made up of mostly empty space between all its atoms. That is analogous to an experienced person's reading of the same rock art as the novice who thought he had the only right reading. In actuality, both models are valid. There is no one, single, isolated reality that to one person may be a sure reality, because it is multifaceted; each has his own truths whether or not those truths really are truths (Samuels and Samuels 1982:8).

No one master knows it all, and there is always someone to learn from. In Matthew 25 we learn that when we have clothed the naked, we have taught Christ. Not taught *to* Christ, but taught *of* Christ. In that manner, when we enrich the understanding of one who understands less, we taught those who made the symbols. Remember what Shaw said, if you teach a man anything he will not learn it. It is as Galileo said, we enhance their knowing by helping them find it within themselves.

The goal of the Utah Rock Art Research Association is that, "We all know something. No one knows everything. So let's get together and share what we know, right or wrong, we'll all be better off." Teaching is done for those who deserve to learn, those who empty their cups and open their minds. That means everyone is a pupil, even teachers when they're not teaching. Both teacher and pupil can look at the moon towards which the current teacher points their eyes, rather than looking at his finger and missing the real mystery, wondering why it is sticking out there. And it is surprising how often even those who teach or write miss the point, analyzing by comparing the pointing finger to other pointing fingers. Those who missed the point end up making much to-do about nothing. Those who missed the point argue against what they do not understand. To maintain a spirit of comradeship and help each of us to grow, remember what Clifford Rayl would always say, "Remember that in URARA we all need to agree to disagree."

Trying to explain an out-of-body experience to someone who not only hasn't had one but also doesn't believe in spirits, is worse than trying to describe something unknown to a blind person. The former are just as blind to the symbolism. The latter use hearing to see, and often see more. When we become enlightened, we know the ordinary becomes sacred, not only in rock art elements, but in any researcher as well. And through that the sacrimonious becomes ordinary as well.

"Freud wrote, '...it is possible for thought processes to become conscious through a reversion to visual residues.... Thinking in pictures... approximates more closely to unconscious processes than does thinking in words'" (Samuels and Samuels 1982:183).

The medium of rock art imagery is closer to Zen philosophy and its teachings than words. In Zen, things cannot be explained by words. Words can't define the realities that confront us, let alone the worlds beyond those realities (Williams 1992:86, 129, 131, 153, 163, 166, 167, 184). They have to be earned through hard work, practice, and then experience, though experience doesn't make perfect, only better. The well-known saying is that a picture is worth a thousand words (a referent for an infinite number), but the rest of it is that a thousand words still can't explain the picture (Cytowic 1993:63, 119, 131, 229). A combination of any and all words cannot explain what the picture means, but another picture can. Life, just as rock art, can only be glimpsed and experienced. It has to be pondered, not in the mind but in the heart. In that respect rock art will always be subjective. It can only be revealed, not explained (Franck 1973:118).

Samuels and Samuels (1982:152) explain it like this: visualization tends to get in touch with pure images. To visualize, one needs to lose his ego. The ego separates us and elevates the “me-mine” from what one sees, rather than being allowed to become one with the thing to be experienced. “Images,” the Samuels say, “are closer to the voice of the inner center, whereas words are closer to the voice of the ego.”

That isn't the viewpoint of traditional science, therefore science in the form of archaeology, using rock art as a tool, by that very fact will never really help us in its primary goal of fully understanding and explaining past ways of life. Rock art or rock writing is beyond words and beyond science (Samuels and Samuels 1982:152; Cytowic 1993:29-31, 36, 38-9, 58, 70, 72-3, 132, 179, 203, 220, and especially 225). It is the artist's response to his environment and to being alive. Insofar as it has anything to transmit, it transmits a quality of awareness. The Pleistocene cave paintings are the product of those who could see directly into the life center of each animal and grasp it with full humanity, giving their answer to the Zen Master's question, “What do you see?” (Franck 1973:128)

Yet that is different from what the Fremont of Utah, or the San of Africa, saw and pecked or painted, and their work was their answer. Neither was right nor wrong, nor better, or not as good as. All of these types of paintings worked for each just as well, for their times and places.

Take hold of an element, and once you are filled with it, you possess it, it is yours, you have earned it. Once you are filled to total capacity from the experience, if it is let go, it will be there forever.

Franck believes that many of the truly great artists use life as their medium, as well as paint. They are mystics who express the inexpressible without the aid of a brush, knife, chisel, flute, or computer. They not only paint and dance, their medium is whatever they do. With whomever they touch, they increase life and understanding. They see, and are artists of being alive. Are enlightened researchers or our ancient friends who talk to us through what we so inadequately call rock art, from either just a moment ago or the distant past, still reflecting their light to us, doing any less so?

To all those, both ancient and now here, who are windows through which we look and learn, may we be mirrors reflecting their illumination, like those enlightened panels, they who taught us so little which is really then so much, or taught us so much which is really so little, who in their spiritual nakedness remain beautiful people, I dedicate these remarks.

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