CANADIAN SHIELD ROCK ART AND THE LANDSCAPE PERSPECTIVE

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ABSTRACT

Canadian Shield Rock Art and the Landscape Perspective

Dagmara Zawadzka

Canadian Shield rock art, which is believed to have been created by Algonquian-speaking peoples, survives in the form of pictographs finger-painted with red ochre and petroglyphs pecked or incised into rocky outcrops. This study examines Canadian Shield rock art from a landscape perspective, by focusing specifically on the phenomenology of landscape. The aims of this study are to elucidate why rock art sites are found in their particular locations and why certain landscape attributes might have guided the selection of particular sites for creation of rock art. Furthermore, the possible functions of Canadian Shield rock art are explored. This study concludes that multi-functional rock art sites form an integral part of the Algonquian sacred landscape and that landscape attributes present at the site represent the spiritual and cosmological concepts of Algonquian-speaking peoples. In doing so, it helps shed light on an often neglected form of visual expression within the larger Algonquian-speaking peoples' belief system.

KEYWORDS

Canadian Shield rock art, Pictographs, Petroglyphs, Algonquian-speaking peoples, Landscape, Phenomenology

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2004 Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources. Map of Regions and Districts. Electronic document, http://www.mnr.gov.on.ca/MNR/youthprograms/sep_ontmap.html, accessed May 20, 2007.

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Chapter 1: Rock Art and the Landscape

Rock art found throughout most of the Canadian Shield is believed to have been created by Algonquian-speaking peoples. The tradition of creating rock art extends at least as far as 2,000 years into the past; however, rock art was also created into the post-European period. Canadian Shield rock art survives especially in the form of pictographs, finger-painted with red ochre on vertical waterside cliffs, and petroglyphs abraded or incised into rocky outcrops, which are also located near water bodies as well as in the bush. Lichen glyphs, created by scraping away lichens to uncover the underlying rock surface, and boulder art (petroforms), created by arranging stones into geometrics, ceremonial circles, "medicine wheels," and effigies, such as turtles, are also found and are classified by some scholars as rock art. However, lack of scholarly publications regarding lichen glyphs, which were described by early travellers, and their relatively short life-span, preclude at this stage their analysis within the wider context of Canadian Shield rock art. Boulder art, which is concentrated on the Great Plains, represents not only a strikingly different mode of execution, but its functions differed from that of pictographs and petroglyphs[1]; thus it will not be included in this study (Brace 2005; Conway 1984a:2, 6-7; Dewdney 1978:113; Dewdney and Kidd 1967:43, 45, 147-148, 155-156; Kehoe n.d.; Norder 2003:59-61; Steinbring 1983).

Serious scholarly studies of Canadian Shield rock art have been initiated only during the second half of the twentieth century and have concentrated mainly on documenting, preserving and dating sites. Rock art was interpreted especially as a

[1] Functions of boulder art have been inferred from ethnohistoric, ethnographic and archaeological data. Its functions were varied and it has been proposed that, for example, "medicine wheels" were memorials to war chiefs, geometrics were vision questing sites, and animal effigies were directional markers for resources (Brace 2005:123-147).

religious phenomenon. The meaning of its pictorial content has been mainly analysed in light of *Midewiwin* pictography and Algonquian speaking-peoples' mythology (e.g. Dewdney and Kidd 1967; Rajnovich 1994; Vastokas and Vastokas 1973). However, I found this approach limited as images are known to have had multiple various meanings and the ascription of one particular meaning to images (e.g. Conway 1992:250-251), however well documented against available mythological and/ or ethnographic evidence, remains speculative for the most part.

A new perspective for the study of Canadian Shield rock art emerges with Richard Bradley's *Rock Art and the Prehistory of Atlantic Europe, Signing the Land* (1997). Bradley contextualises rock art within its landscape. He examines the distribution of rock art sites on the landscape in relation to ritual monuments, such as passage graves and natural formations; as well as speculates on the messages that may have been conveyed by the location of rock art sites within a landscape inhabited and experienced by hunter-gatherers. Bradley's approach to the study of rock art demonstrates that it should be contextualized and studied beyond its pictorial content. Thus, inference about prehistoric rock art can be successfully undertaken when no records regarding ideological perceptions of landscape remain and a more secular reading of rock art is possible, alongside religious interpretations.

As Bradley suggests, landscape is socially constructed by people who assign to it different meanings and is understood within its specific cultural and symbolic contexts. Landscape is an essential part of rock art research, because rock art is created and experienced within the landscape. In the past decade, rock art across the world has been examined increasingly within the theoretical framework of landscape studies (e.g.

Bradley 1997; Bradley et al. 1994; Chippindale and Nash, ed. 2004; Nash, ed. 2000; Nash and Chippindale, ed. 2002). Nevertheless, the landscape approach has been rarely applied to Canadian Shield rock art (e.g. Arsenault 1998, 2004a, 2004b, 2004c; Norder 2003; Steinbring 1998; Vastokas and Vastokas 1973), despite some understanding of Algonquian-speaking peoples' perceptions of landscape. Ethnohistoric and mythological sources, as well as ethnographic research (e.g. Jenness 1935; Jones 1973[1861]:85) have demonstrated that Algonquian-speaking peoples conceive of landscape as sacred and that certain locales within the landscape are inhabited by spiritual powers, such as the Underwater spirits that often dwell at rapids or Thunderbirds that reside on high mountains. Rock art locales along with other sacred spots, such as natural effigy formations envisioned as beings turned to stone, form an integral part of this sacred landscape. Rock art scholars and researchers (e.g. Lambert 1983, 1985, 1986; Rusak 1992; Steinbring 1998) have pointed out that certain natural features, such as ledges, overhangs, quartz veins and cracks and fissures, are often present at rock art sites. It has been suggested (e.g. Arsenault 2004c:305; Conway 1993:89-90, Molyneaux 1983:5; Vastokas and Vastokas 1973) that cracks and fissures, as well as quartz veins, might have been imbued with spiritual significance, while overhangs might have acted as natural amphitheatres which amplified sounds at rock art sites. Indeed, acoustic properties at the sites, such as the echo effect or the trickling sound of an underground stream, as well as visual effects, such as the shimmering sun light reflected from the water onto the cliffs, might have also been important factors in site selection.

This thesis is informed by Algonquian-speaking peoples' spiritual and cosmological concepts regarding landscape. The purpose of this thesis is to elucidate why

rock art sites are placed in their particular locations in terms of their landscape context and why landscape features present at or near the sites, such as high cliffs, rapids, quartz veins or calcite/silica precipitate deposits, might have influenced the choice of site location. Sites associated with these features were most likely selected because of these features' spiritual connotations, which enhanced the sacredness of the place. Furthermore, rock art sites seem to be often oriented from south-east to south-west, and rarely to the north. Since Algonquian-speaking peoples attach a great significance to the cardinal directions, orientation of rock art sites also will be explored.

Ethnographic research suggests that rock art was created and utilised within a religious context, thus an exploration into its various possible socio-religious functions also is undertaken. Rock art sites are particularly linked in the literature with medicine men and fasting youth (e.g. Conway 1985; Dewdney and Kidd 1967; Steinbring 1998; Vastokas and Vastokas 1973), thus an inquiry into why rock art sites would have been propitious for conducting shamanic ceremonies and fasts is carried out. However, it should be noted that the meaning ascribed to rock art by contemporary Indigenous informants might be different from the meaning which prompted the initial creation of rock art at a particular place. Furthermore, some rock art sites can also be found at strategic locations, near rapids, portages or at a narrows. Thus, a discussion of the possible function of rock art sites as a navigational system is attempted. I conclude that rock art might have served various socio-religious functions, with any given site being permeated with many spiritual and secular meanings depending on the social actors and their spiritual knowledge and experiences associated with the said site.

In order to understand Canadian Shield rock art and its role within the Algonquian-speaking peoples' culture, a brief look at the physical context of rock art and Algonquian-speaking peoples' culture is needed. Chapter 2 examines the geographical nature of the Canadian Shield and the distribution of rock art within it. The nature of pictographs and petroglyphs, including their mode of execution, their pictorial content and their possible dates of execution, also is discussed. Furthermore, the cultural traits of Algonquian-speaking peoples and their spiritual beliefs are described with an emphasis on the practice of puberty vision questing and the roles of medicine men.

Chapter 3 discusses the theoretical underpinnings of rock art research in the Canadian Shield since its beginnings in the nineteenth century to the present day, with an emphasis on the landscape approach, which guides this study. The theoretical discussion is followed by an explication of the methodology employed in this study. In order to get a better understanding of Canadian Shield rock art within its landscape context, the phenomenological approach to landscape studies (see Tilley 1994), which takes into account the experiences of the researcher at rock art sites, is applied. Ten Canadian Shield rock art sites located in Ontario are investigated by the author in order to elucidate what the embodied experience at a rock art site might have been for its creators and those who conducted ceremonies at these locales, and in turn, why these locales would have been chosen for creation of rock art.

Chapter 4 is descriptive in nature and explores the ethnohistoric, ethnographic and mythological evidence regarding the meaning of landscape for Algonquian-speaking peoples and how rock art fits into this sacred landscape. The functions of rock art sites, as sacred locales for fasting youth and places where medicine men obtained medicine from

the *maymaygwayshiwuk*, spirits inhabiting the rocky cliffs on which the pictographs were painted, are also discussed. Furthermore, the presence of recurring landscape attributes at the sites, such as quartz veins, cracks and fissures, and the cardinal orientation of the sites are discussed.

Chapter 5 presents the results of the phenomenological investigation carried out at ten rock art sites. The experiences and observations at these rock art sites are then considered within the broader context of Algonquian-speaking peoples' spiritual and cosmological belief-system. It is argued that rock art locales may combine physical features that suggest the spiritual connections of the Upperworld, Underwater/ Underworld and the Earthly plane and that they evoke the four primordial elements important within the Algonquian belief system: fire, water, earth and air. The possible spiritual meanings of the landscape attributes associated with rock art sites and of the cardinal directions that the sites face also are discussed. The function of rock art sites as locales propitious for conducting fasts and religious ceremonies is examined, along with their possible seasonal time of execution. The role of offerings at rock art sites is also investigated. The types of offerings left at rock art sites further indicate that these sites are sacred ritual sites, and suggest an association between pictograph sites and the quest for medicine. The discussion of the possible function of rock art sites as a navigational system is also attempted.

Chapter 6 presents the conclusions of this study, which indicate that Canadian Shield rock art forms an integral part of a sacred landscape. The placement of rock art sites in their particular locations and the landscape attributes present at these sites connote spiritual and cosmological ideas of the Algonquian-speaking peoples and thus,

are not trivial or simply selected for practical purposes, such as indicating approaching rapids. Rock art sites are multifunctional and represent an amalgam of socio-religious ideas, which manifested themselves to various social actors in the context of their knowledge and experiences associated with particular sites.

This study has broader implications for rock art research as it attempts to explore spiritual and cosmological ideas associated with the physical context of rock art sites, and it suggests the multifunctional aspect of rock art sites. As such, it not only presents a more holistic approach to rock art research, but it might also be relevant to more in-depth studies of Algonquian-speaking peoples' concepts of landscape, which take into account other sacred locales on the landscape, such as effigy formations or Thunderbird nests.

Chapter 2: Canadian Shield Rock Art in its Cultural Context

This chapter introduces Canadian Shield rock art by describing the geographical character of the Canadian Shield, the location of rock art within the Canadian Shield, its mode of production, pictorial content and possible dates of execution. It also situates Canadian Shield rock art within its cultural context by describing the cultural traits of Algonquian-speaking peoples most likely responsible for its creation, with an emphasis on their spiritual beliefs and religious practices.

The Geographical Character of the Canadian Shield and the Distribution of Rock Art

Canadian Shield rock art is that which is found on locations in the vast expanse of the Pre-Cambrian Shield, an ancient rock formation composed of igneous (e.g. granite), metamorphic (e.g. gneiss) and sedimentary rocks (e.g. sandstone)[2] (Bastedo 1994:15, 17; Pye 1968:7, 9). This formation, stretching almost 5,000,000 square kilometres (or over 2,000,000 square miles), includes much of Québec, Ontario, Manitoba, northern Saskatchewan, a small portion of north-eastern Alberta, the Northwest Territories and, in the United States, north-eastern Minnesota, northern Wisconsin, northern Michigan and north-eastern New York (Adirondack Mountains) (Moon 1970:18) (Figure 2.1). The Canadian Shield is characterised by a multitude of lakes and rivers and its bedrock is covered by a thin layer of soil. These characteristics emerged after the last glaciation came to an end around ten thousand years ago (Moon 1970:18-19, 21-22). Tundra (grasses, mosses and lichens) dominates the northern landscape while boreal forest

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[2] Igneous rock is "one which has crystallized from a natural melt or magma generated at high temperatures deep below the Earth's surface" (Pye 1968:9).
Metamorphic rock is "rock formed from igneous or sedimentary rocks that have been subjected to great changes in temperature, pressure and/or chemical environment" (Bastedo 1994:247).
Sedimentary rock is "rock formed by the accumulation and cementing of sediments" (Bastedo 1994:249).

(conifers) covers the southern portion of the Shield (Moon 1970:21). The boreal forest, consisting primarily of white spruce, black spruce and balsam fir, as well as birch and aspen, has been called "the typical Canadian landscape" (Moon 1970:21, 97) (Figure 2.2). The thick boreal forest cover is interrupted by numerous lakes and rivers, by muskeg, a "bog of peaty muck, spongy sphagnum moss and standing water," as well as outcrops of bare rocks (Moon 1970:21, 97). The south-central portion of the Shield, in Québec and Ontario, is home to the temperate mix forest of pines, hemlocks, birches and maples (Moon 1970:22). The fauna encountered includes black bears, lynxes, wolves, moose, deer, caribou, beavers, martens, ducks, perch, pike, as well as mosquitoes and black flies which are the scourge of both animals and humans (Moon 1970:13, 22, 62).

Canadian Shield rock art is found in Québec, Ontario, Manitoba, Saskatchewan, the Northwest Territories, Minnesota and Michigan. Its greatest concentration occurs in north-western Ontario in the area of Quetico Provincial Park, the Lake of the Woods and the Berens River region; eastern Manitoba along the Hayes River and Molson Lake; and north-eastern Saskatchewan along the Churchill River (see Dewdney and Kidd 1967:164; Jones 1981:11; Rajnovich 1994:10; Steinbring 1998:90). The paucity of known rock art sites in Québec can be attributed to extensive hydro-electric dam projects which resulted in the flooding of sites, and to scholarly neglect (Tassé 1977:81). The distribution of rock art in the Canadian Shield therefore, is not uniform, but concentrated in specific areas.

Pictographs and Petroglyphs: Location and Mode of Execution

Hundreds of pictograph sites are known across the Canadian Shield. Painted images, known as pictographs, tend to occur on vertical rock formations on lakes and rivers. A few pictographs, however, have also been found in rock shelters (Conway and

Conway 1989:37; Lugthart 1968; Molyneaux 1980:6, 1987) and on boulders (Conway 1984b). Fewer than thirty petroglyph (engraved or carved images) sites have been located in the Canadian Shield (Dewdney 1977:8) and they tend to be found along waterways as well as in the bush away from waterways on rock outcrops and boulders. Canadian Shield rock art is poorly incorporated into regional archaeological studies and is usually treated as an "isolated phenomenon" because it is difficult to date and to assign a particular cultural provenience to rock art (Lemaître 1997:65; Molyneaux 1981:9). The few studies that have tackled the problem indicate that some rock art sites are isolated (e.g. Steinbring 1998:41, 93) while others are placed in the vicinity of other archaeological sites (e.g. Reid 1979:250). At this point, it is often difficult to speculate if the archaeological remains found in the vicinity of rock art sites are linked to them temporally or culturally. More in-depth studies are needed to shed light on rock art and its wider archaeological context.

Pictographs were executed with various shades of red ochre (iron oxide) using fingers or brushes.[3] The paint consisted of iron oxide possibly mixed with a binding agent, which, according to ethnographic evidence, was most likely isinglass (fish glue obtained from fish swimming bladder[4]) (Jones 1980). This mixture of ochre and isinglass is resistant to wear. Alanson Skinner (1911:23) observed that Eastern Cree men smeared their legs with this mixture which "could not be washed off. When once put on it had to remain until it wore away." It is possible that no organic binder was used. Arsenault et al. (1995:27) suggest that ochre could have been mixed with water. According to Taylor et

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[3] See Dewdney and Kidd (1967:6), with limited use of white pigment on two sites, yellow pigment on one site and black pigment on another site. Pelshea (1980:54) mentions the use of white pigment on just one site.

[4] A gas-filled sac used to control the fish's buoyancy.

al. (1974), the pigment becomes bound and mixed with the calcite or silica deposits which form over the paintings and at the base of the rock. The layer which forms over the paintings protects them from erosion. Petroglyphs, which do not seem to have been painted, were created by pecking, incising, abrading or scratching the rock's surface (Wellman 1978:17).

Pictorial Content

According to a classificatory scheme devised by Dewdney and Kidd (1967) Canadian Shield rock art includes images of human figures, animals, mythical creatures, abstractions and objects of material culture such as canoes. According to Dewdney and Kidd (1967:18), approximately 10 percent of all Shield pictographs may be classified as "anthropomorphs" or human figures. These figures are painted solidly or as stick figures and are usually portrayed from the front. Facial features, feet and hands are not usually represented (e.g. Dewdney 1970a:18-19; cf. Dewdney and Kidd 1967:49). The figures' heads are sometimes depicted with horn-like projections (e.g. Dewdney and Kidd 1967:33, 46, 50, 77, 107; Jones 1981:21, Figures 14 and 15; Rajnovich 1981a:298, Steinbring 1998:Figure 8; Vastokas and Vastokas 1973:71, Figure 16), with so-called rabbit ears (e.g. Dewdney and Kidd 1967:96; Rajnovich 1989:Figure 4) and with lines emerging from their heads (e.g. Conway 1988:Figure 4; Dewdney and Kidd 1967:53; Vastokas and Vastokas 1973:55, Plate 14). Conical "hats" have also been observed (e.g. Vastokas and Vastokas 1973:65, Plate 15). Action scenes are rarely depicted. Figures occasionally hold items resembling ceremonial pieces such as otter medicine bags and rattles (e.g. Dewdney 1978:130; Dewdney and Kidd 1967:62; Vastokas and Vastokas 1973:65, Plate 15), bow and arrows (e.g. Dewdney 1978:130; Jones 1981:Figure 28) and

cross-like objects (e.g. Dewdney and Kidd 1967:37, 105). Hand prints and engravings of human hands are also depicted (e.g. Dewdney and Kidd 1967:30, 51; Vastokas and Vastokas 1973:70, Figure 15d).

Items of material culture constitute around 10 percent of the Canadian Shield pictograph inventory (Dewdney and Kidd 1967:18) and include canoes with occupants represented simply as vertical strokes (e.g. Dewdney and Kidd 1967:32, 75, 83, 119; Vastokas and Vastokas 1973:123, Figure 51). Depictions of pipe smoking (e.g. Dewdney and Kidd 1967:27, 32) and of structures containing figures have also been recorded (e.g. Dewdney and Kidd 1967:31-32, 171-172; Jones 1981:34, Figure 29).

Animals also form 10 percent of the pictorial inventory. However, species identification is difficult (Dewdney and Kidd 1967:18-19). Depictions include moose (e.g. Dewdney and Kidd 1967:32, 35, 38), deer (e.g. Dewdney and Kidd 1967:57, 85) caribou (e.g. Jones 1981:45, Figure 41), canines (e.g. Dewdney and Kidd 1967:38, 41, 56), possibly including dogs[5], bears (e.g. Dewdney and Kidd 1967:47, 74, 109; Conway and Conway 1990:34), bison (e.g. Dewdney and Kidd 1967:55, 61; Jones 1981:36, Figure 31), horses (e.g. Dewdney and Kidd 1967:82), snakes (e.g. Dewdney and Kidd 1967:44-45, 54; Vastokas and Vastokas 1973:96-102) and turtles (e.g. Dewdney and Kidd 1967:45, 130; Vastokas and Vastokas 1973:Figure 34). Birds are common under the guise of the mythical Thunderbird (e.g. Dewdney and Kidd 1967:53, 57, 59, 113; Jones 1981:Figures 39 and 40), but other birds such as herons and cranes (e.g. Vastokas and Vastokas 1973:Plate 22, Figure 37) have also been identified. Dewdney and Kidd (1967:22) observe that the frequency of Thunderbird depictions increases from south-east

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[5] See Oberholtzer (2002) for evidence of a long tradition of ritual sacrifices and feasts involving dogs among Algonquian-speaking peoples.

to north-west and a similar trend can be noted for depictions of serpents. Animal tracks have also been identified (e.g. Vastokas and Vastokas 1973:112).

Mythological creatures, identified as such by Indigenous informants, represent around 10 percent of pictographs (Dewdney and Kidd 1967:18). In addition to Thunderbirds, these include the *maymaygwayshiwuk* (spirits inhabiting rock cliffs) (e.g. Dewdney and Kidd 1967:53; Wheeler 1975:701), horned snakes (e.g. Dewdney and Kidd 1967:45, 51, 129), water spirits (i.e. merman) (e.g. Conway 1984b:8-10) and *Mishipeshu* (a dangerous water spirit)[6] (e.g. Dewdney and Kidd 1967:82, 84).

Abstractions amount to half of all the recorded pictographs and consist of, among others, short strokes identified as tally marks, ladder-like structures, dots, and checkerboard patterns (e.g. Dewdney and Kidd 1967:18, 34, 35, 56, 57, 95; Conway 1984a:8). According to Dewdney and Kidd (1967:22), abstractions are more prominent in the south-east than the north-west of Ontario. Dewdney and Kidd's (1967) identification of motifs as "anthropomorphs," objects of material culture, animals, mythical creatures and abstractions is problematic as Indigenous artists did not necessarily differentiate their pictorial production in such terms; thus, abstractions (i.e. tally marks, ladder-like structures), are abstractions only to an Euro-Canadian researcher (see Phillips 1987:58).

Dating Canadian Shield Rock Art

Dating rock art is problematic, because it is usually situated within an archaeological context that is hard to date. Various methods for the dating of Canadian

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[6] *Mishipeshu* is usually depicted as a quadruped with a long tail and horns (see figure 5.9). Beings depicted with horns are said to possess "superior power" (see Vastokas and Vastokas 1973:74-75).

Shield rock art have been explored. To date these include lichenometry[7], weathering[8], water level marks[9], stylistic analysis, subject matter analysis, and ethnohistoric and ethnographic evidence (see Dewdney 1970a; Jones 1981:62-69; Pohorecky and Jones 1968a; Reid 1979; Steinbring and Elias 1968). The tradition of rock art in the Canadian Shield is believed by some researchers to be 2,000 years old, thus dating to the Middle Woodland period[10] (Rajnovich 1994:41), but a date of 3,000 B.C., situating its beginnings within the Archaic period, has also been suggested (Steinbring 1998:129). Vastokas (2004:282-283) proposed that the Peterborough Petroglyphs site's (Ontario) earliest carvings could be dated to the Middle Woodland or even Archaic period. Steinbring et al. (1987:8) suggested that the Mud Portage petroglyphs in the Lake of the Woods, Ontario, which were found under stratified occupation levels containing temporally diagnostic artifacts, were executed about 7,000 years ago. Rock art continued to be produced well into the post-contact era, as attested by European motifs, such as guns and horses (Dewdney 1970a:27) and, in Saskatchewan, a record exists of a painting that was made as late as 1905 (Steinbring 1998:6).

Radiometric dating[11] has been applied only recently in Canadian Shield rock art studies. Small amounts or lack of organic material in paint precluded standard radiocarbon dating. However, advances in AMS dating[12] allow for the dating of micro-

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[7] Determining the date of a rock painting based on the lichen encroachment at the site. Method is problematic because of differential lichen growth rates and improper understanding of variables involved in lichen growth.
[8] Measuring the rates of deposition of silica on rock paintings.
[9] Dating a rock painting in relation to dated high water level marks.
[10] The Middle Woodland Period is believed to have lasted from 500 B.C. to A.D. 800 and the Archaic from 8,000 B.C. to 1,000 B.C. (Ellis and Ferris, ed. 1990).
[11] Radiometric dating operates on the principle of radioactive decay where unstable radioactive isotopes decay over time into stable elements.
[12] AMS (Accelerator Mass Spectrometry) is radiocarbon dating which requires smaller samples of material and is more precise than standard radiocarbon dating.

organic matter present between the silica layers and the pictographs (Aubert et al. 2004). The Nisula site in Québec, for example, has been AMS dated. It has yielded dates of 2,500+/- 275 years B.P. and 2,440+/-610 B.P. (Arsenault 2004a:356), thus confirming the antiquity of some Canadian Shield rock art.

Cultural Context

Canadian Shield rock art is believed by most scholars to have been created by Algonquian-speaking peoples (i.e. Anishnabeg/ Ojibwa/ Chippewa/, Algonquin/ Algonkin, Cree) (e.g. Boyle 1971[1896]:4; Conway 1993:98-101; Rajnovich 1994:159-160; Reid 1979; Steinbring 1998:2; Tassé 1977:82; Vastokas and Vastokas 1973:27).

Algonquian-speaking peoples occupied the vast territory stretching from Labrador and the Maritime Provinces to the Rocky Mountains and from Hudson Bay to the American Midwest. Pertinent to this study are groups which occupied the territory from Québec to Saskatchewan, which corresponds with the distribution of rock art. Historically, these groups included, from east to west, the Montagnais-Naskapi/ Innu, the Algonquin[13], the Ojibwa and the Cree (see Jenness 1963:266).

Names, such as Ojibwa, are "blanket tribal designations" which tend to mask the proliferation and diversity of bands and dialects present among the Algonquian-speaking peoples. This diversity is more evident in ethnohistoric documents which speak of many groups or "nations" (Bishop 1981:159; Greenberg and Morrison 1982:76). Furthermore, it is difficult to delineate exact group territories through time. The territories have changed on numerous occasions due to factors such as migration and seasonal movement,

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[13] Algonquin is a designation given to a single tribe, while Algonquian is a term that refers to a group of different tribes whose members speak Algonquian languages.

which resulted in the mingling of various bands and tribes[14] (Rogers and Leacock 1981:170; Rogers and Taylor 1981:231). Diseases introduced by Europeans caused serious population decline, which resulted in the merging of remaining bands (Wright 2004:1495). The fur trade and the destructive Iroquois wars[15] resulted in westward migrations of, among others, the Cree and the Ojibwa (Bishop 1981:160; White 1991:1). It should also be noted that as one progresses further into the past, ethnicity, which can be a nebulous concept, is much harder to infer (Jones 1997). Thus, through the reminder of this thesis, the general designation of "Algonquian-speaking peoples" is employed. Furthermore, one should also be careful about the assumption that these people in the past were exclusively Algonquian-speaking, as inter-marriage with other linguistic groups occurred, nor can an assumption that material culture equates with language necessarily be made (Jones 1997).

The Montagnais-Naskapi/ Innu occupy a vast area stretching from the Labrador Peninsula to the St. Maurice River (Québec). They are composed of two "nations," the Montagnais in the south, who occupy a territory roughly corresponding to the drainage of the St. Lawrence River and the Gulf of St. Lawrence, and the Naskapi, who occupy a territory roughly corresponding to the drainage into the North Atlantic and Ungava Bay (Jenness 1963:270-271; Rogers and Leacock 1981:169-170). The Algonquin occupy an area centered on the Ottawa River drainage which stretches roughly from the St. Maurice

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[14] For example, the Lake Mistassini band is an intermediate Cree-Montagnais band (Speck 1985[1917]a:15) composed of the East Cree and the Montagnais who adjoin each other (Rogers and Leacock 1981:169-170).

[15] The Iroquois Wars were a conflict between the Iroquois Confederacy (Mohawk, Oneida, Onondaga, Cayuga and Seneca tribes) and the French and Algonquian-speaking peoples around the Great Lakes, which took place in the middle of the seventeenth century. The Iroquois vied for control of the fur trade but, more importantly, wished to ensure that cosmological balance was maintained and that people continued to follow the true path, rather than Christianity, because it was holistic (Susan Jamieson, personal communication 2007).

River (Québec) almost to Lake Nipissing (Ontario) (Day and Trigger 1978:792-793; Jenness 1963:274-276; Tanner 1987:58-59).

The Ojibwa, which became an overall Euro-Canadian term for various "nations," inhabit the territory around the Great Lakes "from Georgian Bay to the edge of the prairies" and from the states of Minnesota, Wisconsin and Michigan to the height of the land at which point they adjoin the Cree (Jenness 1963:277; Tanner 1987:58-59). At contact, the Ojibwa, who claim origin on the Atlantic seaboard, lived north of Lake Superior and Lake Huron; however since the seventeenth century, they have migrated west and south (Ritzenthaler 1978:743). The Ojibwa have been divided into various branches; however the divisions are not unanimous and agreed upon (cf. Skinner 1911:117 and Jenness 1963:277). The Northern Ojibwa "live along the upper courses of the rivers that flow generally northeast into Hudson and James bays, from Island Lake Manitoba," to Little Current River, Ontario (Rogers and Taylor 1981:231-232). Saulteaux of Lake Winnipeg "occupy lands in Ontario and Manitoba that drain into Lake Winnipeg from the east and south" and include communities around Lake of the Woods and Lac Seul (Ontario) (Steinbring 1981:244-245). The Saulteaux of Lake Superior occupy the territory around Lake Superior (Jenness 1963:277). Furthermore, Jenness (1963:277) recognizes the Mississauga of Manitoulin Island and the Mississagi River; and the Ottawa of Georgian Bay area as Ojibwa. These nations joined together at the end of the seventeenth and beginning of the eighteenth century to form the Ojibwa (Schenck 1997:37).

The Cree occupy a large territory north of the Ojibwa and Algonquin peoples, stretching from Lakes Mistassini and Nitchequon (Québec) to Lake Athabasca

(Saskatchewan) (Jenness 1963:283; Skinner 1911:8). The Western Cree are divided into Swampy Cree who inhabit the "west coast of James and Hudson bays from the Moose River in north-eastern Ontario to the Churchill River in northern Manitoba," Rocky Cree who occupy the area "west of the Nelson River drainage in north-western Manitoba and Saskatchewan," and Strongwoods Cree who occupy the area "north of Saskatchewan River in Saskatchewan and Alberta," (Honigmann 1981:217-218; Smith 1981:256). The Eastern Cree live "on the east side of James Bay and the south part of the east side of Hudson Bay" (Preston 1981:196).

Algonquian-speaking peoples shared many common cultural traits but were by no means homogenous. Their material culture represented an adaptation to the range of environments they inhabited and their religious and social life also exhibited variation. However, socio-religious commonalities prevailed as attested by the presence of shared beliefs and rites. The traditional cultures of these peoples have been reconstructed by scholars using archaeological, ethnohistoric and ethnographic sources.

In the early post-contact era, the groups in question were traditionally organized into egalitarian bands of approximately 100-300 people (Hickerson 1970:13; Rogers 1983:98; Speck 1985[1917]b:90; Wright 2004:1562) headed by nominal leaders who acquired their status through their exceptional hunting skills or medicinal knowledge and powers. Bands occupied defined territories and usually adhered to the exogamous patrilineal clan system with totems such as Bear, Sturgeon, Moose and Duck (Cooper 1936:4; Couture 1983:59; Hallowell 1992:51; James 1956:313-315; Jenness 1935:7-9, 1967:120, 276, 286; Warren 1970:42). However, "totemism" was not a general trait among Algonquian-speaking peoples as attested by Skinner (1911:56) who states that the

eastern Cree from Albany post had no recollection of a clan organization and believed that it never existed among them. Speck (1985[1917]a:15-16, 1985[1917]b:90) claims that the Mistassini did not develop totemism. Wright (2004:1562) concurs and claims that the Montagnais-Naskapi and Cree did not possess totemic clans. Some of the Ottawa living around Sharbot Lake (Ontario) did not possess them either (Susan Jamieson, personal communication 2007).

Bands were traditionally mobile and practiced seasonal rounds by aggregating in the summer into larger settlements and scattering to the family's hunting grounds in the winter. They subsisted mainly on the hunting of wild game such as the moose, deer, caribou, hare and beaver; fishing of, among others, sturgeon and whitefish; and gathering of wild fruits and plants such as berries and wild rice (Ojibwa[16]) (Couture 1983:25; Hallowell 1992:43-50; Jenness 1935:13-16, 1967:271, 279, 285; Kinietz 1965:235-236, 322-324; Ritzenthaler and Ritzenthaler 1970:13-26; Skinner 1911:57). Agriculture among the southernmost Algonquin and Ojibwa in the form of corn and squash was seldom practiced and only supplemented hunting and gathering (Jenness 1967:276, 279; Kinietz 1965:322; Skinner 1911:117). Stone projectile points, wooden implements such as cradles and sleds, basketry, as well as birch-bark canoes, containers, mats and coverings for dome or conical shaped wigwams formed, among others, the material culture inventory (Couture 1983:25; Hallowell 1992:18; Ritzenthaler and Ritzenthaler 1970:55-71; Skinner 1911:12, 42; Speck 1937:47-48). Pottery was produced among the Algonquin, Ojibwa and Western Cree, while the Montagnais-Naskapi produced it infrequently (Skinner 1911:130; Wright 2004:1488-1489).

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[16] Except for the northernmost Ojibwa (Rogers and Taylor 1981:231).

Evidence of interaction with neighbouring people is present among the southern Algonquian-speaking peoples, as attested, for example, by the sharing of the same pottery tradition between the Algonquin and the Ontario and St. Lawrence Iroquois and the trade of cornmeal and tobacco between the Montagnais and their Iroquois and Algonquin neighbours (Rogers and Leacock 1981:170; Wright 2004:1488, 1493).

Artistic expression included birch-bark transparencies, symmetrical patterns bitten into birch-bark sheets, and embroidery with moose-hair, porcupine quills and beads (post-European) on clothing, medicine bags and birch-bark boxes (Burnham 1992:31-32; Densmore 1970[1929]:183-194, 1941; Köhl 1985[1860]:412-413, 315-316; Ritzenthaler and Ritzenthaler 1970:72-74; Skinner 1911:53; Speck 1937:53, 74-80).

Spiritual Beliefs and Religion

Algonquian-speaking peoples do not make any distinction between the sacred and the secular realms of existence: the entire natural world is permeated with spiritual meaning (Coleman et al. 1971[1961]:56; Hallowell 1934:390, 1975:144-145, 153, 1992:81; Krupnik et al 2004:3; Paper 1990:44; Smith 1995:22-23). The world is believed to be multilayered, a common belief among societies that have shamanistic beliefs (Eliade 2004[1964]:259-260). The earth is envisioned as a Great Turtle, that is, an island positioned between an Upperworld and an Underworld. Certain myths recount that while it is daytime in the Underworld, it is night on earth (Barnouw 1977:41; Coleman et al. 1971[1961]:56; Hallowell 1971:6, 1992:74; Smith 1995:44-47; Vecsey 1983:72). This universe is thought to be inhabited by greater and lesser manitous (spirits) "that [are] thought to exist everywhere in nature – in the animals, birds, trees, an odd-shaped rock, the waterfalls, thunder and lightning, the winds and the cardinal directions" (Coleman et

al. 1971[1961]:56). According to Copway (1972[1850]:153) "[t]he earth teemed with all sorts of spirits. The Ojibway, as he reclines beneath the shade of his forest trees, imagines these gods to be about him. He detects their tiny voices in the insect's hum. With half-closed eyes he beholds them sporting by thousands on a sun-ray."

A Supreme Being has been cited in Algonquian mythology and is known as *Kitchi Manitou/ Kitci Manitu/ Kitche Manito/ Kay-shay-mani-to/ Gitchi Manitu/ Keche-munedoo* or Master of Life. *Kitchi Manitou* is believed to be the sexless, benevolent Creator of the world and of all the living beings, removed from partaking directly in human affairs. The origins of the concept of the Supreme Being have been debated and it remains unclear whether the notion was influenced by Christianity or if it is Indigenous in nature (Brown and Brightman 1988:36, 107; Cooper 1934; de Charlevoix 1966[1761]:II:141; Hallowell 1971:6, 1975:154; Johnston 1995:6; Jones 1973[1861]:83; Köhl 1985[1860]:49, 59; Skinner 1911:59; Vecsey 1983:80-82). According to Schoolcraft (1851-1857:I:15), Indigenous peoples recognized:

> the Great Spirit in rocks, trees, cataracts, and clouds; in thunder and lightning; in the strongest tempest and the softest zephyrs; and this subtle and transcendental Spirit is believed to conceal himself in titular deities from human gaze, as birds and quadrupeds; and, in short, he is to be supposed to exist under every possible form in the world, animate and inanimate.

The Algonquian culture-hero and trickster is known as *Nanabush/ Nanibozhu/ Manabozho* (Ojibwa), *Wisahkecahk/ Wisakedjak* (Cree) or *Tseka'bec* (Montagnais-Naskapi). He is credited with the creation of Earth after a mythical deluge and introduction of various inventions among human beings (Chamberlain 1891; de Charlevoix 1966[1761]:II:46; Jenness 1935:38; Radin and Reagan 1928; Speck 1925:3). Other mythological beings include the Thunderbirds, usually benign powerful spiritual

entities who create lightning by flashing their eyes and noise of thunder with the flap of their wings (Chamberlain 1890a; Jenness 1935:34-38; Morriseau 1965:4-14; Vecsey 1983:75). Thunderbirds are locked in an eternal battle with Underwater creatures like *Mishipeshu* or Water Lynx and the Sea Serpents, who are usually envisioned as dangerous and evil (Chamberlain 1888:157; Jenness 1935:35-36; Jones 1973[1861]:85-86; Landes 1968:31; Skinner 1914:99).[17] Underwater creatures are also in conflict with *Nanabush* (Brown and Brightman 1988:45-46; Kawbawgam et al. 1994:25-29; Radin 1914a:19-20; Radin and Reagan 1928:63-64, 70). Four spirits (associated sometimes with the winds) are believed to dwell at the four quarters of the world (Hallowell 1934:391; Jenness 1935:30-32; Köhl 1985[1860]:60, 152; Skinner 1911:59; Smith 1995:47; Vecsey 1983:73-74) and were said to be placed there by *Nanabush* (Chamberlain 1891:206; Schoolcraft 1851-1857:I:318). Another recurrent character is *Windigo*, a supernatural cannibalistic giant (Jenness 1935:40-41; Jones 1973[1861]:159-160; Speck 1925:21; Vecsey 1983:77). The *maymaygwayshi/ memegwesi/ Memengwéciwak/ Memekwe'zu* are believed to be human-looking hairy dwarfs inhabiting rocky cliffs on lakes and travelling in stone canoes. They are mischievous and steal fish from nets (Coleman et al. 1971[1961]:51; Désveaux 1988:265-266; Hallowell 1992:64; Jenness 1935:42; Jones 1973[1861]:156-159; Speck 1925:12).

Spirits known as "bosses" or "owners" (*ogimaa*) are believed to control animals (Master of Animals) and plants. They are another set of entities that are respected and

[17] The concept of Underwater creatures as malefic is probably a post-European phenomenon. The Upperworld and Underworld creatures were traditionally envisioned as opposing but complementary to each other, in a way similar to the Chinese ying and yang concept. Furthermore, Algonquian mythology attests that Underwater creatures could be helpful to humans by, for example, helping them cross water and Thunderbirds could be responsible for capturing humans and even human death (Ellis 1995:45-47; Jones 1916:384; Kawbawgam et al. 1994:52, 54; Laidlaw 1918:24; Smith 1906:219; Speck 1915:72; Doug Williams, personal communication 2007).

propitiated in order to secure a successful hunt and a continual supply of beneficial plants. For example, only the owner of beavers would allow for a beaver to be killed by a hunter. Thus, these "owners" were propitiated and animal remains were treated in a ceremonial manner. Similarly, tobacco was offered when plants were gathered (Copway 1972[1850]:153; Hallowell 1971:7, 1975:154, 1992:62; Jones 1973[1861]:84; Vecsey 1983:76).

Mythological beings, such as the Thunderbirds, *Windigo* and *maymaygwayshiwuk*, are believed to co-habit earth with human beings, thus it is possible to encounter and to communicate with them. Hallowell (1975:158) reports that:

> An informant told me that many years before he was sitting in a tent one summer afternoon during a storm, together with an old man and his wife. There was one clap of thunder after another. Suddenly the old man turned to his wife and asked, "Did you hear what was said?" "No," she replied, "I didn't catch it." My informant, an acculturated Indian, told me he did not at first know what the old man and his wife referred to. It was of course, the thunder. The old man thought that one of the Thunder Birds had said something to him. He was reacting to this sound in the same way as he would respond to a human being, whose words he did not understand.

Constant concern for a successful hunt and good health warranted that humans enter into relationships with manitous that were believed to help humans in survival (Hallowell 1955:104, 1971:6; Landes 1968:15; Vecsey 1983:72). The trend of entering into reciprocal relationships, whether with manitous, human beings, animals, plants, physical features such as rivers, and celestial bodies, is widespread among North American Indigenous cultures that are generally characterized by a holistic approach to existence (Brown and Cousins 2001:84; Hultkrantz 1981:118; Kidwell et al. 2001:45; Krupnik et al. 2004:3). Humans cultivated relationships of respect and mutual obligation with manitous that mirrored inter-human relationships, a phenomenon exemplified by the

use of the kinship term "grandfather" to address spiritual beings (Hallowell 1971:7, 1975:144-145, 172).

Communication with spiritual beings took place in dream visions and conjuring, but it is especially the former that was widespread. Hence, manitous were often referred to as *pawagan/ pawaganak* (dream visitors) (Brown and Brightman 1988:120; Chamberlain 1902:61; Hallowell 1971:7, 1976[1966]:461, 466, 1992:84-85). Dream experiences were given as much importance and credibility as waking experiences. According to Hallowell (1975:166):

> After having a dream in which [his informant] met some (mythical) anthropomorphic beings (*memengwéciwak*) who live in rocky escarpments and are famous for their medicine, he told me that he had later identified precisely the rocky place he had visited and entered in his dream. ...This is why experiences undergone when awake or asleep can be interpreted as experiences of self.

Puberty Vision Quest

The emphasis placed on dream visions as the medium for communicating with manitous was especially exemplified in the puberty vision quest during which a guardian spirit was sought by youth (see Benedict 1964[1923]). Though the capacity for dreams and visions could be exercised throughout life (Brightman 1977-79, cited in Brown and Brightman 1988:140; Coleman 1947:71; Jenness 1935:53), it was this initial vision obtained through a fast that was of utmost importance. During the puberty vision quest, the tutelary spirit (*pawagan*) entered a life-long relationship with a youth, conferring its power and knowledge ("blessings") in return for respect and offerings such as tobacco (Brown and Brightman 1988:138-139; Hallowell 1976[1966]:462, 468, 1992:87; Landes 1968:15; Thwaites 1896-1901:LIV:141; Vecsey 1983:112). The puberty vision quest (puberty vision fast) required pubescent children aged ten to fourteen to fast in seclusion

in order to obtain a vision, which was to remain secret lest its powers be forfeited (Hallowell 1992:87; Jenness 1935:50; Landes 1968:9-10, 21; Radin 1914b; Vecsey 1983:123).

Vision fasts lasted anywhere from three to thirty days. However, most lasted between four to eight days (Brown and Brightman 1988:34; Cooper 1936:8; de Charlevoix 1966[1761]:II:145; Hallowell 1976[1966]:464, 1992:87; Landes 1968:8; Radin 1914b; Redsky 1972:25). Ethnohistoric and ethnographic evidence show that vision fasts could be held at any time of the year (Conway 1985:19; Cooper 1936:8; Copway 1972[1850]:154; Hallowell 1992:87; Jenness 1935:49; Kegg 1991:23; Köhl 1985[1860]:234; Landes 1968:8; Morriseau 1965:67; Radin 1928:659; Shkilnyk 1985:77; Vecsey 1983:126), though spring was preferred because it was "a period of intensified spiritual activity" and the season when Thunderbirds (in the form of thunder storms) returned (Brightman 1977-79, cited in Brown and Brightman 1988:140; Conway 1985:19). Summer fasting could entail a visitation from Underwater manitous (active during summer), which were associated with misfortune (Jenness 1935:40; Landes 1968:31; Vecsey 1983:126).

Various spirits were hoped for during the vision quest. According to Warren (1970:65): "All other minor or guardian spirits whom they court in their first dream of fasting appear to them in the shape of quadrupeds, birds, or some animate object in nature, as the moon, the stars, or the imaginary thunders." Upperworld manitous, such as the Thunderbirds, were usually desired because of their association with curing and war dreams (Landes 1968:25, 47-49; Vecsey 1983:126), while Underwater manitous were avoided. However, the latter could also bestow powers on fasters and provide them with

medicines (Barnouw 1977:132-135; de Charlevoix 1966[1761]:II:45; Jenness 1935:39; Kegg 1991:157; Köhl 1985[1860]:422-425; Smith 1995:108). Spirits such as the *maymaygwayshiwuk* and the spirits of the cardinal directions could also become a *pawagan*, however, *Kitchi Manitou* could never become a guardian spirit (Désveaux 1988:266; Hallowell 1971:6-7; Jenness 1935:31; Morriseau 1965:107; Redsky 1972:25-27; Rogers 1962:D6).

Visions were undertaken in order to secure power, long life, success in hunt and war, knowledge of one's future, and knowledge and power to cure sickness with medicinal plants (Brightman 1977-79, cited in Brown and Brightman 1988:174; Brown and Brightman 1988:34; Copway 1972[1850]:154-158; Densmore 1974[1928]:322; Hallowell 1992:85; Jenness 1935:51; Köhl 1985[1860]:233-242; Landes 1968:33; Radin 1914b:3-4; Rogers 1962:D5; Skinner 1911:61; Vecsey 1983:122).

Fasting in order to obtain visions was conducted in isolated spots, often within a rocky setting, in the forest or on islands where one could enter into communion with a *pawagan* undisturbed (Hallowell 1955:178; Köhl 1985[1860]:237; Landes 1968:8; Vecsey 1983:126). Fasting could have been undertaken on the ground, in a cave, on a platform or in a "nest" on a tree, the latter, according to Jenness (1935:50), if the young visionary hoped to become a conjuror, and according to Köhl, in order to avoid *Matchi-Manitou* (Evil Spirit) (Copway 1972[1850]:154-158; Densmore 1970[1929]:71; Dewdney Collection 1960-1966; Köhl 1985[1860]:234, 236; Landes 1968:8; Hallowell 1976[1966]:465, 1992:88; Radin 1914b:5; Skinner 1911:61). George Nelson, a fur trader working in the nineteenth century, left the following account of a puberty fast:

> In the spring of the year they chuse a proper place at a sufficient distance from the camp not [to] be discovered nor disturbed. They make themselves a

> bed of Grass, or hay as we term it, and have besides enough to make them a covering. …they must neither eat or drink. If they want to Dream of the Spirits above, their bed must be made at some distance from the Ground – if of Spirits inhabiting our Earth, or those residing in the waters, on the Ground. Here they ly for a longer or shorter time, according to their success, or the orders of the Dreamed. Some remain but 3 or 4 days, some 10, and I have be[en] told one remained 30 days without eating or drinking (Brown and Brightman 1988:34).

According to Brightman (Brightman 1977-79, cited in Brown and Brightman 1988:141):

> Platforms in trees on the shores of rivers and lakes were favored because they juxtaposed the faster simultaneously with the earth, the sky, the water and, through the roots, with subterranean and Underwater domains. Such intersections were thought to be conductive to a successful experience.

Paper (1990:44-45) arrives at a similar conclusion:

> While all the natural world is sacred, as in other cultures, some parts of the world may exhibit a greater concentration of sacredness, of holy power, than others. High places, where Earth and Sky can be seen to join, where the Thunderbirds gather, and which offer grand views of the Four Directions; waterfalls, where the power of Earth's life-giving force can be physically felt; rock clefts, where the sound of the Four Winds may be heard; and narrow caves, where Earth can be penetrated are all favoured locales for vision questing.

The entering into a relationship with a *pawagan* or the acquisition of an important dream was often recorded by pictographic representations. According to Coleman (1947:70-71):

> A representation of the dream figure, or a part or attribute of it, was made on cloth or hide, and carried on the person of the individual who wished to secure protection by its presence. Often the wearing of the dream article was an injunction given in the vision by the tutelary manito. The Ojibwa believed that the essence of the guardian manito dwelt in its representation. The dream article indicated to others the manito of a man's dream, but it did not indicate the nature of the dream. One of my informants told of having seen an owl used as a dream symbol embroidered on a man's clothing. Mr. Hyde and Mrs. Webster mentioned designs of the rabbit track, moon and stars, worn as dream symbols on women's dress yokes. Dream symbols were also woven in quill and bead headbands and neckbands.

Densmore (1941:680) also reports that dream symbols were represented on headbands and included images of stars and rainbows. Dreams and guardian spirits acquired in dreams were also depicted on birch-bark, dishes, clothing, pipes, tomahawks, hunting equipment and drums as well as the dreamer's own skin (Burnham 1992:1; de Charlevoix 1966[1761]:II:147; Hoffman 1891:163; Jenness 1935:63; Köhl 1985[1860]:144; Schoolcraft 1851-1857:I:114; Skinner 1911:20; Speck 1985[1917]a:16; Thwaites 1896-1901:LIV:141). Speck (1977[1935]:35, 197) also reports that among the Montagnais-Naskapi people, the manitou would demand that the dream be represented in order to unleash its power for various "undertakings." Representations of guardian spirits were also executed in order to honour the spiritual helpers (Speck 1937:60).

Dream visions fulfilled other socio-religious functions and inspired artistic productions. Also obtained in visions were songs, names for children and insights into the future (Brown and Brightman 1988:35, 59; Hallowell 1992:58, 81; Jenness 1935:47; Köhl 1985[1860]:273; Vecsey 1983:122). Landes (1969:9) observed that "[w]omen 'dream' beadwork patterns, songs, decorations for a dress, complicated dance patterns; men dream traditional tales, or tales about culture heroes, or have visions of the architecture of the after-world."

Algonquian Medicine Men

Dream visions were of such importance that their nature determined one's life vocation. Thus, some individuals were influenced to become warriors while others, medicine men (Hallowell 1971:7; Jenness 1935:48, 60). According to Densmore (1974[1928]:322):

> Health and long life represented the highest good to the mind of the Chippewa [Ojibwa], and he who had knowledge conductive to that end was

> most highly esteemed among them. He who treated the sick, by whatever means, claimed that his knowledge came from *manido*.

Algonquian medicine men engaged in practices which could be described as shamanistic. Eliade (2004[1964]) has defined shamanism as a "technique of ecstasy" and shamans as individuals who, upon entering a trance state (induced by various means, such as drumming), were capable of communicating with supernatural powers and beseeching them for their benefit or the benefit of their communities. The shaman's soul was capable of travelling across the layers of the universe. Shamans, accompanied by their tutelary spirits, were often engaged in curing with medicinal herbs. Among Algonquian-speaking peoples, disease was believed to result from the soul leaving the body or foreign matter entering the body due to a punishment for transgressing a taboo or an injection by a sorcerer (Brown and Brightman 1988:63-64; Jenness 1935:18, 63; Landes 1968:51; Radin 1914c:370). Thus, medicine men travelled in search of lost souls as well as removed foreign matter from the body by sucking it out (Densmore 1970[1929]:46; Jenness 1935:64-65; Ritzenthaler and Ritzenthaler 1970:101).

Though visions propitious to becoming a medicine man were obtained during the puberty fast, it is only upon reaching maturity that one could start practicing medicine (Hallowell 1971:19; Hoffman 1891:156-157; Jenness 1935:60; Ritzenthaler and Ritzenthaler 1970:101; Skinner 1911:61). Among the Ojibwa, guardian spirits associated with shamans were Thunderbirds and Bear due to the ability to bestow great power (Densmore 1974[1928]:324; Hoffman 1891:157; Jenness 1935:65; Landes 1968:47-50). Schoolcraft (1851-1857:I:113) reported that medicine men wanted to "dream of the sun: as it was believed that such a dream would enable them to see everything on the earth." Ethnohistoric and ethnographic accounts indicate that in the early European/ post-

European era the Ojibwa and Cree recognized different classes of shamans/ medicine men engaged in various methods and practices of curing the populace. The three major recognised classes were the *Wabeno*, the *Jessakids/ Djiskiu/ Djasakid* and the *Midewiwin* medicine men (though the latter could also be women).

The *Wabeno*, which means "the twilight that precedes the dawn," "daylight comes," "eastern man" or "Morning Star Man" were healers as well as makers of love and hunting medicine, who trained with older medicine men. Their power came from the morning star. The *Wabeno*, for some reason, were often associated with evil sorcery (Hoffman 1891:156-157; Jenness 1935:62; Ritzenthaler and Ritzenthaler 1970:101-102). The *Wabeno* were also said to preside at yearly ceremonies honouring the sun and the moon (Jenness 1935:32).

The *Jessakids* or conjurors communicated with manitous via the shaking tent ceremony. The shaking tent was practiced by the prairie and woodland Algonquian-speaking peoples as well as by north-eastern Algonquians (Montagnais-Naskapi/Innu) (Hallowell 1971:14; Jenness 1963:273; Vecsey 1983:103). The ceremony was observed around 1610 by Samuel de Champlain among southern Ontario peoples (Biggar 1922-1936:II:86-88), and in the 1630s by the Jesuit Le Jeune among the Montagnais (Thwaites 1896-1901:VI:163-173, XII:17-23).

The conjuring tent, or lodge, was a circular enclosure around four feet in diameter constructed from four to eight poles inserted into the ground. The lodge was six to seven feet high. The wooden framework was covered with birch bark, hides or canvas (Brown and Brightman 1988:149; Hallowell 1992:68; Hoffman 1891:158; Jenness 1935:66; Redsky 1972:26; Rogers 1962:D13-D14). During the shaking tent ceremony, the conjuror

would enter the tent and summon manitous and the souls of living and dead people who would cause the tent to shake. The spirits were consulted in order to inquire about the well-being of absent people, foretell future events, locate game, steal or retrieve human souls, and discover lost objects or the causes of illnesses, usually when other ways of curing failed. Conjuring could be done in the summer or in the winter, but always after sunset (Brown and Brightman 1988:32-33, 63, 147-148; Chamberlain 1888:158; Hallowell 1971:53, 66, 1992:68; Hoffman 1891:157; Jenness 1935:65-66; Ritzenthaler and Ritzenthaler 1970:102; Vecsey 1983:104).

The spirits that were consulted included Great Turtle (often identified as the messenger and interpreter in a conjuring ceremony), *Wisakedjak* [Nanabush], *maymaygwayshiwuk*, Thunder, *Windigo* and the Masters of Animals (Brown and Brightman 1988: 39-43, 110-111; Hallowell 1971:12; Jenness 1935:66). A conjuror would conduct a shaking tent ceremony rarely, as the experience was exhausting and personal power was to be conserved (Hallowell 1971:32; Jenness 1935:65-66). A conjuror could also be a *Midé* (member of the *Midewiwin* society), thus able to engage in curing more frequently (Densmore 1970[1929]:44; Hoffman 1891:158; Jenness 1935:66).

The *Midewiwin* (meaning "mystic doings") or the Grand Medicine Society, most likely Ojibwa in origin, was a secret society of men and women who, with the aid of manitous, engaged in the healing of people through the use of herbs and medicine bundles (Hickerson 1970:52; Hoffman 1888, 1891; Jenness 1935:75; Landes 1968). The *Midewiwin* was widespread over time among Algonquian-speaking peoples[18] and was

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[18]For example, Skinner (1911:65) observed that "The farther we recede from the Ojibway boundaries, especially to the East the midéwin seems to loose strength and importance in Cree territory. It may even have been wanting among the Cree before they began their westward migrations and came into contact with the Ojibway." By the time Skinner (1911) was making his observation, the *Midewiwin* had stopped

practiced, among others, by the Ojibwa[19], the Eastern Cree and the Algonquin. However, it was absent among the Montagnais-Naskapi (Hallowell 1936:33; Hickerson 1970:52; Rajnovich 1994:52; Skinner 1911:60-65, 152-157; Speck 1925:2). The origin of the *Midewiwin* has been widely debated with some researchers viewing it as a nativistic post-European movement, while others as a phenomenon emerging from more ancient Algonquian roots (see Hickerson 1962, 1970:51-63; Hoffman 1888, 1891; Kidd 1981; Oberholtzer 2002; Redsky 1972:21; Vastokas 2005a:4-6; Vecsey 1983:174; Warren 1970:67).

The *Midewiwin* was responsible traditionally for preserving traditional lore: myths, legends and origin tales. Membership in the *Midewiwin* was limited and could only be obtained after a long and costly initiation process (Dewdney 1975:23; Hickerson 1970:52; Hoffman 1891:151; Landes 1968; Vennum 1978:753, 760). Members were ranked into four to eight degrees.[20] Ethnographic research among Ojibwa in the 1930s indicates that the first four grades were called Earth grades and the second four were called Sky grades (Coleman 1947:77; Hickerson 1970:52; Hoffman 1888, 1891:164; Landes 1968:52). Traditionally, *Midewiwin* rites were held in a Grand Medicine Lodge (*Midewegan*) only during the summer, when the population came together into larger clusters (Hallowell 1992:48; Hoffman 1888:211; Landes 1968:7). The *Midewiwin* is also known for the practice of recording sacred songs and stories with pictographs on birch-

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being practiced in his study area but not in other areas (e.g. Landes, personal communication to Susan Jamieson 1968).

[19] Not all Ojibwa people practiced the *Midewiwin*. It was lacking among the Northern Ojibwa (Rogers and Taylor 1981:231).

[20] Among the Eastmain and Labrador Cree, only two degrees of the *Midewiwin* existed (Skinner 1911:60, 62).

bark scrolls. These records were mnemonic aids which could only be interpreted by the initiated (Dewdney 1975; Hoffman 1888, 1891; Landes 1968:172; Vennum 1978:788-9).

Algonquian-speaking peoples co-habited a world with the manitous which manifested themselves in visions. Medicine men tapped into this rich universe in order to assure success in hunting and cure people. It is within this sanctified world that daily life was pursued and rock art was created and experienced. However, before turning to an in-depth exploration of Canadian Shield rock art, the history of its research as well as the methodology employed in the current study are explored.

Chapter 3: Theoretical Perspectives and Methodology

This chapter reviews past approaches to Canadian Shield rock art by demonstrating how rock art studies have been shaped by theoretical and methodological approaches from the late nineteenth century to the present. The chapter concludes with an examination of the landscape approach to rock art and the theoretical and methodological stance adopted in the following study is presented and discussed.

Theoretical Perspectives

Rock Art Studies in the Nineteenth Century: Philology, Formalism and Evolutionism

Canadian Shield rock art received earliest attention during the nineteenth century, most notably from the antiquarian and ethnologist, Henry R. Schoolcraft (1793–1864). In the later nineteenth century, ethnologist Garrick Mallery's (1784-1866) monumental *Picture-Writing of the American Indians* (1893) was the first comprehensive survey of the subject. Studies of rock art carried out in the nineteenth century were informed by the perspectives of ethnography, philology and evolutionary theory. Ethnography in the nineteenth century prevailed under the perspective of an "ethnographic present" in which North American cultures were seen as stagnant throughout the ages and change occurred only by migration and diffusion, not by transformations within the culture (Trigger 1989:119-124). This perceived lack of historical change promoted interest in geographical distribution and cultural patterns of aboriginal peoples instead of chronology and validated the use of ethnology to infer about a perceived static aboriginal past (Trigger 1989:122-124).

Hence, nineteenth century studies of rock art were minimally concerned with elucidating time depth and meaning through time. Schoolcraft (1851-1857:I:411-412)

remarked "that very few essential changes" occurred in the Indigenous "forest arts" and that "[t]he arts that sufficed one generation sufficed the next." Nevertheless, ethnologists collaborating directly with Indigenous people gathered invaluable data about their cultures. Schoolcraft, for example, who was married to an Ojibwa woman, worked as a United States government Indian agent among the Ojibwa at Sault Ste. Marie. He was exposed to Ojibwa spiritual beliefs and had the opportunity to record information pertaining to Indigenous perceptions of landscape and the meaning of Ojibwa pictography, which later provided an important, albeit questioned source for interpretation of Canadian Shield rock art in the twentieth century.[21]

Studies of rock art in the first half of the nineteenth century were conditioned by philology, the "science of language," which, at that time, was also influential in art history (Venturi 1936:217-240). Philological concerns led to a preoccupation with form, classificatory schemes and typologies (Kleinbauer 1989:18; Molyneaux 1977:15-17; Whitley 2001:10). This, in turn, led to a concern with style, as opposed to meaningful content and formal elements become studied in their own right (Molyneaux 1977:21; Venturi 1936:219). Evolutionary theory, emergent in the nineteenth century, also impacted rock art research, as works of art were seen to progress through time from simple to complex (Haddon 1979[1895]; Kleinbauer 1989:18-29).

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[21] Schoolcraft's accounts regarding Indigenous pictography, customs, and folklore have been already questioned for their accuracy by his contemporaries in the nineteenth century. Mallery and Hoffman, under the auspices of the Bureau of Ethnology, carried out research in northern Minnesota and Wisconsin among the Ojibwa and determined that "[t]he general results of the comparison of Schoolcraft's statements with what is now found show that he told the truth in substance, but with much exaggeration and coloring. The word 'coloring' is particularly appropriate, because in his copious illustrations various colors were used freely and with apparent significance, whereas, in fact, the general rule in regard to the birch-bark rolls was that they were never colored at all; indeed, the bark was not adopted to coloration" (Mallery 1972[1893]:202). Clements (1990) observed that Schoolcraft's alterations of Indigenous folklore tales were prompted by his desire to institute Indigenous narratives as "true literature" and thus, render them more receptive to the Euro-American audience.

Rock art in the nineteenth century was viewed as a form of "picture-writing," an hypothesized developmental stage of the alphabet, and an indication of the level of civilization among its users (Boyle 1971[1896]:2; Lawson 1885:656; Mallery 1886:13, 1972[1893]:26-28, 584, 664; Schoolcraft 1851-1857:I:333). Phillips (1971[1907]:11), for example, wrote that "these paintings [Temagami district (Ontario)] extended along the face of the rock in one irregular line, so that they should, in our engravings, be regarded as two sentences of print or of writing, and read from left to right, one line following the other." Rock art was often perceived as a communication system, because it was not seen as fulfilling the criteria of what westerners would consider "real art" which required stylistic naturalism and aesthetic function (Blundell 2000:24; Molyneaux 1977:22). Since rock art was not considered "real art," it was more likely to be studied as evidence of Indigenous religious practices (Mallery 1972[1893]:770; Molyneaux 1977:25).

Schoolcraft's work stands out in particular, as he strove to situate rock art within its total cultural context. Schoolcraft's exploration of Ojibwa pictography and the recognition that it could only be read by those initiated into its arcane knowledge might have prompted him to realize the importance of the particular cultural context of culture under study. "[I]t is essential to their explanation that the interpreter be acquainted, not only with the characteristic points and customs of their history, but with their peculiar mythology, idolatry, and mode of worship" (Schoolcraft 1851-1857:I:333).

Schoolcraft was familiar with Indigenous perceptions of a landscape filled with spiritual entities. These entities inhabited unusual physical formations and were occasionally marked by Indigenous people:

> The deepest recesses of the forest – those features in the earth's surface which are suited to excite the liveliest feelings of awe, as pinnacles and cataracts, are

> indeed their chosen places of offering and worship. These natural features are, indeed, most emphatically, "temples not made with hands." They will often, indeed, set up a water-worn boulder on the shores of a lake or river, or in the waste of the boundless prairies, and perhaps tip it, if they have paints at hand, with some resemblances to a person (Schoolcraft 1851-1857:I:50).

Being acquainted with Indigenous ideas concerning landscape, Schoolcraft sought to situate rock art within its physical context. In characteristically antiquated nineteenth century style and thought, he wrote:

> The superstitions of the existing race of Indians are evinced by their frequently selecting curiously wrought boulders of rock, called *Shin-ga-ba-was-sins* by the Algonquins. These boulders have the essential character of idols. They mark the supposed locality of some god of the air. They are sometimes distinguished by the use of pigments (Schoolcraft 1851-1857:I:94).

Writing in the early nineteenth century, Schoolcraft's descriptions of awesome natural places were also likely inspired by prevalent Romantic ideas about the sublime character of Nature. Schoolcraft seemed also to be influenced by Romanticism's concept of the Noble Savage and the Indigenous peoples' close relationship with Nature (Barnard 2000:20). By referring to Indigenous places of worship as "temples not made with hands" (Schoolcraft 1851-1857:I:50), he further emphasised nature's vital role in the spiritual beliefs of Indigenous people.

Late Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Century: Formalism in Rock Art Studies

During the second half of the nineteenth century, anthropology increasingly strove to become a scientific discipline founded on positivism and scientific methodologies (Garbarino 1977:25). In archaeology, the scientific impetus resulted in an emphasis on description, classification and the creation of typologies of material culture (Willey and Sabloff 1974:42-83). The philological method, with its emphasis on typology and formal analysis, was combined with empiricism and positivism in rock art studies

(Molyneaux 1977:16-17). Rock art, studied in light of positivism and philology, was subjected to a systematic study through classification and description, especially through the concept of "style" (Molyneaux 1977:44-46). This trend in rock art studies and in art history, where the visual form is studied in its own right, removed from its cultural and physical context, is well known as "formalism" (Kleinbauer 1989:7-8, 29, 49; Molyneaux 1977:73-107; Rees and Borzello 1988:7). Formalism prevailed in nineteenth century rock art studies owing to its dominance in Western methods of visual analysis and because of the concentration on form in studies of both Western and non-Western art (Blundell 2000:25-26; Molyneaux 1977:5).

Rock art's *in situ* location coupled with the trend to study cultural variation in terms of geographic patterns (Trigger 1989:122) resulted in the prevalence of geographic classifications (see Mallery 1972[1893]). Mallery (1972[1893]:34-35) gave the following explanation for the classificatory trend:

> [N]o hermeneutic key has been discovered applicable to American pictographs, whether ancient on stone or modern on bark, skins, linen, or paper. Nor has any such key been found which unlocks the petroglyphs of any other people. Symbolism was of individual origin and was soon variously obscured by conventionalizing; therefore it requires separate study in each region. No interpreting laws of general application to petroglyphs so far appear, although types and tendencies can be classified.

Rock art studies in light of formalism and positivism resulted not only in fervent descriptive and classificatory efforts but also in the exclusion of symbolic interpretations and research into the possible Indigenous meaning of the landscape (Molyneaux 1977:18-19, 55, 61, 73). This neglect of symbolic meaning in rock art was certainly a reaction against more speculative theories regarding rock art such as, for example, it being the work of ancient immigrants from Europe (see Mallery 1886:247-253). Mallery (1886:15)

remarked that "pictographs… exhibit very little trace of mysticism or of esotericism in any form. They are objective representations, and cannot be treated as ciphers or cryptographs in any attempt at their interpretation." The general attitude towards elucidating meaning of rock art was pessimistic (e.g. Boyle 1908:31; Mallery 1972[1893]:27-28). Lawson (1885:656) observed:

> The chief advantage to be derived by archaeologists from an acquaintance with such inscriptions is the tracing out the similarity or identity of the individual characters with those of inscriptions found in other parts of the continent. There is little hope of any coherent meaning or narrative ever being derived from such isolated groups of characters.

Empiricism, however, prompted Mallery (1886:255-256, 1972[1893]:776) to call for the recording of rock art panels'[22] orientations and for the noting of the presence of trails and of archaeological remains in the vicinity of a rock art site. Mallery (1972[1893]:770) observed that:

> Rock carvings are frequently noticed at waterfalls and other points on rivers and on lake shores favourable for fishing, which frequency is accounted for by the periodical resort of Indians to such places. Sometimes they only mark their stay, but occasionally there also appear to be records of conflict with rival or inimical tribes which sought to use the same waters.

Furthermore, Mallery (1886:254-255, 1972[1893]:772-773) provided systematic guidelines for the accurate recording of rock art while Boyle (1971[1896]:9) called for its preservation.

The rise of "particularism" on the verge of twentieth century anthropology (as best understood in the work of Franz Boas) resulted in the abandonment of philological

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[22] A panel is "a portion of a face bearing paintings… Panels of the same face are distinguished by having a generally similar orientation but are separated by minor cracks and fissures and sometimes by heavy lichen growths" (Lambert 1983:xv).
A face is "[a] designated subdivision of a pictograph site characterized by a paint-bearing cliff of generally unchanging (compass) orientation and having almost no natural or destructive interference [i.e. fissure] along its length" (Lambert 1983:vii).

and evolutionary perspectives and in further strengthening of detailed description and empiricism (Molyneaux 1977:70-72). Though Mallery (1972[1893]:35) wrote that "it now seems that knowledge of the people who were the makers of the petroglyphs is necessary to any clear understanding of their work," little effort was made to understand the makers of rock art and to collaborate with their descendants in the quest for elucidating the meaning of rock art and its landscape "context."

Rock Art Studies in the First Half of the Twentieth Century

Canadian Shield rock art, with a few exceptions, was generally ignored during the first half of the twentieth century. The anthropologist Albert R. Reagan (1921:257-259) provided a brief description of Nett Lake (Minnesota) petroglyphs along with a note on the Indigenous beliefs associated with the site. The archaeologist Harlan I. Smith (1923:184-189) provided reproductions of a few of Ontario's pictographs and a brief note on their geographical location and cultural affiliation. Julian Steward's (1936) study of American rock art reaffirmed the empirical nature of rock art research, and described design elements and their geographical distribution in the United States. Robert M. Tatum's (1946) preliminary report on the geographical distribution of petroglyphs in the United States attempted to inspire the study of this neglected visual expression and mentioned Minnesota's rock art. M. S. Stanton (1947) provided a brief descriptive note on the pictographs from Tramping Lake, Manitoba. The archaeologist Paul Sweetman's (1955) report on the newly "discovered" petroglyphs site near Peterborough, Ontario, focused on the recording of the petroglyphs and a discussion of possible cultural links and age of the remains.

Wellmann (1979:14) attributed the general paucity of rock art studies to the difficulty of specific cultural ascription, difficulty in dating, and to an academic perception that it was not particularly important. Munn (1973:2) further lamented the situation, by stating that "the tendency in anthropology has been to view 'art'[23] as a special area of study, essentially trivial in comparison with such hard-core problems as kinship and social structure." Culture history, which emerged as a dominant perspective in archaeology in the first half of the twentieth century, put emphasis on specific cultures and their chronological phases (Johnson 1999:18-19; Trigger 1989:196). Hence, dating rock art and assigning it to specific cultural groups gained in importance.

Problems with dating rock art and ascribing it accurately to particular cultures further relegated its study to classification and description, and resulted in a lack of archaeological interest, which left rock art studies mainly to non-archaeologists (Grant 1967:4-5; Wellmann 1979:14; Whitley 2001:16). Scant descriptions of rock art, accompanied by accounts left by early travellers and explorers, were provided by modern canoe-travellers (Bolz 1960:113-115, 124-125, 155-156; Downes 1943:41, 66-67; Olson 1961:119-120, 138-139) and historians studying the fur trade era (Nute 1941:25-26, 36-37, 75, 1948). A series of brief descriptive notes regarding the Peterborough Petroglyphs (Mallory and Mallory 1961), Agawa Bay pictographs (Ontario) (Mallory 1964) and Quetico Provincial Park pictographs (Littlejohn 1965:45-46) appeared in the *Canadian Geographical Journal,* promoting Canadian Shield rock art to a general audience. It was

[23] The concept of rock art as "art" has been disputed and depends largely on what is understood by "art." Chippindale and Nash (2004:22-24) see rock art as art because just like art in the Western sense, rock art consists of "representational images ... skilled craftwork [and] a world of symbolism." Whitley (2001:22-23) points out that Indigenous "people often lack a term that translates literally as 'art'." Furthermore, art in the Western world is often perceived as "art for art's sake," and calling rock art "art" implies it only serves aesthetic functions. However, art has many more functions, and rock art has been called as such for over a 100 years and it is a convenient term that should be kept (Whitley 2001:22-23).

only in the 1960s, when Selwyn Dewdney (1909-1979), an artist and amateur rock art researcher, was commissioned by Kenneth E. Kidd to record hundreds of sites across the Canadian Shield for the Royal Ontario Museum that rock art in the Canadian Shield received its due attention.

Dating and Preservation of Canadian Shield Rock Art

Problems with dating of rock art and ascribing it accurately to particular cultures remain a central focus of rock art studies. As Jones (1981:74) states, "[t]he determination of the age of ... rock paintings and the identification of who created them are two of the most important problems in any archaeological study." Various studies have been dedicated to the dating of Canadian Shield rock art (e.g. Arsenault 2004a; Arsenault et al. 1995; Aubert at. al. 2004; Dewdney 1970a; Jones 1981:62-69; Steinbring 1990; Steinbring and Elias 1968).

Another concern in Canadian Shield rock art studies, which gained in importance in the middle of the twentieth century and which remains significant, is the accurate recording and preservation of these sites. Prior to the middle of the twentieth century, few Canadian Shield rock art sites were recorded. However, in the second half of the twentieth century, issues of recording and preservation came to the fore. Destruction and damage to sites due to development, governmental "protection" methods, vandalism and certain recording techniques sparked concern for conservation (e.g. Bahn 1998:276-277; Conway 1979; Grant 1967:68-78; T. Jones 1979, 1981:7-9; Pohorecky 1979; Pohorecky and Jones 1966, 1967, 1968b; Tassé 1977:90-92, 1979; Wainwright 1988). Problems of a technical nature, pertaining to the characteristics of the binder and the pigment used in pictographs, also were considered. These investigations emerged as scientific enquiries

permitted more detailed studies of the chemical and physical properties of the paint (e.g. Taylor et al. 1974). More recently, the physical and chemical analysis of rock art has been greatly advanced. New techniques examining the organic and inorganic properties of rock art, such as X-ray Diffraction (XRD) (Mineral Analysis) and Crossover Immunoelectrophoresis (CIEP) (Organic Analysis) have been applied to the study of rock art (Rowe 2001). Other recent studies have examined the effects of fire on petroglyphs (Tratebas et. al 2004) and chemical effects in rock substrates caused by lichens (Dandridge and Meen 2006). However, Canadian Shield rock art has not been subjected to most of these novel analyses.[24]

Rock Art Studies from 1950-1975: Formalism and the New Archaeology

The classificatory and descriptive methodologies initiated in the nineteenth century continued to dominate rock art studies in the Canadian Shield well into the third quarter of the twentieth century (Schaafsma 1985:238). As late as 1967, according to Grant (1967:4), Mallery was "still ... the foremost authority on the subject" of North American rock art. The New Archaeology, which emerged in the 1960s, was marked by the trend to generalize, the importance of empirical objectivity, and a return to evolutionary concerns. New Archaeology's tenets perpetuated the gap between rock art and its specific cultural context and further strengthened stylistic studies. Style, "the constant form – and sometimes the constant elements, qualities, and expression – in the art of an individual or a group" (Schapiro 1953:287), remained a useful tool for classifying rock art's pictorial elements, as well as a tool for correlating rock art with particular cultures (Grant 1983:11). According to Grant (1983:11): "Style is the most

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[24] XRD has been applied to Canadian Shield rock art by Taylor et al. (1974:34) and it has been determined that the pigment consisted of hematite.

important consideration in rock art research." Thus, major rock art studies tended to concentrate on style and geographical distributions (see Dewdney and Kidd 1967; Grant 1967, 1983; Wellmann 1979).

The return of evolutionary concerns by the New Archaeology meant that style could serve as a gauge for cultural change (Grant 1967:18-20) despite the fact that the stylistic sequences were "supported by suspect chronologies and tenuous ethnographic analogies" (Molyneaux 1977:106). Grant (1967:40-41), for example, devised three stages of rock art traditions where the degree of leisure attained by a cultural group was correlated with the so-called "great[ness]" of art created. Thus, sedentary groups were said to create art superior to hunter-gatherers. People, such as the Ojibwa, corresponding to the primary stage of art development and characterized by an hunting and gathering economy, were associated with rock art that consisted of "mainly crude representations of game animals, hunters, and a few mythological beings" (Grant 1967:41). Design motifs such as the thunderbird, were classified and described (e.g. Grant 1967:54-67; Wellmann 1979:165-168), but were further removed from their particular cultural context. In addition, the New Archaeology's emphasis on generalizations and objectivity left little room for the study of ideology, thus hampering research into the meaning and function(s) of rock art.

Search for Meaning in Canadian Shield Rock Art

Grant (1967:28) remarked that "[i]nterpretation is the most difficult and controversial part of any study of rock drawings....Of course we can know only in a general way the reasons for the drawings; precise meanings could come only from the original creators." Researchers downplayed the artistic merit of rock art, which was

believed to serve specific purposes, usually of a ceremonial nature or as records of events or even as mere doodles (Grant 1967:28-39, 40). However, an increasing interest in symbolism, structuralism and semiotics in cultural anthropology and archaeology in the 1960s and 1970s prompted the search for meaning in the study of rock art (e.g. Leroi-Gourhan 1967) (Blundell 2000:35-45; Conkey 2001:278; Munn 1973:2). Iconographic[25] studies carried over from art history have also been influential (Kleinbauer 1989:51-65; Panofsky 1955). Eventually, rock art was envisioned as a sign system with multiple readings from which meaning could be elucidated (Conkey 2001:280-282).

Studies of Canadian Shield rock art employed ethnohistoric and ethnographic sources in order to access meaning (e.g. Dewdney and Kidd 1967; Jones 1981:70-72). Researchers were focused upon discrete iconographic images and relied predominantly on *Midewiwin* pictography as recorded by Schoolcraft (1851-1857), Hoffman (1888), and others, in order to interpret rock art images (Dewdney 1968:2; Dewdney and Kidd 1967; Lipsett 1970; Lugthart 1968; Rajnovich 1989, 1994; Vastokas and Vastokas 1973). Ethnographic inquiries carried out among Ojibwa and Cree peoples sought to elucidate the meaning of the imagery. These indicated that the *maymaygwayshiwuk* who lived within the cliffs are believed to have created rock art; that shamans could enter the cliffs to obtain medicine power; that fasts were held at rock art sites; and that the sites continue to be revered as evident from offerings of tobacco and cloth (Conway 1988, 1993:100-101; Dewdney 1965:3, 1978; Dewdney and Kidd 1967:13-14, 22; Jones 1981:76-77; Reid 1979:247-250; Steinbring 1978:13, 1998:8; Steinbring, Wheeler and Hanks 1978:66). Rock art locales usually are interpreted as vision quest sites (e.g. Conway

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[25] "Iconography is that branch of the history of art which concerns itself with the subject matter or meaning of works of art, as opposed to their form" (Panofsky 1955:26).

1988:19; Dewdney 1970b; Dewdney and Kidd 1967; Jones 1981:71-74; Rajnovich 1989; Vastokas and Vastokas 1973). With few exceptions, surrounding geography and landscape and the nature of the surface on which the art was created were usually ignored. According to Dewdney (1957:2-3), for example:

> It soon became evident on our first trip that the larger setting of any site was irrelevant. To date no generalization has been thought of that begins to account for the choice of either an individual cliff out of a group of cliffs, or of a particular rock face on a given cliff. Further, it is quite obvious that the artist was not concerned with the relationship in design between his drawing and the space it occupied.

Dewdney (1958:21) further stated that:

> [o]n most sites the artist pays no attention to the background he paints on. On one Agnes Lake site [Quetico Provincial Park], for instance, the background consists of strongly contrasting bands of gneissic rock against which the painting can scarcely be seen. In three other cases, drawings run across cracks or other flaws that could have been avoided. Here, however, the "net" that surrounds the sturgeon appears to emerge from, and disappear into, a deep vertical crevice in a very deliberate way.

These attitudes also pervaded the work of Dewdney and Kidd (1967:16-17). However, Dewdney's extensive research into Canadian Shield rock art led him to speculate about the possible functions of rock art sites. When talking of the Picture Rock site in Lake of the Woods region, Ontario, Dewdney (1971:4) considered it a place where a shaman could dream, as suggested by its location, its broad vista, and the "manito feel" which he experienced with "shameless subjectivity." Dewdney was verging on a phenomenological approach to rock art sites, where the experience generated by a visit to a site helps in constructing rock art's meaning. However, the primacy of objectivity and empiricism would have precluded further inquiries into the "being-there" experience of rock art. Nonetheless, it became apparent that style and imagery are not the only concerns in rock

art research as other variables come into play in defining the what, where and why of rock art. As Dewdney and Kidd (1967:168) remarked:

> It is conceivable that there is some pattern or plan to the general location of rock paintings, but, if this is true, it has still to be worked out. Were they placed only at the abodes of spirits? Were they scattered haphazardly in remote as well as in accessible places? Were they located only along important routes, or along routes used only at certain seasons or for certain purposes? The answers to these, and to many other questions, still have to be found, but should be interesting when discovered.

Contextualism: A Landscape Approach to Canadian Shield Rock Art

The first comprehensive study of a Canadian Shield rock art site, which took into consideration its cultural and physical context, was done in 1973 on the Peterborough Petroglyphs (Ontario) by Joan and Romas Vastokas, who emphasized the primacy of the site itself. Vastokas and Vastokas interpreted the site using ethnohistory, ethnography, art history, phenomenology of religion, history of religions, and Algonquian mythology. The result was an analysis situating the Peterborough Petroglyphs within the Algonquian cultural context. They linked the petroglyphs and the site with Algonquian mythology and beliefs that speak of an animate landscape inhabited with manitous. The Peterborough Petroglyphs were examined beyond their formal qualities. The Vastokas' analysis demonstrated that the rock itself is inextricably connected with the carved images. "It is these unusual natural formations [seams and fissures in the rock] that might have prompted the initial selection of this site as uncanny, strange, awesome, and hence charged with *manitou*, perhaps even the voice of *manitou* manifested in the tricking sounds of the hidden water" (Vastokas and Vastokas 1973:49). The site was interpreted as forming a whole with the surrounding landscape (Vastokas and Vasokas 1973:141).

The Vastokas' research also challenged the prevailing attitudes to stylistic studies. Changes within style were traditionally envisioned as results of migrations or different cultural phases but "distinctions of style within a single culture or a series of works need not always be explained in terms of outside cultural influences or culture change, but that they probably have their basis in functional and iconographic variation within the culture itself" (Vastokas and Vastokas 1973:137). Thus, rock art within one culture may have many functions that can be manifested, among others, through various styles. The plurality of functions might also be uncovered in the location of rock art (i.e. private versus public site) as pointed out by Schaafsma (1985:261-263).

The Vastokas' seminal study resulted in a greater consideration of the physical context of rock art sites. Dewdney (1979:337) later called for a greater awareness of the physical setting of the sites and for a more thorough incorporation of ethnohistoric and ethnographic accounts into rock art research. Pettipas (1991) argued for inclusion of oral literature into rock art studies. Researchers began to pay more attention to the surface of the rock and the positioning of images in relation to the surface features such as quartz lines, cracks, and washes of white patina (e.g. Adams 1980:119; Conway 1988:5-7; Lambert 1985, 1986; Rajnovich 1980a:38, 1981a:287; Steinbring 1987:5, 1998:20, 29-30, 59). The presence of topographical features such as overhangs, ledges, which possibly served as platforms for the painters; possible fasting caves and effigy formations in the vicinity; which all were likely factors in the choice of the sites, were also recorded (e.g. Conway and Conway 1984:3, 5, 9; 1989; Rajnovich 1981a; Rusak 1992; Steinbring 1987:11, 1998; Steinbring and Iwacha 1982:9-10; Steinbring, Whelan, Elias and Jones 1978:51). Waller (1993a, 1993b 2002), who explored at length the acoustic properties of

rock art sites claimed that "[c]ave paintings and ancient petroglyphs around the world are typically found in echo rich locations such as caves, canyons, and rocky cliff faces" (Waller 2002:1). Acoustic properties have also been observed on Canadian Shield rock art sites (e.g. Conway 1993:149-157; Lambert 1983:13; Steinbring 1998:77, 92; Vastokas and Vastokas 1973:49). The sites' orientation also was recorded (e.g. Jones 1981; Lambert 1983, 1985, 1986; Rajnovich 1980a:34; Rusak 1992; Conway and Conway 1989:42). Consultation with Indigenous people further indicated that rock art sites occupied special locations within the landscape and that the landscape itself was charged with powerful meaning (e.g. Conway 1985, 1988:7-8, 1993:30, 90-92, 101; Conway and Conway 1984: 19-20, 1989: 54-55, 1990; Rajnovich 1989:186; Steinbring, Whelan, Elias and Jones 1978:57).

Brian Molyneaux also argued for rock art within a sacred landscape, using physical evidence at the sites as well as incorporating ethnohistoric and Indigenous beliefs into his study (Molyneaux 1980, 1983, 1987).

> When rock art is viewed within the context of the surrounding landscape, it becomes evident that many of the sites are associated with unusual or striking rock features: massive cliffs, large crevices or cavities, prominent overhangs, or strangely glaciated or weathered surfaces. Like the painted circle in the rock cavity on Cuttle Lake [Ontario], or a snake depicted at the entrance of a large crevice, some natural features have been clearly perceived by the artist and incorporated into the art. At other sites the association may be more subtle. On Lake of the Woods there is a painting site situated on a rock that owning to its dark colour appears to be entirely unsuited for the equally dark paintings that are barely visible on its surface. When the rock is viewed from a different angle, however, it becomes the profile of a large fish-like form, with a natural crease in the rock clearly defining the mouth. At Nett Lake in Minnesota, there is a petroglyph site located on an island with one peculiar feature. When one walks on the polished rock it gives out a drum like sound. These special places, distinct in their environment, may be interpreted as part of a larger tradition of beliefs and rituals concerning what might be called the sacred landscape (Molyneaux 1980:10).

Molyneaux (1987:25), a former student of the Vastokas', also called for an incorporation of Indigenous perceptions of landscape into rock art studies.

This was made possible by the rise of post-modern approaches within archaeology in the last two decades of the twentieth century. Contextual and post-processual archaeologies study archaeological remains in their whole cultural context with the aid of, among others, ethnography and ethnohistory. Ideology and religion are not mere epiphenomena but valid areas of archaeological research, and meaning and symbolism are explored. Furthermore, the endeavour of "break[ing] down oppositions between mind and matter" permits the engagement of "phenomenological approaches in archaeology" (Hodder 2005:207-212).

Landscape, which emerged as an analytic paradigm only in the 1960s, was not envisioned as a viable part of rock art research during the heyday of the New Archaeology, because landscape studies in archaeology focused traditionally on resources, climate, and soil. Landscape was studied in terms of "demographic patterns, technologies, transhumance systems, [and] territoriality" (Tilley 1994:1). The adaptive role of social organization for "environmental exploitation" [sic] was also explored and the location of sites was envisioned as resulting from "'rational' decision-making" (Tilley 1994:1). The New Archaeology studied landscape from a positivist and functionalist perspective. Settlement archaeology and the exploration of the constraining aspects of landscape on humans and their culture were the primary concerns of landscape archaeology (Ashmore and Knapp 1999:2, 7; Tilley 1994:7). Landscape was devoid of the human element (Tilley 1994:7), a perspective of little value for the interpretation of rock art's elusive meaning(s).

With the rise of contextual archaeology, landscape stopped being a "passive backdrop" (Ashmore and Knapp 1999:2) for human activities and its complex and active role in human culture was recognized. According to Tilley (1996:161) landscape:

> may be defined as a set of relationships between named locales. The latter are specific physical settings for social interaction (e.g. forest glades, rocks, monuments, rooms, dwellings, settlements) which presence material and symbolic potentialities on which actors draw in the conduct of their activities. Locales have individual and particular embedded meanings and are of vital significance in the formation of the existential self. A concept of landscape, by contrast, transcends the particular meanings of locales, signifying a set of conventional and normative understandings through which people construct and make sense of their cultural world. Locales stand, then, in relation to landscapes as parts to wholes.

Many scholars now recognize landscape as an embodiment of human ideology and belief where human experiences are the shaping forces of landscapes. Thus, landscapes have to be understood within their particular contexts as their meanings change through time depending on experiences lived by social actors. A person's age, gender and social status will create different realities that result in a proliferation of meanings. An abundance of meanings leads to a continuous "construction and reconstruction" of landscapes (Bender 1993:1-3; Thomas 2001:176).

Landscapes are comprised of natural features and "intangible [aspects] such as the acoustic, the kinetic and the olfactory, as well as the visual" (Australia ICOMOS 1995:4, cited in Buggey 2004:21). Landscapes are composed of realities apparent to the corporeal senses and of realities that stem from the mythological world. Landscapes can signify upper and lower worlds as well as a conflation of the past, the present and the future (Bender 1993:1-2; Thomas 2001:174). Landscapes are associated with memory and people can effectively partake in the construction and maintenance of individual and

group identities by, for example, altering the landscape through the construction of monuments (Ashmore and Knapp 1999:13-15; Carmichael et al. 1994; Tilley 1996:162). Modifications of the natural landscape through the construction of monuments or the creation of "human marked features" (such as rock art) contribute to the socialization of the landscape and to the creation of various meanings for those who experience it, meanings that can change over time depending on the ideological stance and needs of social actors (Bender 1993:11; Bradley 1998; Thomas 2001).

Evocative natural formations in the landscape are often linked with mythology. They are its tangible representations, and are also crucial elements that determine the uses and interpretations of a landscape (Ashmore and Knapp 1999:8). Bradley (2000) and Tilley and Bennett (2001) further argue that natural features found within the landscape, such as rivers, hills and rock outcrops, had a supernatural significance for prehistoric people. This idea is strengthened by studies of modern people that indicate that the symbolic value of a landscape does not depend directly on the amount and type of human modification it incurs (Ashmore and Knapp 1999:1-2; Carmichael et al. 1994). Thus, unusual physical formations as well as rivers, paths or areas within a landscape might have been the source of sacred meaning in that landscape.

Rock art plays a role in our perceptions of landscape but landscape also dictates our experience of rock art. Rock art serves to socialize a landscape, highlights its special meaning(s), and, often occurring in tandem with unusual physical features, it offers a window into past perceptions of landscape and ideologies.

These theoretical stances were also investigated in terms of Canadian Shield rock art. Paul Taçon (1990), another former student of Vastokas', argued for a Canadian

Shield rock art embedded within a sacred landscape. This landscape manifests itself through other features such as the stone arrangements known as Thunderbird nests (Taçon 1990:27-28). Vastokas (1990:57, 60-62) called for an incorporation of Indigenous perceptions and experiences of landscape into rock art studies, in order to better understand rock art within its total cultural and physical context.

John Norder (2003) studied the pattern of site distribution in the landscape of the Lake of the Woods region (Ontario) and concluded that rock art, besides its religious function, served a secular function as a geographical marker of paths and of important points in the landscape such as food gathering spots. Rock art also conveyed generalized and specialized information that could have been understood on many levels within a community. Furthermore, any single rock art site could have encoded information at various levels of understanding. Thus, forays have been made into understanding rock art as a multifunctional phenomenon.

Most recently, Daniel Arsenault has initiated a multidisciplinary research of the Nisula site in Québec, including archaeologists, geo-archaeologists, art historians, conservators, specialists in dating techniques as well as ethnographers and Innu people in order to understand the site in its total physical and cultural context (Arsenault 1996; Arsenault et al. 1995). Arsenault (1997, 1998, 2004b, 2004c) advocates for an investigation of the sacred landscape which includes not only the site proper, but also the various access routes that lead to it and other associated natural formations filled with spiritual power. The sacred landscape can be reconstructed through a study of Algonquian-speaking peoples' perceptions of landscape and spiritual beliefs, insights gained from anthropology of religions, as well as with a systematic analysis of the

physical properties of the site including its acoustic and visual properties. Lemaître (1997) argues for a more thorough investigation of rock art sites including their acoustic properties, the properties of the rock's surface and those of the surrounding landscape, in order to better comprehend the phenomenon that is rock art. Despite these theoretical advances, no comprehensive study of Canadian Shield rock art in light of a landscape approach has been undertaken.

Methodology

This study aims at elucidating the role of landscape in the location of Canadian Shield rock art sites as well as the possible functions of rock art sites. In order to fully comprehend rock art, it has to be studied and understood within its total cultural and environmental context. The landscape context is crucial because rock art is created and *experienced* by humans within that landscape (e.g. Bradley 1997; Bradley et al. 1994; Hultkrantz 1986:47). Thus, for the purposes of this study, various threads of evidence such as ethnohistory, ethnography, Algonquian mythology, anthropology of religion, phenomenology of religion, Indigenous perceptions of landscape, phenomenology of landscape and the physical setting of the sites are analysed.

Fieldwork was conducted in order to experience rock art within its natural setting and an analysis of written sources was undertaken in order to determine which landscape features might have played a decisive role in the location of rock art sites. Furthermore, interviews with Elders and a Traditional Person[26] were conducted in order to get a better understanding of rock art within its landscape and its possible functions. These

[26] An acknowledged Elder is an older person versed in Indigenous knowledge (i.e. ceremonies, language), a teacher of traditional Indigenous ways, and a spiritual and cultural leader (Stiegelbauer 1996). A Traditional Person follows the traditional Indigenous ways, without necessarily achieving the status of an Elder.

Indigenous informants consulted are not from an area where rock art is prevalent and their knowledge cannot escape the legacy of four centuries of European contact and missionary activity. Furthermore, the meaning they ascribe to rock art might not be the original meaning which was associated with this form of visual expression. However, their knowledge was sought in order to better comprehend Indigenous spirituality and perceptions of landscape. These methodological approaches invite the consideration of phenomenology in the study of rock art within the landscape context, as well as a consideration of issues inherent in conducting rock art research from written sources.

Phenomenology of Landscape

In the past, rock art's form and iconography were described and analysed apart from physical context. As Vastokas (1992:16-17) argued:

> Since the emergence of the Renaissance and the rise of materialist and positivist values, the work of visual art has been perceived and interpreted as an isolated object, divorced physically and meaningfully from both social life and the surrounding natural environment ... The natural landscape site played no role at all as an aesthetic factor in the mainly urban traditions of Renaissance, Baroque, Neoclassical and International Bauhaus genres...Western perception of Native art has been influenced from the beginning by these Renaissance and Modernist perceptions of the art work as an isolated object, as a commodity and as a status symbol ... this Western tradition of seeing and experiencing art has been totally inadequate to the task of appreciating and interpreting not only Native North American art, but also that of pre-Renaissance Europe, Asia and other non-Western traditions in which the work of art functions as culturally contextualized.

In the case of rock art, the physical and environmental context of the rock art site, as well as its socio-cultural context has to be taken into consideration. Vastokas (1992:18 emphasis added) further remarked that:

> [f]or the Native people themselves, art works never were simply artifacts; they never did function as isolated and inert physical objects but embodied

> a life-force of their own and played an active, highly meaningful role in cultural process and in the *experiential environment* of native societies.

Quantitative observation and description is insufficient in revealing the meaning of rock art. For North American Indigenous peoples, experience is one of the essential means of acquiring Knowledge. Experiencing the whole world around "not fragment[ing] experience but rather stress[ing] modes of interrelatedness across categories of meaning, never losing sight of an ultimate wholeness" (Brown and Cousins 2001:84) allows for a better understanding of self and of the entire Creation (Brown and Cousins 2001:107; Lynn Gehl, personal communication 2007). Thus, the site and its immediate landscape setting have to be experienced empirically in person. Vastokas (1992:34), following the phenomenological approach, observed that "work at pictograph and petroglyphs sites across Canada has only confirmed the importance of experience, of 'sensibles' and of personal physical involvement with the art work." Experience is crucial in understanding a rock art site (or any place for that matter). Rock art transforms a space in a landscape into a place which in turn generates various accretional experiences over time (Barrett 1999:29; Nash 2000; Nash and Chippindale 2002:2). Places emerge as locales of cultural landscapes through experience and experiences are remembered by being associated with places (Thomas 1996:83, 89).

Lane (2001:56) asks "how can we give voice to place, recovering a sense of the highly embodied and imaginative way that the natural environment participates with us in the creation of meaning and the mystery of experience." Phenomenology provides a framework for the study and the understanding of how we experience and perceive a place such as a rock art site. Phenomenology is about creating an experience of a place by "being-there" by paying attention to the topography, the material character of the place,

and its fauna, flora and geographical features (Lane 2001:58). Phenomenology's aim is to describe the subjective experience of a human being in the world as sensed and interpreted through one's body and how this experience proceeds to form our understanding of the world (Goldhanh 1999:17; Merleau-Ponty 1962; Thomas 1996; Tilley 2004:1-4).

Tilley (2004:10) remarks that "[t]he manner in which we sense the world remains forever incomplete and ambiguous because we always experience things from a particular point of view or relationship…the manner in which I experience an artefact, or a place, very much depends on the structure of my encounter with it." Furthermore, one's perception of a place is not static and is conditioned by the properties and attributes one chooses to emphasize, the lighting, the weather or the time of the day when the experience is occurring, one's mood, as well as previous understandings and experiences associated with the object of study. Thus, when describing landscapes one is creating an "open-ended" account which is subject to reevaluation upon subsequent visits by the same or different person and in the process offers a chance of obtaining a better understanding of the said landscape (Nash 2000:1, 7; Nash and Chippindale 2002:4; Thomas 1996:18, 88; Tilley 2004:11-12).

Hence, a phenomenological study of a rock art site is an active exchange between the place and our minds and bodies. It takes into consideration the total environmental setting, sounds, animals, plants, light conditions and weather, which were simultaneously encountered at the site and which affected our bodily senses, and how our personal experience of "being-there" was in turn instrumental in interpreting the site. The phenomenological approach to rock art and its landscape has been applied especially in

Europe (e.g. Goldhahn 2002; Helskog 1999:78; Nash 2000; Nash and Chippindale 2002; Tilley 1994, 2004). In North America, Vastokas (1992:33-37) has argued for the importance of experience at rock art sites, while Steinbring (1992) provided a general discussion of "phenomenal attributes" (i.e. visual and acoustic qualities at the site), which might have influenced site selection in rock art. Klassen (1995) has also employed phenomenology in his study of the Writing-On-Stone site in Alberta.

Phenomenology and Rock Art: Pros and Cons

The presumed need to measure and quantify all data in archaeological research has created a heavy reliance on the recording of visual properties, which are more amenable to this process, and therefore, seen as more objective, while other senses such as hearing and smell have been neglected as being too subjective (Goldhahn 2002:31). However, acoustic and tactile properties have been demonstrated to be of vital importance in rock art (e.g. Arsenault 2004c:307; Goldhahn 2002; Hedges 1993:123-124; Ouzman 2001) and they cannot be ignored. Thus, phenomenological research, which relies on all senses experienced holistically, is bound to be criticized by positivists for its subjectivity. Furthermore, the researcher's perception of a landscape and of a rock art site will be influenced by his/her cultural background which will determine what is deemed worthy of attention as well as the degree of attention that should be accorded to particular elements in the landscape (Smith and Blundell 2004:241-248). However, a phenomenological interpretation of a rock art site should be attempted as it will generate results unobtainable through quantitative empirical methods.

Nash and Chippindale (2002:4) state that "[o]ne tends to ignore (and forget) that our own experiences when visiting sites are just as valid as an archaeological report or

narrative text." Modern experience at a rock art site permits the researcher to make an effort at understanding why a particular site was chosen and how it was experienced in the past (Nash 2000:3). Though modern-day experience will be different from what people experienced in the past, it is nevertheless important to endeavor a re-construction of how a landscape was envisioned in the past (Chippindale and Nash 2004:13-14; Vastokas 2006:2). Thomas (1996:89) argues that "processual approaches" preclude a complete comprehension of a place and that "we must *put* [humans'] *bodily presences back*, through interpretation," into the archaeological record and consequently, be able to generate "a plausible account produced in and for the present." Vastokas (2005b) arguing for a *humanist archaeology* that concerns itself with beliefs, values and ideas, reminds that in humanities "testability is not a requirement nor even a possibility, but rather methodologies for *interpretation* that would prove over time to be either *valid* or *invalid*." Thus, a valid interpretation is one for which evidence is the strongest (Vastokas 2005b:9). Vastokas (2006:2) also points out that an understanding of past meanings can be attempted thanks to the work of Mark Johnson (1987) who argues that our bodies are the elementary source of meaning, imagination and reason. Strang (2005) "argues that physiological and cognitive processes common to humanity generate cross-cultural themes of meaning that persist over time and space," while Tilley (2004:219) argues that there is a certain degree of universality in an experience of a landscape due to the objective nature of physical features. Therefore, a coarse rock surface will be perceived as such by all who touch it and thus, will engender a certain elemental perception of that rock. The environment generates certain basic perceptions. Modern humans have the ability to experience the environment similarly to people in the past by virtue of identical

perceptual systems, which perceive the environment directly without having to rely on the brain to process data "from a kaleidoscopic inflow of sensation" (Gibson 1966).

Phenomenology of Canadian Shield Rock Art: Methodological Concerns

From a phenomenological perspective, rock art has to be experienced in person, as secondary descriptions and illustrations of a site thwart an understanding of its meaning. In this study, ten rock art sites located in Ontario were visited in order to gain a better understanding of Canadian Shield rock art within its landscape. The criterion for the selection of these sites was primarily their physical accessibility, as the majority are located in remote areas that are difficult to reach and require help from the members of the local community in locating and visiting them. Thus, four out of the ten sites are located in provincial parks which are easy to access. Other constraints were of temporal and financial nature which only allowed for visits to Ontario sites. The sites visited were (in order of visit): Agawa Bay pictograph site, (CiIe-3) located in Lake Superior Provincial Park; Blindfold Lake pictograph site (DjKn-1) located near Kenora; Annie Island pictograph site (DiKm-4) located in Lake of the Woods; Picture Rock Island pictograph site (DhKm-3) located in Lake of the Woods; Devil's Hole/ Devil's Bay 1 pictograph site (DhKm-4) located in Lake of the Woods; Devil's Bay 3 pictograph site (DhKm-18) located in Lake of the Woods[27]; Hayter Peninsula pictograph site (DiKm-1) located in Lake of the Woods; Peterborough Petroglyphs site (BdGm-10) near Peterborough; Lake Mazinaw Pictograph Complex located in Bon Echo Provincial Park (BfGh-5); and Fairy Point pictograph site (DcHw-2) located in Missinaibi Provincial Park.

[27] This site in Molyneaux (1979) report is recorded as DhKm-4.

The sites visited provide a sample of the variability of Canadian Shield rock art sites. They range from those containing multiple images and located on imposing cliffs (Agawa Bay site, Lake Mazinaw Pictograph Complex, Fairy Point site) to a substantial number of images on a fairly large cliff (Picture Rock Island site) to sites located on fairly large cliffs containing few images (Annie Island site, Devil's Bay 3 site), to a medium sized cliff with a substantial number of images (Devil's Hole/ Devil's Bay 1 site), to sites on smaller cliffs with a substantial number of images (Blindfold Lake site, Hayter Peninsula site), and to a large petroglyph site (Peterborough Petroglyphs) located on horizontally sloping bedrock.

The sites were each visited once except for Agawa Bay (three times), Peterborough Petroglyphs (two times) and Lake Mazinaw Pictograph Complex (two times). The duration of the visits lasted up to several hours depending on time constraints and safety issues. This precluded the carrying out of detailed observations of all of the sites. The sites were all visited during the summer under rather favourable weather conditions (i.e. sunny or partially cloudy, with little wind). Attempts at visiting sites at other times were avoided due to boating safety issues as all of the sites, except Agawa Bay and Peterborough Petroglyphs, are accessible only by water.

Offerings of tobacco were made at the sites, as is customary for pious Indigenous people and others who want to pay respect to the sacred places. Recording of information at the sites was not carried out in a systematic manner by using a checklist because each site is unique and different factors are more important in some than others. Each site also generates different sensations. Attention was paid to such factors as the acoustic properties of the site (i.e. echo), light effects, depth of water, directions the site was

facing, presence of unusual rock formations at or near the site, the view away from the site, the characteristics of the rocky outcrop on which the images were placed (such as its colour) and the relationship of images to the rocky outcrop. Finally, photographs of the site were taken and included shots of individual images as well as overall views of the site and of vistas from the site. The photographs now form a large collection of approximately 900 colour pictures taken with a digital camera. No other visual recording (i.e. tracing of images) was undertaken as these were not required for the present study. The results of the phenomenological investigation are discussed in Chapter 5.

Canadian Shield Rock Art and Problems of Classification and Terminology

In order to further elucidate the relationship between Canadian Shield rock art and its landscape, and to determine if rock art could have served as a navigational sign system, the available literature on rock art and rock art site reports were consulted. However, an analysis based on the existing rock art literature is inherently problematic.

The recording of rock art was always fraught with problems because pictographs and petroglyphs elude straight-forward classification and measurements due to their variability. Thus, an element of subjectivity is always present. Dewdney (1979:325) lamented the situation of "the cavalier approach of many archaeologists in illustrating and interpreting their rock art findings, and … the vague verbal terminology and careless visual records that continue to add confusion and premature conclusions to the literature." Visual reproductions of rock art are often misleading, as images are reproduced inaccurately and out of context. Images are often isolated from adjacent images and are sometimes depicted alongside unrelated ones or are depicted vertically when in reality

they were painted in a horizontal position (Boyle 1971[1896]:6; Dewdney 1979:333-336; Jones 1981:8; Lemaître 1997:59).

Rock art terminology is also problematic (see Wellmann 1979:15-16) and can be confusing and inconsistent. For example, Willcox criticised Dewdney's use of the term "unidentified abstract symbols" to describe certain images because if these images are "meaningless doodles [they] have no possible identification; if they are unrecognized representations they would not be abstract, and they are not symbols unless … they are 'something that stands for, represents or denotes something else'" (Willcox, quoted in Dewdney 1979:326).

The arbitrary ascription of motif types (i.e. animal, human) as well as the assigning of labels to particular images is also problematic as these encourage unfounded assumptions about the meaning and content of rock art (Dewdney 1979:330-331; Maurer and Whelan 1977:199-201). Dewdney (1979:331) criticised this tendency by exposing his designation of a figure from Lake Mazinaw Pictograph Complex as a "Rabbit-man" (i.e. *Nanabush*). It was a "thoughtless label" which led some researchers to claim the site as Ojibwa in origin. Many images are also difficult to identify due to weathering or damage. Therefore, the attribution of such images to any category can lead to interpretation errors. Furthermore, it has been demonstrated that rock art images can encompass a simultaneity of plural meanings (e.g. Bradley 1997:11; Hultkrantz 1986:55; Jones 1981:75; Rajnovich 1994:81-92; Steinbring 1998:44). These typological issues demonstrate that an inquiry into recurrent patterns in the iconography of Canadian Shield rock art, which is believed by some to be a polysemous record of personal dream visions

of shamans and fasting youth executed throughout centuries, would only reveal the distribution of particular motifs, precluding any meaningful insights.

Problems of Inadequate Information in Literature Pertaining to Rock Art

Theoretical concerns determine what questions will be addressed during research and what data will be gathered to answer them (Schaafsma 1985:240). Landscape concerns in Canadian Shield rock art research are relatively recent and few studies have systematically examined landscape features at rock art sites. Thus, cracks and crevices are rarely shown in reproductions of rock art images and written accounts do not always identify such elements as ledges or overhangs or indicate the site's orientation. Acoustic and visual properties at the sites are also seldom recorded. The overall landscape context of sites is further ignored and often the location of the site in relation to the river or lake on which it is found is not described.

Problems inherent in rock art studies such as inadequate recording, as well as typological and theoretical shortcomings are evident from rock art site reports. Due to this lack of data, an analysis of a site's physical setting and its attributes cannot be undertaken. Such an analysis should aim to determine which physical characteristics of the landscape might have influenced the location of a rock art site by examining their frequencies. A site's physical setting includes the distinctive properties of the rock outcrop such as the presence or absence of overhangs, ledges, quartzite veins, calcite deposits and cracks. General phenomenological properties of the site such as its cardinal orientation and attributes such as the acoustic (e.g. echo) and visual features (e.g. shimmering reflections from water on or near the paintings) of the site could also be examined. The site's placement on the lake or river should be considered to determine

whether the location had to be necessarily passed or not while travelling (i.e. at a narrows) and the importance of the lake or river in the Algonquian water travel system should also be studied in order to determine patterns in placement of rock art sites. Future research should concentrate on a systematic gathering of such data.

Summary of Theoretical Approaches

Canadian Shield rock art studies in the past have been predominantly of a descriptive and classificatory nature. As described earlier, this trend, initiated in the nineteenth century, was influenced by philology, evolutionism, formalism and positivism. Though the cultural and landscape contexts were ignored, a limited exploration into rock art and its association with landscape was carried out (e.g. Schoolcraft 1851-1857:I). Description, classification and stylistic and iconographic studies continued well into the twentieth century. It is only in the 1970s and the 1980s that landscape was increasingly envisioned as an integral aspect of rock art studies. With the rise of contextual archaeology, changing attitudes towards landscape and greater awareness of Indigenous beliefs, rock art studies stepped into a new era of interpretation.

Rock art studies in the post-modern era are multidisciplinary. They include not only a thorough investigation of the rock art site itself, but also incorporate ethnohistory, ethnography, Indigenous spiritual beliefs, anthropology of religion and phenomenology of landscape in order to arrive at a satisfactory interpretation of rock art. Though some researchers have earlier proposed and/or adopted this multidisciplinary approach (e.g. Arsenault et al. 1995; Lemaître 1997; Vastokas and Vastokas 1973) only isolated sites received such complete attention and the totality of Canadian Shield rock art remains to be considered within such a multidisciplinary approach.

Chapter 4: Rock Art and the Landscape: Ethnohistoric, Mythological and Ethnographic Evidence Regarding Canadian Shield Rock Art in its Landscape Context

This chapter presents evidence from ethnohistoric, ethnographic and mythological sources pertaining to the generalized landscape belief system of Algonquian-speaking peoples. For Algonquian-speaking peoples, just as for many people around the world, landscape is a repository of memory and certain natural landscape features are tied with myths and permit orientation in both cultural and natural worlds (see Molyneaux 2006). Algonquian-speaking peoples perceive the landscape to be animate, with spirits dwelling at particular locations. Rock art sites are among such places.

Landscape and Rock Art in Ethnohistoric Accounts

Earliest ethnohistoric accounts regarding Indigenous peoples' beliefs regarding rock art and its relationship with the landscape have been preserved in the writings of European missionaries, explorers and early travellers. Missionaries described Indigenous spiritual beliefs as mere curiosities and superstitions as they sought to convert the newly "conquered" peoples. Concerns with the fur trade and the charting of topography and new water routes permeate the pages of early travellers and explorers' journals, but descriptions of Indigenous lifeways and beliefs are also numerous. Both missionaries and early explorers' writings, though containing very few references to rock art, allow a glimpse into Indigenous beliefs regarding landscape and rock art.

The Sacred Landscape

Early accounts suggest Indigenous peoples envisioned a sacred landscape, filled with spirits or manitous. These manitous dwelled in mountains, unusual rock formations, lakes and rapids and their assistance was solicited with various gifts, especially tobacco

which was and remains a sacred substance among Indigenous peoples of the Canadian Shield and Great Lakes area. According to Gabriel Sagard, a Recollect Brother who made his journey to Huronia in 1623:

> They [Indigenous people] believe also that there are certain spirits which bear rule over one place, and others over another, some over rivers, others over journeying, trading, warfare, feasts and diseases, and many other matters. Sometimes they offer them tobacco and make some kind of prayer and ritual observance to obtain from them what they desire (Sagard 1939[1632]:171).

Jesuit priests observed that:

> They [Indigenous people] address themselves to the Earth, to Rivers, to Lakes, to dangerous Rocks, but above all to the Sky; and believe that all these things are animate, and that some powerful Demon resides there. They are not contented with making simple vows, they often accompany them with a sort of sacrifice. ...Some are to render them propitious and favourable; others to appease them, when they have received in their opinion some disgrace from them or believe they have incurred their anger or indignation (Thwaites 1896-1901:X:159).

The Jesuit Father François Du Creux (1951[1664]:117) noted that Indigenous people "throw tobacco into the fire, or into the lakes, or place it in the crevices in the rocks, or on the trails; they do this, no doubt, to propitiate the spirits." Another account comes from the Jesuit Father Lafitau (1974[1724]:114) who remarked briefly that among Indigenous people, one finds veneration for "high places [and] conical stones." The Ojibwa missionary Peter Jones (1973[1861]:85), remarked:

> Any remarkable features in natural scenery or terrific places become objects of superstitious dread and veneration, from the idea they are the abodes of gods: for instance, curious trees, rocks, islands, mountains, caves, or waterfalls. Whenever they approach these it is with the greatest solemnity, smoking a pipe, and leaving a little tobacco as an offering to the presiding spirit of the hallowed spot. Waterfalls are noted places for their tobacco offerings, from the belief that the gods of the falls are very fond of this plant.

Sagard related that the Hurons believed their Creator, *Yoscaha*, left a "print of his feet on a rock at the edge of a river" (Sagard 1939[1632]:169). Thus, for Indigenous people the

landscape was imbued with spiritual powers and a mythological significance evident in the Creator leaving an imprint as a tangible sign of its presence.

Early explorers' and travellers' accounts also contain information about a landscape inhabited by supernatural powers which Indigenous people revered. The French explorer, Pierre de Charlevoix (1966[1761]:II:144) wrote that Indigenous people "ascribe to those imaginary beings, [spirits] a kind of immensity and omnipresence, for in whatever place they are, they invoke them, speak to them, believe they hear what is said to them, and act in consequence." He further noted that spirits inhabiting particular locales on the landscape, such as lakes and rivers and dangerous places, such as cataracts, were propitiated with various gifts, such as tobacco (de Charlevoix 1966[1761]:II:148). David Thompson, geographer and trader for the Hudson's Bay Company and the North West Company who travelled across Western America, including the Prairies in the years 1784-1812, noted that the Nahathaway (Cree) believe "[t]he Forests, the ledges and hills of Rock, the Lakes and Rivers have all something of the Manito about them, especially the Falls in the Rivers, and those to which the fish come to spawn" (Tyrrell 1916:84). The German explorer Johann Georg Köhl (1985[1860]:60) observed that the Ojibwa of Lake Superior sacrifice tobacco "on all stones, boulders, masses of copper, graves, or other places to which they attach a holy significance." Alexander Mackenzie (1971[1801]:29) reported that, while travelling among the Cree, his party came upon mountains whose summits "appeared also to be sprinkled with white stones, which glistened in the sun, and were called by the Indians *manetoe aseniah* or spirit stones." The explorer was also informed by the Hare Indians that the Mackenzie River (Northwest Territories) was inhabited by a Manitou (Mackenzie 1971[1801]:45). George Nelson (2002:85-86), a fur

trader working for Mackenzie's XY Company, reported that thunder-like sounds heard near Lake Superior were ascribed by some Indigenous people to manitous. The Ojibwa chief, George Copway provided further information about Indigenous perceptions of landscape:

> The lakes and streams were the places of their [the spirits'] resort, and mountains and vallies alike their abode. All the remarkable spots in the country were considered their favourite resorts. These were the peaks of rocky cliffs; the clefts of craggy mounts. Water-falls were thought to be their sporting scenes (Copway 1972[1850]:151-152).

Copway also indicated that some topographical formations were created in a supernatural manner. "There is not a lake or mountain that has not connected with it some story of delight or wonder, and nearly every beast and bird is the subject of the story-teller, being said to have transformed itself at some prior time into some mysterious formation" (Copway 1972[1850]:95).

Dwellings of Manitous

Within the sacred landscape, significant locales filled with manitous were also encountered. The physical features inhabited by spirits were sometimes, as Copway (1972[1850]:95) mentioned, the result of a transformation of a living being into an effigy rock. These special places revered by Indigenous people were also recorded by Europeans. Sagard recorded the presence of an unusual rock resembling a human being.

> They also showed me many mighty rocks on the way to Québec, in which they believed a spirit lived and ruled, and among others they showed me one, a hundred and fifty leagues from there which had something like a head and two upraised arms, and in the belly or middle of this mighty rock there was a deep cavern very difficult to approach. They tried to persuade me and make me believe absolutely, as they did, that this rock had been a mortal man like ourselves and that while lifting up his arms and hands he had been transformed into this stone, and in course of time had become a mighty rock, to which they pay respect and offer tobacco when passing it in their canoes, not always, but when they are in doubt of a successful issue to their journey.

> And as they offer the tobacco, which they throw into the water against the rock itself, they say to it, "Here, take courage, and let us have a good journey" (Sagard 1939[1632]:171).

Sagard (1939[1632]:253) also remarked that the rock, which used to be a human, was situated "about a harquebus-shot away" from a big waterfall 25 or 30 feet (7-9 meters) tall. The Jesuits further elaborated on this unusual rock:

> On the way by which the Hurons go to Kebec, there are some Rocks that they particularly reverence and to which they never fail, when they go down to trade, to offer Tobacco. They call one of them *Hihihouray*, meaning "a rock where the Owl makes its nest." But the most celebrated is the one they call *Tsanhohi Arasta*, "the home of *Tsanhohi*," which is a species of bird of prey. They tell marvels of this Rock. According to their story, it was formerly a man who was … changed into the stone. At all events they distinguish still the head, the arms, and the body; but he must have been extraordinarily powerful, for this mass is so vast and so high that their arrows cannot reach it. Besides, they hold that in the hollow of this Rock there is a Demon, who is capable of making their journey successful; that is why they stop as they pass, and offer it Tobacco, which they simply put into one of the clefts, addressing to it this prayer … "demon who dwellest in this place, here is Tobacco which I present to thee; help us, guard us from shipwreck, defend us from our enemies, and cause that after having made good trades we may return safe and sound to our village" (Thwaites 1896-1901:X:165,167).

During his voyage to the Hudson Bay in 1686, Chevalier de Troyes described that along the Ottawa River, there was a mountain known as Roche à l'Oiseau. Sacrifices were made at this location by throwing arrows over it to the end of which tobacco was attached (Caron 1918:37). This account might illustrate the effigy rock encountered in relations of early missionaries and possibly the Roche à l'Oiseau rock art site (see Tassé 1977), though the pictographs are not mentioned. This sacred location must have been situated on a frequently travelled route and was likely important since it has been recorded by various Europeans.

Tsanhohi Arasta and Roche à l'Oiseau form an integral part of the sacred landscape of Indigenous people. Not only are they inhabited by a spirit, *Tsanhohi Arasta*

also bears the name of a bird of prey which were revered among Indigenous people (i.e. Thunderbirds). The rock is also situated in the vicinity of turbulent water, which was often the abode of spirits into which tobacco was offered. Dangerous water may have possibly reinforced the sacredness of the site.

Another account describing a sacred rock was left by John Long, a fur trader. Long (1971[1791]:43-44) claims that at the entrance to Lake Superior, near Sault Ste. Marie, there:

> is a high rock, somewhat in the shape of a man, which the Chippeway [Ojibwa] Indians call "Kitchee Manitoo," or the Master of life. Here they all stop to make their offerings, which they do by throwing tobacco, and other things, into the water: by this they intend to make an acknowledgment to the rock, as the representative of the Supreme being, for the blessings they enjoy, cheerfully sacrificing to him their ornaments, and those things they hold most dear.

Robert Bell (1878:7C), working for the Geological Survey of Canada, left the following account regarding the Conjuring-house Rapid on Missinaibi River (Ontario) where "[a] curious angular pillar forty or fifty feet [12-15 meters] high stands perpendicularly in the middle of the rapid. Its proportions resemble, on a large scale, those of the Indian medicine-man's conjuring house, from which circumstance it derives its name, and the Indians regard it with superstitious veneration." Captain Carver, travelling on Lake Superior around the year 1766, stated that some islands on Lake Superior are avoided as being the abode of the Great Spirit who plays tricks on all who happen to venture on them (Quaife 1921:216).

Describing the mineral-stained Pictured Rocks of Lake Superior (now in the Picture Rocks National Park, Michigan), Copway (1972[1850]:16) said, "[t]he voyageurs never pass this coast except in the most profound calm; and the Indians, before they make the

attempt, offer their accustomed oblation, to propitiate the favour of their Manitas."

Copway (1972[1850]:17) further described the environs of Pictured Rocks.

> When we passed this immense fabric of nature, the wind was still and the lake was calm. But even the slightest motion of the waves, which in the most profound calm agitates these eternal seas, swept through the deep caverns with the noise of the distant thunder, and died away upon the ear, as it rolled forward in the dark recesses inaccessible to human observation. No sound more melancholy or more awful ever vibrated upon human nerves. It has left an impression which neither time nor distance can ever efface.

This account testifies that special places made an impact on other senses (i.e. hearing) and visual properties of a site could have further been augmented by, for example, acoustics.

Other accounts of places where acoustic qualities were of importance have been recorded. Alexander Henry, a fur trader, "reached an island called La Cloche, because there is here a rock standing on a plain, which being struck, rings like a bell" (Quaife 1921:33). According to Nelson (2002:39) a spot on the French River known as "l'Enfant-perdu" (Lost Child) was called by Indigenous people "crying child,' "from the cries of a child, heard *in the ground.*" Henry reported that he has stopped at the spot called Lost Child where a "chasm in the rock, nowhere more than two yards in breadth, but of great and immeasurable depth" was found and from which a child's cries issued (Quaife 1921:238). Schoolcraft (1977[1851]:78) related that near Sault Ste. Marie there existed a Manitou tree, which was renowned for emitting a sound similar to that of the war-drums and thus, was believed to be inhabited by a spirit. Offerings of twigs and boughs were made to the tree. The Mississauga believed that spirits dwelled in caves around Burlington Bay. One of these caves, known as *Manito-ah wigwam,* was located "at the foot of a steep precipice, from which the sound of explosions was often heard"

(Chamberlain 1888:157). The Mississauga also credited a manitou that lived in "a deep hole in the water" near Credit village with singing and drumming (Chamberlain 1888:157).

"Red Figures on the Face of a Rock": Rock Art in Ethnohistoric Accounts

Missionaries and early explorers recorded very little about rock art, but their accounts of an animate landscape inhabited by supernatural powers suggest that rock art was situated at locales venerated for their spirits. A Jesuit account indicates that "[a] day's journey up the river from the head of the Bay des Puans" there are difficult rapids (Thwaites 1896-1901:LV:191).

> At the Fall of these rapids, we found a sort of Idol which the Savages [sic] of that region honor, never failing to offer it some Sacrifice in passing, - either of tobacco, or arrows, or painted objects, or other articles, - to thank it for aiding them to escape, on their way up, the dangers of the waterfalls occurring in the stream; or else, if they have to descend, to pray for its assistance on that perilous voyage. It is a rock shaped by nature in the form of a human bust, in which one seems to distinguish, from a distance, the head, shoulders, breast and, more especially, the face, which passers-by are wont to Paint with their finest colors (Thwaites 1896-1901:LV:191-193).

Unfortunately, the Jesuit fathers had it thrown into the river in order to "remove this cause of idolatry" (Thwaites 1896-1901:LV:193).

An impressive account of a rock art site was recorded by the Jesuits on the Missouri River:

> While skirting some rocks, which by Their height and Length inspired awe, We saw upon one of them two painted monsters which at first made Us afraid, and upon Which the boldest savages [sic] dare not Long rest their eyes. They are as large as a calf; they have Horns on their heads Like those of a deer, a horrible look, red eyes, a beard like a tiger's, a face somewhat like a man's, a body Covered with scales, and so long a tail that it winds all around the Body, passing above the head and going back between the legs, ending in a Fish's tail. Green, red, and black are the three Colors composing the Picture" (Thwaites 1896-1901:LIX:139-141).

This site as well was situated near a "dreadful" rapid (Thwaites 1896-1901:LIX:141).

Another popular site was recorded on Crooked Lake in Minnesota by Alexander Mackenzie. Mackenzie (1971[1801]:liv) observed "a remarkable rock, with a smooth face, but split and cracked in different parts, which hang over the water. Into one of its horizontal chasms a great number of arrows have been shot." Mackenzie (1971[1801]:liv) related that this has been done by the Sioux as a warning to the Ojibwa. David Thompson (Tyrrell 1916:178) and Alexander Henry the Younger, who worked for the Northwest Company, mentioned as well the "Rock in Arrows" on Crooked Lake (Coues 1965[1897]:15-16). The geologist John J. Bigsby, travelling across the Canadas from 1819 to 1822, also left an account of this unusual place located at the narrows at the entrance to Crooked Lake where "[u]ntil lately the arrows shot by the Sioux, during a conflict at this spot, might be seen, sticking in the clefts of the rocks" (Bigsby, quoted in Nute 1941:36). Nute (1941:36) remarked that Bigsby's description along with those reported by earlier explorers describes Picture Rock. However, Bigsby, like his predecessors, failed to comment on the pictographs also present at the site. Mallery (1972[1893]:36) also observed the general lack of interest given to rock art by explorers.

Rock art was seldom noticed by explorers and the accounts that exist are laconic. The German traveller Köhl, who lived among the Ojibwa of Lake Superior, made a general note pertaining to this phenomenon. "It is well known that they covered large rocks and blocks of stone with inscriptions, especially the walls of caves, which appeared to them, as to other nations, something wonderful and sacred, and which were usually composed of a soft stone, on which a picture could be easily carved" (Köhl 1985[1860]:143). An account of one such rock art site located on Churchill River in

Northern Saskatchewan was left by Mackenzie (Pohorecky and Jones 1968a:30). Mackenzie (1971[1801]:lxxviii) recounted that "[a]t some distance from the Silent Rapid [a dangerous rapid], is a narrow strait, where the Indians have painted red figures on the face of a rock, and where it was their custom formerly to make an offering of some of the articles which they had with them." Captain John Franklin's narrative contains the description of:

> [t]he Painted Stone [which] is a low rock, ten or twelve yards across, remarkable for the marshy streams which arise on each side of it, taking different courses... It is said that there was formerly a stone placed near the centre of this portage on which figures were annually traced, and offerings deposited, by the Indians; but the stone has been removed many years, and the spot has ceased to be held in veneration (Franklin 1969[1823]:40-41).[28]

The fur trader Daniel Harmon (1911:10-11) recorded that on an island on Lake Huron:

> it is reported, that the Natives killed a snake, which measured thirty-six feet in length. The length and size of this astonishing serpent, they have engraved on large smooth rock, which we saw, as we passed by. But we have often seen other engravings, on the rocks, along the rivers and lakes, of many different kinds of animals, some of which, I am told, are not now to be found, in this part of the world, and probably never existed.[29]

Geologists were also responsible for the discovery and description of various rock art sites. The United States geologist, David Dale Owen's report contains the following description:

> At a point called by the Indians *Wa-bi-se-gon*, near the entrance to Nemakan or Sturgeon Lake, is an exposure of mica slate, with feldspar veins, as shown by the subjoined cut, which from the resemblance of one of the veins to a serpent, is regarded by the Indians as a *manitou* or god, and must be highly esteemed by them, from the quantity of vermillion

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[28] The Painted Stone Portage is located by a "curious little river, the Echimamish (the-river-that-flows-both-ways). The Echimamish, with barely detectable current for about forty miles, links the Hayes River with the Nelson. In totally flat, swampy country the Echimamish, boasts the unusual feature of rising, not at one end, but in its 'middle'; two streams, from north and south, meet in a beaver pond which flows out to the west and east – respectively into the Nelson and the Hayes....The Painted Stone Portage avoided a shallow rocky rapid in the stream" (Morse 1971:40).

[29] Conway (1985:7) claims this is an account of the Serpent Rock (CaHq-1) lichen glyph site.

> bestowed on it, and the number of animals depicted on the face of the rock (Owen 1852:318).

Bell (1881:7C) reported that:

> On the north side of the Pai-musk-taban Spi [a small stream known as Marshy-Canoe-route River which enters into Molson Lake on its south-western extremity] near its mouth, a perpendicular cliff of gneiss rises to a height of about 100 feet. The face of the cliff runs S. 38 degree W. (mag.), and is marked by horizontal glacial striae. On this cliff are some small figures in red ochre, said to have been painted by the father of the present chief of the colony of Indians which removed a few years ago from Little Playgreen Lake to Fisher River, on the west side of Lake Winnipeg. The largest pictures are not more than one foot high, and most of them do not exceed eight inches. They represent a boat, canoe, tortoise, bird, deer, otter, Indian, pipes, &c., and are spoken of by the Indians as being much more wonderful than they really are.[30]

Ethnohistoric accounts indicate that rock art was an integral element of a sacred animate landscape where the rock surfaces as well as the sites' often unusual surroundings were charged with spiritual power.

Stories of Sacred Places: Landscape through the Lens of Mythology

Indigenous legends and stories have been recorded since the times of early explorers such as Alexander Henry and Johann Georg Köhl. The latter believed that legends are important as sources for allowing a better understanding of cultures that produced them (Köhl 1985[1860]:xxxv). Ethnologists working in the Shield continued to record Indigenous mythology. Their research resulted in the accumulation of various legends that often speak of an animate landscape, where supernatural forces dwell and where particular features are associated with supernatural beings.

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[30] Bell is describing the Paimusk Creek site in Manitoba (Steinbring 1998:3).

In the Footsteps of Nanabush

Many accounts indicate that Lake Superior and the surrounding landscape were strongly associated with *Nanabush*, the Ojibwa culture-hero. Köhl (1985[1860]:415) remarked that "all along Lake Superior, you cannot come to any strangely formed rock, or other remarkable production of nature, without immediately hearing some story of Menaboju [*Nanabush*] connected with it."

An important landscape feature associated with *Nanabush* is the so called Sleeping Giant located in the harbour of the present-day city of Thunder Bay (Figure 4.1). Alexander Henry reported on an island on Lake Superior under which *Nanabush* is buried and on which offerings of among others tobacco, kettles and broken guns were made (Quaife 1921:203-205). Chamberlain (1891:195) reported that *Nanabush*'s grave is located on the north shore of the lake and looks like a man lying on his back. Indigenous people sacrificed tobacco in the water while passing by it. Jenness (1935:38) was informed that *Nanabush*'s body can be seen as a rock on Lake Superior. Coleman et al. (1971[1961]:97) reported that "At Fond du Lac [Minnesota], we heard that he [*Nanabush*] is living out on an island somewhere. At Grand Portage, we heard that he is the sleeping giant (a rock formation) in Thunder Bay farther up the north shore of Lake Superior."

Other features on the landscape are associated with *Nanabush*. A stone on the eastern end of Manitoulin Island (Ontario) was said to have been *Nanabush*'s kettle. The stone "is always filling with water, and a little hole lets out the water, so that it never overflows" (Jones 1916:389). Chamberlain's report indicates that such a "kettle" is also found near Ottawa River.

> On a smooth rock on the shores of the Ottawa River there are the prints of human footsteps, and, near by, a round hole "about the size of a kettle" These the Ottawa and Chippewas believe to be the track of Ne-naw-bo-zhoo and the kettle which he dropped while pursuing his brother. Into these holes bits of tobacco are dropped as luck offerings for a successful journey, etc. (Chamberlain 1891:195).

A depression in the rock near Lake Superior was said to be the place where *Nanabush* sat and "smoked his pipe before he left for his kingdom in the west" and into which tobacco is also offered (Chamberlain 1891:195). A stone near Sarnia (Ontario) was believed to have been *Nanabush*'s child (Jones 1916:389). Chamberlain (1891:195) further related that "[t]he great rocks of flint on the east shore of Grand Traverse Bay, near Antrim City, Michigan, are the corpse of the stone-monster ... whom Ne-naw-bo-zhoo there slew."

Köhl (1985[1860]:460-464) recounted the story of the Beaverhead boulder located on the bank of St. Mary's River. The story describes Nanabush chasing the Beaver King and his family and in the process forming St. Mary's River, the cataracts of Sault Ste. Marie, "heaps of rocky debris near Bruce Mines" and the Pictured Rocks of Lake Superior. De Charlevoix (1966[1761]:II:44) reported that Lake Superior:

> was formed by Michabou god of the waters, in order to catch beavers. In the channel by which it discharges itself into Lake Huron, is a rapid current caused by two great rocks ... these rocks according to the tradition of the Indians, are the remains of a causeway made by the god in order to dam up the waters of the rivers, and those of the lake *Alimipegon* which supply this great lake.

A tale from Maniwaki (Québec), about *Wisekedjak* the Trickster (*Nanabush*) chasing the giant Beaver, explains how the Thousand Islands and the Great Lakes were formed (Beck 1947:262).

Other supernatural beings are also credited with the formation of the landscape. The Great Beaver was responsible for forming "lake Nipissing; and all the rapids or

currents which are found in the great river of the Outaways" (de Charlevoix 1966[1761]:II:47). According to Johnston (1981:44-45), Hudson Bay and the multitude of lakes in northern Ontario resulted from an accident during a lacrosse game played by little Thunderbirds.

High Mountains and Deep Waters: the Place of Thunderbirds and Underwater Manitous within Algonquian Landscape

Thunderbirds and Underwater manitous are both ubiquitous in Algonquian mythology and are said to inhabit distinctive landscape locations. Thunderbirds are believed to dwell on the peaks of high mountains and the local lore identifies many such mountains (i.e. Thunder Mountain [McKay Mountain west of Thunder Bay]) (Chamberlain 1890a:51-52; Kawbawgam et al. 1994:40-41; Jenness 1935:37; Johnston 1995:122; Jones 1973[1861]:43, 86; Jones 1916:384; Laidlaw 1915:4, 1918:24; Morriseau 1965:4; Ray and Stevens 1995:20; Smith 1906:219; Smith 1995:80-81).

Underwater/ Underworld creatures such as serpents and the Great Lynx also know as the lion, water panther and *Mishipizhiw*, *Michipeshu* or *Mishi-bizheu* (Coleman et al. 1971[1961]:71; Conway and Conway 1990:24; Grant 1967:147; Johnston 1995:243; Jones 1916:385, 387; Laidlaw 1918:27, 65) were associated with lakes, rapids, falls and portages (Dewdney Collection 1960-1966; Laidlaw 1918:15, 61; Rogers 1962:D24, D42). Lake Superior is associated with the Great Lynx (e.g. Jones 1916:385, 387). The Mississauga believed that at the Narrows of Lake Simcoe (Ontario), there lived a *mishibishi* (Chamberlain 1890b:153). *Mishipeshu* was also said to live in Shoal Lake, Silent Rapids, White Sand rapids and the narrows at Sucker Lake (Ontario) (Dewdney Collection 1960-1966; Redsky 1972:120). The Potawatomi Indians believed there was a monster serpent in Lake Manitou (Indiana) (Gatschet 1899:257). Serpents also lived in

Mud Lake and Bark Lake (Québec) (Beck 1947:264) and in Sable Lake (Ontario) (Kawbawgam et al. 1994:45-47). According to modern-day Ojibwa, a merman or *Nebahnahbe* lives in Whitefish Bay (Ontario) (Conway 1984b:14).

Underwater spirits were propitiated with various gifts such as tobacco and dogs which were thrown into the water, in order to secure a safe journey or successful fishing. These gifts were also deposited "on the sides of difficult or dangerous roads on rocks, or near cataracts, ... to the genii who preside in these places" (de Charlevoix 1966[1761]:II:148). The Jesuit relations also indicate that "[a]t perilous places in the Rivers, they propitiate the eddies and rapids by offering them presents" (Thwaites 1896-1901:L:287). Henry related that while crossing a body of water with his Indigenous companions under dangerous weather conditions, a dog was thrown into the water to appease the Manitou (Quaife 1921:107). Jones (1973[1861]:84) wrote of a similar sacrifice that was made in order to secure a safe water journey. Coleman et al. (1971[1961]:57) reported that offerings of tobacco were made in order to secure protection while travelling on water. Morriseau (1965:27) claimed that:

> Ojibway Indians of Lake Nipigon [Ontario] had an offering rock erected to [*Mishipeshu*]. Offerings of copper pails were thrown into the water and black dogs as well as white dogs, decorated in the very best, were offered alive to the water god for it to eat. In the time of the early traders, traps, guns and firewater, as well as great amounts of tobacco, were also put into the water. This was done once a year around June, in order not to offend the water god and to bring good luck to all those who believed in these offerings. Canoes formed a circle at the offering rock, as these rites took place on the water.

Similar offering rocks were also erected on Lake Hanna (Ontario) in order to placate "evil snake sturgeons" and plead for safe travel (Morriseau 1965:33). Tanner (1979:98), working with the Mistassini Cree of Québec, also reported the custom of offering tobacco

to spirits dwelling in lakes prior to a journey and if a storm threatened. Landes (1968:31) mentioned that tobacco, decorated sticks and pieces of cloth were offered to water spirits by those who dreamt of water monsters in their vision quests.

Beings Turned to Stone: Supernatural Origins of Effigy Features

Natural formations resembling human beings, animals or items of material culture were often endowed with sacred meaning. Algonquian-speaking peoples' beliefs explain how some of these natural formations came into existence as a result of a transformation. The Sleeping Giant is one of many such formations. According to de Charlevoix (1966[1761]:II:47-48), the Great Beaver responsible for the formation of Lake Nipissing (Ontario):

> is buried under a mountain which you perceive on the northern shore of lake Nipissing. This mountain viewed from one certain side, naturally enough represents the figure of a beaver, which circumstances has no doubt occasioned all these tales; but the Indians maintain that it was the great beaver who gave this form to the mountain, after he had made choice of it for his burial place, and they never pass by this place, without rendering him their homage, by offering him the smoke of their tobacco.

The Michilimackinac Island (Ontario) is named after the Great Turtle which it resembles (Quaife 1921:37). The Beaverhead boulder in St. Mary's River is the head of the Beaver King whom was slain by *Nanabush* (Köhl 1985[1860]:464). A Montagnais legend about a man marrying a beaver, states that he turned into a rock hence the rock looks like a beaver (Speck 1925:22). Another legend recorded by Speck (1925:32), explains that the big rock, after which Lake Mistassini (Québec) is named, is the body of a killed conjuror. On the rock's side, there is supposed to be a cave into which rocks that are thrown produce an echoing sound. This sound is believed to belong to the spirit responding from within the rock. In a story about *Nanabush* and the four men, *Nanabush* transformed the

fourth man into a stone after the latter expressed the desire for an eternal life (Jones 1916:389; Laidlaw 1915:14; Skinner 1919:291).

The mythology of Algonquian-speaking peoples demonstrates that landscape was filled with spiritual powers. These powers were often concentrated in specific landscape features which often bore mythical origins. Thus, the sacred nature of the landscape is further confirmed.

A Note on Toponymy

Among Algonquian-speaking peoples, particular places received their names based on "some unique or distinct characteristic within the area" (Johnston 1986:9) as well as based on events that occurred there in historical and mythological times (Arsenault 2004c:297). The name "Manitoulin Island" "implies the residence of the Manitoes, or genii, a distinction [which was] very commonly attributed to the islands, and sometimes to the shores of Lake Huron and Superior" (Quaife 1921:36). The village of Manitowaning, located on Manitoulin Island, is named after *Mishipeshu* who dwells in the nearby underwater cave (Smith 1995:96). Places can be named after the sighting of a mythical creature, as is the case with Great Lynx Rapids (Hallowell 1934:395-396). Ghost River (Ontario) is said to derive its name from a bloody battle between the Iroquois and the Cree (Ellis 1995:177). According to Désveaux (1988:26-27), who worked among Ojibwa of Big Trout Lake in Northern Ontario, rivers do not bear the same name throughout their entire course but are divided into sections which are named after important natural features in the vicinity. Thus, *Mahikan Sipi* which literally means "wolf/river" should be understood as "the section of the river which provides access to the lake of wolves."

Band names can also be derived from places on the landscape. Franklin (1969 [1823]:155) related that the Dinneh Indians (Northwest Territories), who belong to the Chipewayan language family, call themselves Dinneh but each tribe "adds some distinctive epithet taken from the name of the river, or lake, on which they hunt, or the district from which they last migrated." Henry noted that the Nipisingues (Ontario) derive their name from a lake of the same name and the Missisakies, from the Missisaki River (Ontario) (Quaife 1921:31, 35). The Ojibwa Saulteurs band (Ontario) derives its name from a French translation of an Algonquian term meaning Dwellers at the Falls (Hickerson 1960:84).

Ethnographic Information Relating to Landscape and Rock Art

"Temples not Made with Hands": Shrines of Algonquian-speaking Peoples

Sacredness of the landscape and of specific landscape features for Algonquian-speaking peoples is evident in the ethnographic record. Jenness (1935:45), working with the Ojibwa of Parry Island in Ontario, reported the story of a man who angered a manitou dwelling within a rock. Hallowell (1992:58), working among the Ojibwa of the Berens River in Manitoba in the 1930s, recorded that on portage between Poplar Narrows and Pikangium, on Berens River, there was a boulder known as "our grandfather's rock." Hallowell (1992:58) stated that the rock was viewed as sacred and various offerings were placed by it. Hallowell (1975:148) also reported that Chief Berens had a boulder which belonged to his *Midé* great-grandfather. The stone's surface was suggestive of eyes and of a mouth, which was said to open during ceremonies and contain medicine in a leather sack. Landes (1968:15, 22), working among the Ojibwa of western Ontario and north-western Minnesota, stated that offerings of tobacco were employed in communication

with supernatural entities and that manitous could appear as, among others, meteoric stones. According to Danziger (1978:45), the Ojibwa of Grand Portage Reservation (Ontario) honour a cedar tree known as the Witch Tree, where offerings have been left "for hundreds of years … to appease Lake Superior's 'storm spirits.'"

The eastern extremity of Black Island (Manitoba) was known to produce "curious reverberation or thumping sound" when walked on. Incidentally, the *Midewiwin* was also held on that island. Hallowell (1936:44) observed that the acoustic properties might have prompted the choice of the island as a location for the *Midewiwin*. Smith (1995:51) was informed that ceremonies are still being held at the Bell Rocks (which sound upon being struck), located just to the north of Manitoulin Island (Ontario), and that they are perceived as manitous. Smith (1995:81) further reported that the La Cloche Mountains (the abode of Thunderbirds [Jones 1973[1861]:43]), also north of Manitoulin Island, are known as "the pathway of animikeek [Thunderbirds] … because thunder seems to sound loudest when it crosses these quartzite mountains."

According to Conway and Conway (1990:49), who conducted ethnographic fieldwork relating to rock art among the Ojibwa, Lake Superior's north shore is dotted with a series of rocks where manitous dwell. One of these rocks is the Old Grandmother Frog Rock located at the entrance of Whitefish Bay. In the past it was customary to deposit offerings at these locations. A rock formation north of Parry Sound (Ontario), that had the appearance of a turtle from one side, was/is also revered and offerings of tobacco, pennies, corn, bits of white broken crockery and spark plugs were/are deposited at the site (Allen 2002:64-65; Jameson 1965[1838]:161; Susan Jamieson, personal communication 2007). Tanner (1979:98), working among the Mistassini Cree of Québec, observed that

mountains are inhabited by spirits and that shamans venture there "to practise magic." The Mistassini Cree also recognize a specific conical mountain found within a rather flat landscape, which when pointed at, can bring about a storm (Tanner 1979:98).

The special place accorded to stones and trees among Algonquian-speaking peoples stems from the fact that they have the potential to be animate. In Algonquian languages, there is no grammatical distinction between the feminine and the masculine. The distinction is made between the animate and the inanimate and in Cree and Ojibwa languages, stone can be placed in the animate category along with trees, the winds, the sun and objects such as a pipe (Craik 1982; Désveaux 1988:61; Hallowell 1992:61; Wheeler 1975:707). The "gender" used will depend on the context of the experience with the object (Craik 1982; Hallowell 1975:144). Thus, stones and by implication stony formations, as well as trees can be perceived as alive and some can even become guardian spirits (see Jones 1916:377). Wheeler and Buchner (1975:368-369) state that "examples of rock art are perceived as a result of this implicit linguistic conditioning, as living things, sources of power, and the dwelling place of spirits."

Landscape and Rock Art

Ethnographic information indicates that rock art sites are associated with spiritual entities and, along with other natural formations, form an integral part of the sacred landscape. Landes (1968:227) states that the Ojibwa regard locations with rock paintings as "manito-charged," thus explaining the habit of leaving tobacco as offerings. According to Conway and Conway (1990:49), pictograph sites are sacred and can be envisioned as shrines.

Conway and Conway's (1989:54-55) research among the Temagami band of Algonkins in northern Ontario, demonstrates the connection between rock art sites and particular sacred locales on the landscape. The Mystery Rock pictograph site (CgHb-3), situated on Obabika Lake, is located near the "My Grandfather and My Grandmother rocks" (*Shomis* and *Koomis Wabikong*), a rock formation which functions as a shrine. Conway and Conway (1989:54-55) note further that this unusual rock formation is situated along a major travelling route between Lake Temagami and Obabika River and that in Temagami band territory, shrines referred to as grandmother and grandfather rocks are located near pictograph sites. The Gros Cap pictograph site (CdId-7) located on Lake Superior near Sault Ste. Marie, is also located in the vicinity of a shrine, which was in use until recently and where offerings were deposited (Conway 1984b:12). Pictograph sites can also be found near rock outcrops which are identified by Indigenous people as the mythical Giant Beaver's (*Misamiko*) lodge (Conway 1984a:5, 1993:92; Molyneaux 1987:22). Beaverhouse Lake in Ontario is said to be named after the mythological beaver, and a rock outcrop resembling the mythical beaver's lodge exists near the lake. "[A] deep pot hole with one side broken away" is thought to be the tooth mark of the mythical beaver. Incidentally, a pictograph site is located directly across the lake from this feature (Conway 1975:4). Conway (1985:1-7) has also recounted the story associated with the Rooster Rock Pictographs Site (Place of the Chicken), located on Rooster Rock cliff in Ontario, where sounds similar to a chicken crowing have been heard coming out of the cliff. Conway (1985:16-17) remarks that the appellation "Place of the Chicken" might imply a historic origin for the site as chickens were introduced into Canada in the seventeenth century. However, the chicken in the name of the place might stand for birds

that are native to Canada such as the prairie hen (Conway 1985:17). Louise Jones (1979:88), conducting ethnographic fieldwork among the Cree of Manitoba, also reported that rock art sites in the Nelson River area are located near striking landscape features, including effigy rocks. Steinbring, Whelan, Elias and Jones (1978:55-57) described the Wisakichak Footprint pictograph site (GkLr-1) in Manitoba, which is associated with depressions in the rock considered to be the footprints left by the Cree culture-hero.

Shkilnyk (1985:71) has left an informative account regarding a rock art site associated with the Grassy Narrows community of north-western Ontario:

> Our people used to believe there is a spirit that dwells in those cliffs over there. Whenever the Indians thought something like that, they put a marker. And you can still see those markers on the old reserve. Sometimes you see paintings on rocks. These mean something: they were put there for a purpose. You can still see a rock painting when you go up to Indian Lake. It's on the left-hand side of the cliffs. And as you go towards Maynard Lake and Oak Lake, there's a channel. You see a painting there too. The rock paintings mean that there is a good spirit there that will help us on the waters of the English River. You see a cut in the rocks over there; that's where people leave tobacco for the good spirit that inhabits that place. On the old reserve, they used to gather at the rock formation – "Little Boy Lying Down" they called it. From there they sent an echo across the space. They could tell by the strength of the echo if the land was good.

Maymaygwayshiwuk and Medicine Men: Rock Art and Ethnographic Research

According to a tale collected by Reid (1964:96-102), *Nanabush* instructed Indigenous people how to make rock paintings. The Ojibwa artist Norval Morriseau (1965:19) was told by his grandfather that rock paintings were not made with *onaman* (the sacred sand created from the blood of the Great Beaver) as was believed, but with a red substance exuded from the painter's fingers. Smith (1995:101) was informed that the Agawa Bay *Mishipeshu* pictograph was made by the Thunderbirds with *Mishipeshu*'s blood after they had killed him. However, ethnographic accounts most often cite

Indigenous reports that rock art was made by the *maymaygwayshiwuk*, dwarfs living in cliffs on lakes, or by "old people from long ago" (e.g. Arsenault et al. 1995:29; Barbeau 1914:299; Désveaux 1988:265-266; Dewdney Collection 1960-1966; Dewdney and Kidd 1967:22; Gatschet 1899:258; Hallowell 1992:64; Jenness 1935:42; L. Jones 1979:84; Lawson 1885:657; Rogers 1962:D43).

The *maymaygwayshiwuk* are hairy dwarfs inhabiting rocky cliffs along rivers and lakes. They travel in stone canoes and, upon encountering people, they hide their noseless faces in shame and make for the safety of their rocky abodes, which they enter through cracks, crevices or caves. *Maymaygwayshiwuk* are known to play tricks on humans, such as stealing fish from the nets. The rattling of their paddles, their drumming and their laughter has been heard by many witnesses. Some accounts link these beings to falls and rapids (e.g. Chamberlain 1888:157; Désveaux 1988:265-266; Dewdney Collection 1960-1966; Dewdney and Kidd 1967:13-14; Jones 1916:384; L. Jones 1979:84-86; Morriseau 1965:xvi; Rogers 1962:D43; Speck 1925:12; Wheeler 1975:701, 705-706).

According to some accounts, people did not seek out the *maymaygwayshiwuk*, who were "neither harm[ful] nor help[ful]" (Dewdney Collection 1960-1966; Rogers 1962:D43). Other accounts recognize them as "the good genii of the huntsman" or as usually benign (Chamberlain 1888:157; Désveaux 1988:265-266). However, the *maymaygwayshiwuk* are most renowned for their medicine, which they would trade to medicine men for tobacco or fish (Dewdney Collection 1960-1966). Medicine from the *maymaygwayshiwuk* could have been obtained during a conjuring ceremony (Hallowell 1971:59). Most often, however, medicine men would visit the *maymaygwayshiwuk* in the rocks, which they entered through crevices (Dewdney Collection 1960-1966; Dewdney

1978:115; Dewdney and Kidd 1967:14; Hallowell 1975:166; Overholt and Calicott 1982:108; Stevens 1971:97; Wheeler 1975:710).

An Indigenous informant, whose grandfather was a member of the *Midewiwin*, provided the following account to Dewdney:

> My grandfather was alone chasing two Maymaygwessiwuk into a big sheer rock face. The Maymaygwessiwuk paddled right into this rock and my grandfather went in after him. There was a door in the rock and inside was a very large snake and this old man inside with long long whiskers. What are you doing here? I want medicine.... Then the old man gave my grandfather this medicine. He didn't remember going outside but found himself in his canoe, outside. His bag was still outside that had the medicine and the medicine was still in it. From that time on my grandfather knew different medicine (Dewdney Collection 1960-1966).

The *maymaygwayshiwuk*'s rocky abodes are often associated with rock paintings (Dewdney Collection 1960-1966; Rogers 1962:D43; Wheeler 1975) and the hairy dwarfs are often credited with the paintings' authorship (e.g. Désveaux 1988:265-266; Dewdney Collection 1960-1966; Jenness 1935:42; L. Jones 1979:84; Jan Longboat, personal communication 2006; Ray and Stevens 1995:97; Redsky 1972:26; Rogers 1962:D43). According to an Indigenous informant, interviewed by Dewdney, rock art are images which "are messages to the Indian carved or painted for them by the *maymaygweshi*. Only the old Indians would know what they meant" (Dewdney Collection 1960-1966).

Particular rock art sites have been linked with the *maymaygwayshiwuk*. Dewdney reported the following discussion in 1956 with a Lac Seul Ojibway regarding Site #54[31] on Vermillion River (Ontario):

> ...in the rock cliff carrying the pictographs was a crevice in which tobacco was placed by Indian who passed this way. He told me this half playing, but when I asked him if he also placed tobacco in the crevice, he replied that he did. He told me that the tobacco placed in the niche was always

[31] Prior to acquiring Borden numbers, Canadian Shield rock art sites were numbered by Dewdney in sequence of their discovery.

> gone when they next passed that way. George also said that some people (he didn't know who) are afraid when passing this place having at time heard a slow thumping as of a drum coming from the rock. When I asked George if the "Mameingwessi" were supposed to have done that painting, he answered in the affirmative (Dewdney Collection 1960-1966).

Maymaygwayshiwuk have also been associated with the Tramping Lake site in Manitoba (Dewdney Collection 1960-1966) and the Paimusk Creek site #160 where they have been heard drumming (Dewdney Collection 1960-1966; Dewdney 1978:115). The Nett Lake petroglyphs site, known for its reverberating rock, has also been identified with the *maymaygwayshiwuk* (Jones, cited in Landes 1968:277-278; Molyneaux 1980:10; Reagan 1921:258) as was the Rooster Rock Pictographs site (Conway 1985:1-7). *Maymaygwayshiwuk* were also said to be depicted in rock art as, for example, "anthropomorphs" with arms in the surrender position (i.e. lifted up arms) (Dewdney Collection 1960-1966; Dewdney and Kidd 1967:14; Rajnovich 1989:185; Wheeler 1975:701).

The *maymaygwayshiwuk* received various offerings in exchange for their medicine or in order to provide a safe passage across a lake. These offerings consisted of tobacco (often stuck in a rock crevice or thrown in the water), painted sticks (prayer sticks) and cloth (Chamberlain 1888:157; Dewdney Collection 1960-1966; Jenness 1935:42; Redsky 1972:123-124). Such offerings have also been observed at rock art sites in crevices and on rock ledges (e.g. Annie Island, Blindfold Lake, Devil's Hole, Hayter Peninsula, Nett Lake Petroglyphs, Sunset Channel Petroglyphs) (Dewdney and Kidd 1967:48, 44-45, 48, 51-52, 55, 111, 128, 154; Landes 1968:277; Reid 1979:247, 250). A projectile point has also been recovered from the rock painting site at the narrows of Lower Manitou Lake in north-western Ontario (DhKg-1), which Molyneaux (1983)

interpreted as an offering similar to those described in early ethnohistoric sources (e.g. Roche à l'Oiseau).

According to Indigenous people, rock art is also supposed to have been created by medicine men, a belief that is attested to by medicine men themselves (Conway and Conway 1990:69-75; Dewdney Collection 1960-1966; Leechman et al. 1955:38-39; Wendy Phillips, personal communication 2007; Wheeler 1975:710). Hallowell (1936:47) recorded that one of the sons of a *Midé* was named *manzi-napkinegéwinini* ("the man who is painting the rock").

Ethnographic research has established the association between particular sites and shamanism. Dewdney was informed that paintings on site #160 were done by the *Midé* great-great-grandfather of an informant (Dewdney Collection 1960-1966). Another site connected with the *Midewiwin* has been investigated by Steinbring (1978:8-11, 1998:1-8). The site situated along the Rice River in Manitoba is located in the vicinity of Black Island where *Midewiwin* ceremonies were known to have been held (see pg. 84). The site represents a figure depicted above a scaffold-like structure. The scaffold has been interpreted by a native informant as "a bed ... the kind the Old People used for medicine" and the figure, as a *Midé* fasting on the bed in order to "reaffirm and enhance [his] supernatural strength" (Steinbring 1978:11, 1998:4-6). The Knee Lake Narrows site (GfKq-1) located in Manitoba, is known to the Oxford House Cree as "Painting Rock" and conjuring ceremonies have been held in its vicinity. Furthermore, fish have been noted recently to be missing from Indigenous peoples' nets near the site (Steinbring, Wheeler and Hanks 1978:66). The Iron Spirit Site #286 (FeKr-P1), also in Manitoba, has

been a fasting locale for a medicine man who also was credited with the creation of the pictographs (Dewdney 1978:111-113).

Rock art created by medicine men was said to be a record of their dreams, as well as an indicator of the places where medicine was obtained from the rocks (Dewdney Collection 1960-1966). An unusual account of association of rock art, *maymaygwayshiwuk* and shamanism was given by an Ojibway shaman to Paul Radin who collected Indigenous myths (see also Appendix for an account involving *maymaygwayshiwuk*, medicine man and rock art):

> There was a hill near my father's wigwam called the Place-where-they-keep-weapons. It was a very high hill, steep and rocky. They said it was a very holy place. Within that hill lived spirits called Those-who-are-like-children (i.e. Liliputians). There were twenty of them and they possessed arrows. My father [a very famous shaman] was in charge of these (i.e. some powerful manitoo had in his blessing placed these under his control). When he wished to "bless" a man, he would do as follows. He would take his bow and arrows in both hands and take the spirits around the hill into his wigwam (into the middle of the hill), where stood a stone pillar. On this pillar he drew the pictures of various animals. Then he danced around the stone and sang, and when he was finished, commenced to breathe upon it. Then he walked around it again, shot at it, and it turned into a deer with great antlers... (Radin 1914:215-216, cited in Schmalz 1991:7-8).

"That's What They Seen in Their Dreams": Rock Art and Puberty Fasting

Rock art is also associated with puberty fasting. According to Dewdney and Kidd (1967:22) "[m]ost of the evidence suggests that the rock paintings represented dreams and were intended to enhance their efficacy." Francis Tom of Sioux Narrows explained that "[a] lot of those guys they done some fasting where they have those paintings... whatever you see on the paintings that's what they seen in their dreams. I hear this from my grandfather and dad and others, too. That's why I put tobacco there" (Dewdney and Kidd 1967:22). According to William McInnes, of the Geological Survey of Canada, paintings "were made by boys during the fasting period at the time of puberty and

represent various animals and objects dreamed of at that time" (Leechman et al. 1955:38-39). Jones (1981:72) was informed by a La Ronge man "that the paintings are found at the place where dreams occurred to the painters, and that they represent the gods of these painters. Whenever in need of assistance, the painter could go to these places where the spirits resided." According to Indigenous informants, the Rooster Rock Pictographs site has been used in the past for puberty fasting (Conway 1985:1-7).

Steinbring (1998:48) has remarked that "isolation has been a common consideration in many Algonkian religious activities" and rock art research has demonstrated that some sites are found away from main canoe routes, rendering them propitious to vision quests (e.g. Dewdney and Kidd 1967:74-75; Steinbring 1998:48, 133). Furthermore, some sites are located in proximity to small caves and shelters, which could have been used for fasting (Steinbring 1987:11, 1998:15, 122; Steinbring and Iwacha 1982:9-10).

Landscape Studies of Canadian Shield Rock Art

Certain attributes of the rocky outcrop on which rock art was created, the orientation of the site, phenomenal attributes such as acoustic properties of the site, and the site's relationship to nearby watercourses and effigy formations, have all been remarked upon in various degrees by rock art scholars. The frequency with which some of the traits occur indicates that they must have been taken into consideration when locales for rock art sites were being chosen. Some researchers have observed that pictograph sites tend to be located on "straight shorelines, not coastlines interrupted by bays, points or island contours" (Rajnovich 1981b:24, 27; Reid 1980:223). Smooth and light-coloured surfaces are also preferred for pictographs and petroglyphs (e.g. Arsenault

2004c:304; Arsenault et al. 1995:20; Boyle 1971[1896]:6, 1908:31; Conway 1985:2; Dewdney and Kidd 1967:168; Jones 1981:48; Steinbring 1998:13, 77; Steinbring and Callaghan 1985:3; Steinbring, Whelan, Elias and Jones 1978:45).

Properties of the rock outcrop which seem to have played an important role in site selection were the presence of cracks and fissures, which were often incorporated into the rock art (e.g. Lambert 1983:73; Rajnovich 1981b:15; Vastokas and Vastokas 1973), the presence of quartz[32] veins, which also could have been incorporated directly into rock art (e.g. Lambert 1985) and the presence of white calcite deposits[33] (e.g. Conway and Conway 1990:13; Rajnovich 1980a:38, 1980b:47, 1981b:15; Steinbring, Whelan, Elias and Jones 1978:43). Lambert (1983:69) has observed that at the Maymaygwayshi pictograph site in Ontario (DjJw-1), unpainted surfaces do not contain precipitate deposits. Other natural features have also been observed to be incorporated into rock art. At the Kennedy Island petroglyphs site in Ontario, a snake has been created out of a winding band of rock to which an engraved head has been added (Molyneaux 1983:4). The inclusion of red mineral veins into rock art has also been observed (e.g. Lambert 1983:23, 1986:92; Rajnovich 1980a:38; Vastokas and Vastokas 1973:80). Other features frequently occurring at pictograph sites are ledges and protective overhangs. Norder (2003:63) observed that overhangs create favourable locations for the placement of pictographs, because mold and lichen growths are thwarted. Overhangs also could have

[32] Quartz is usually colourless or white but can also be purple, pink, yellow-brown and grey. It is characterised by a vitreous lustre. It is one of the most common minerals present in sandstones, sedimentary and metamorphic rocks. It "is an essential constituent of the granitic igneous rocks [and] is probably the most common of vein minerals" (Cox et al. 1967:106-107).

[33] The white calcium precipitate is formed by water which dissolves calcium. When water reaches the surface of a rock, it evaporates and leaves the white, opaque calcite streaks. Silica precipitate is formed in the same way; except that the deposits are clear (McMullin 2006:5). The precipitate takes a long time to form (A. Watchman, cited in Arsenault 2004c:304).

served as natural amphitheatres amplifying sounds (Arsenault et al. 1995:47; Lemaître 1997:63).

Acoustic properties have been repeatedly commented upon at rock art sites. The Peterborough Petroglyphs site distinguishes itself by the trickling sound of an underground stream deep within its main crevice (Vastokas and Vastokas 1973:49). The echo effect at certain sites, such as the Lake Mazinaw Pictograph Complex located in Bon Echo Provincial Park and the Paimusk Creek site near Lake Winnipeg (Steinbring 1992:104-105, 1998:92) also has been recorded. The presence of grottoes at the sites, which were created by rock eroding at the water level, could also have created natural amphitheatres (Arsenault 2004c:305; Arsenault et al. 1995:47; McMullin 2006:5). Norder (2003:76) noted that "[i]n talking to an archaeologist in my research area he [Reid] also noted as I did later that oftentimes when you are at a rock-art site the slap of water on hollows or crevices in the rock sounded like the beat of drums." Visual properties at the sites in the form of sunlight affecting the visibility of pictographs have also been remarked upon (e.g. Arsenault et al. 1995:47; Boyle 1971[1896]:5).

Rock art sites were often located at narrows and channels between water bodies (e.g. Lake Mazinaw Pictograph Complex; Smirch Lake site [Rajnovich 1980a:34]; Cuttle Lake Large Site [Rajnovich 1980b:46]; Tranquil Channel Petroglyphs [Reid 1979:250]; and Caribou Nest pictograph site [Steinbring, Whelan, Elias and Jones 1978:40]), as well as near dangerous waters such as falls or rapids (e.g. Goose Lake Site [Dewdney 1978:110] and Moose Falls site #259 [Dewdney 1978:123-125], Jackfish Lake pictograph site [Rajnovich 1981b:18]). Some rock art sites are also associated with effigy formations (e.g. Tramping Lake site in Manitoba [Steinbring 1992:106-107, 1998:64, 66]

and Lake Mazinaw Pictograph Complex). Arsenault (2004c:307) also suggests that prevailing winds might have influenced the placement of rock art sites such as the Roche à l'Oiseau and the Nisula Site (Québec).

Importance of Cardinal Directions in Indigenous Thought

Canadian Shield rock art is often found on south-east to south-west facing cliffs and only rarely on north-facing surfaces (e.g. Arsenault 2004c:305; Lambert 1983, 1985, 1986; Norder 2003:166; Rajnovich 1981a:285, 1981b:27; Reid 1980:223; Rusak 1992). Rajnovich (1981a:285) proposes that this avoidance of the northern exposure might have been enforced in order to protect the paintings from "destructive northwest winds." Another explanation for the direction that rock art sites are facing could be that rising and noontime sunshine reflected from the water produces light sparkles on the pictographs (Arsenault 2004c:305; Rajnovich 1980, cited in Lambert 1983:137). However, Lambert (1983:137) noted that the "light-reflecting phenomenon" also was noticed on unpainted cliffs. These explanations do not take into consideration Algonquian-speaking peoples' spiritual ideas about the cardinal directions, which will be explored further in Chapter 5.

Ethnohistoric and ethnographic accounts, as well as mythological stories indicate that Algonquian-speaking peoples regard the landscape as animate. Rock art sites are associated with spirits, the *maymaygwayshiwuk*, and served as fasting locales for medicine men and youths. Landscape features on or near the sites seem to have played an important role in site selection. The phenomenal attributes of rock art sites, as well as the functions that rock art sites might have served will be explored further in the next chapter.

Chapter 5: Ambiguous Images in a Sacred Landscape

This chapter discusses Canadian Shield rock art within the context of its landscape and Algonquian-speaking peoples' religious beliefs. It presents the results of the phenomenological investigation undertaken at rock art sites. A discussion of the significance of the landscape setting and its attributes present at rock art sites for Algonquian-speaking peoples follows. Furthermore, it discusses the possible functions of rock art sites: why they would have been propitious to communication with spiritual powers for vision-questing youth and medicine men acquiring medicines; the possible seasonal time of execution of rock art; the significance of offerings deposited at rock art sites; and the possible role of rock art as a navigational sign system.

Phenomenology of Canadian Shield Rock Art

> There has been noticed a striking disposition in the persons inscribing these figures, to place them in positions on the rock, not easily accessible, as on the perpendicular face of a cliff, to reach with, some artificial contrivance must have been necessary. The object clearly was to produce a feeling of surprise or mystery (Schoolcraft 1851-1857:I:406).

Schoolcraft's statement attests to the importance of feeling and experience associated with rock art and its placement within the landscape. As explained earlier (see Chapter 3), in order to better understand the place of Canadian Shield rock art in its landscape and experience the phenomenon that it represents, examination of ten rock art sites located in Ontario was made (Figure 5.1). The sites examined were (in order of visit): Agawa Bay pictograph site, (CiIe-3) located on Lake Superior in the Lake Superior Provincial Park; Blindfold Lake pictograph site (DjKn-1) located near Kenora; Annie Island pictograph site (DiKm-4) located in Lake of the Woods; Picture Rock Island pictograph site (DhKm-3) located in Lake of the Woods; Devil's Hole/ Devil's Bay 1 pictograph site (DhKm-4)

located in Lake of the Woods; Devil's Bay 3 pictograph site (DhKm-18) located in Lake of the Woods; Hayter Peninsula pictograph site (DiKm-1) located in Lake of the Woods; Peterborough Petroglyphs site (BdGm-10) just north of Stony Lake near Peterborough; Lake Mazinaw Pictograph Complex located in Bon Echo Provincial Park (BfGh-5); and Fairy Point pictograph site (DcHw-2) located in Missinaibi Provincial Park.

All of these sites are unique and evoke various emotions, which are triggered by diverse factors such as the placement of the site within the landscape; the properties of the rocky outcrop; the placement of rock art in relation to the elements of the rock; the view from the site; and the access route to the site. These factors are all important in personal experience to a greater or lesser degree. The length of visitation of the sites is also important, as a longer stay which was possible in five out of the ten sites, as well as revisitation of sites, which was possible for three out of the ten sites, permitted a deeper understanding of the importance of the surrounding landscape and how it might have played a decisive role in site selection. Visits to the sites further strengthened the argument that landscape is an important attribute in site selection. As Diamond et al. (1994:28) observe "[i]n Native cultures, certain physical formations are important sites because they may show a certain kind of 'power' – a strong wind, the sound of an underground stream, a clear vision of the morning sun." Often located in spectacular settings or incorporating silica or calcite deposits or quartz veins into the rock art composition, these sites have one important element in common: though located in the wilderness, among the endless forests and water ways, these sites truly help to socialize the landscape and assert human presence. The following are informal accounts of the

observations and experiences from the visits to the sites undertaken with the help of friends and sometimes with guides.

Agawa Bay Pictograph Site (CiIe-3)

The Agawa Bay site is located on a tall cliff on the shore of Lake Superior in the Lake Superior Provincial Park. It is easily accessed from Highway 17 where a sign leads visitors to the parking lot. The site was visited three times: on May 7, August 27 and September 1, 2006 in early and late afternoon. Each time the length of stay was from an hour to three hours. The weather on all these occasions was sunny with low to moderate wind. The site was accessed from land, instead of from a watercraft; the latter in all likelihood was how the site would have been accessed by Indigenous artists. This on-land approach resulted in a different experience, as the walk towards the site itself shaped the later reception of the site. It was the first visit that stirred the most emotions as it was also the first time that I have ever seen a pictograph site and such a famous one at that. I made the first trip shortly after the provincial park was opened after the winter season. I was warned by the park staff that a series of strong storms had recently passed in the area, uprooting many trees and that the path towards the pictographs had not been cleared. Furthermore, safety ropes had not been put up on the site's steep ledge.

The site is located roughly 500 meters from the parking lot and can be accessed by a forest path, which leads down to the lakeshore. Two exits lead away from the parking lot towards the path. The exit taken led down a set of narrow, tortuous and steep steps cut into the rock and onto the forest path (Figure 5.2). The path led past a natural wonder; an eroded dike[34] which faced onto Lake Superior. When walking towards it, I

[34] "A tabular body of igneous rock that cuts across the structure of adjacent rocks or cuts massive rocks" filling out fissures in the original rock (American Geological Institute 1976:121).

became gradually enclosed by steep dark vertical, barren walls, which continued all the way towards the lake (Figure 5.3). A sudden fenced-off precipice made further advance impossible. The narrow passage prevented light from entering the canyon-like formation, creating an atmosphere of seclusion; however, the bright light of the sunny day could be seen at the end of the tunnel and formed a strong contrast with the sombre atmosphere of the passage. Of greater interest was the sight of a huge boulder wedged between the narrow walls. The heavy boulder, illuminated from behind by the bright light seemed to be weightless, almost floating in the air, ready to drop at any time onto the ground below (Figure 5.4).

I continued on the rocky forest path and what was to be normally a ten to fifteen minute walk, turned into an hour-long hiking ordeal as the fallen trees obstructed the passage (Figure 5.5). There lay proof of the strength of Lake Superior storms. The path itself, shaded by the trees and high rocky outcrops continued down towards the site. Gradually, the trees began to thin and a set of stone steps led me out of the forest canyon, and I emerged onto a more open rocky area from which the lake and the surrounding landscape could be clearly seen. The sight was quite impressive. The vast Lake Superior, with its turquoise waters shimmering in the sunlight, was stretching in front of me (Figure 5.6). A further walk along rocky outcrops led me into the view of the site, which still had to be accessed by a further narrow downward flight of stone steps. Thus, I progressed from a high and enclosed area unto the lower open shoreline. The descent to the site evoked a descent to the underworld, this impression being heightened by the fact that the site is especially known for its pictograph of the Underwater manitou, *Mishipeshu*.

One could see the Agawa granite rock from its side, lending appreciation not only of its imposing height (50 meters), but also its sharp straight outline towering above the lake. The angular rock, which faces south-west, leans slightly over the lake and from this vantage, it could best be described as composed of three parts: the steep ledge along its front; a lower rectangular section; and the massive straight rock planted on the middle section and divided from it by a deep fissure (Figure 5.7). The cliff does stand out from the usual low rocky, often rounded outcrops found across the Canadian Shield, and it seems as if some entity has taken a knife and cut off a portion in order to create it.

I advanced onto the ledge, which is steep and at times intersected by deep fissures. On stormy days, the high waves cover it as they splash onto the cliff's wall. Under a deep massive overhang I saw the first panel of the fish and mythical creature[35] (Figure 5.8). It is well preserved on a shaded smooth pinkish-grey surface. To the left of the figures, whitish lines of feldspar (?) intersected at right angles forming a cross-like pattern. Panels III and IV (Wolf's War Party and a canoe) were barely visible on the light rock, which contrasts nicely with vertical streaks of darker rock (or lichens). Panels V, VI, VII (moose, abstractions) were so faint that I did not notice them until subsequent visits. However, panel VIII, *Mishipeshu* and the Snakes, was clearly visible on the smooth, vertical, reddish rock whose colour has been suggested to be due to an ochre wash (Conway and Conway 1990:24, 26) (Figure 5.9). Conway and Conway (1990:24) have described *Mishipeshu* as the "ultimate metaphor for Lake Superior - powerful, mysterious and ultimately very dangerous." I found *Mishipeshu* impressive. The ancient pictograph instilled a sense of respect, not only because of its size (it is probably one of

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[35] For a thorough description of individual panels see Conway and Conway (1990:16-42) who have numbered the panels from I to XVII.

the largest pictographs in the Canadian Shield – around 1 meter by 1 meter[36]) but also because of its documented importance in Algonquian mythology. The pictograph is well preserved. A white streak of calcite runs from the centre of its head and dissipates on its chest. The panel is located on a part of the cliff from which a portion has broken off, exposing a large upward jutting area of lighter coloured stone, which contrasts with the darker coloured stone above it. The area of the ledge beneath the panel is lighter than the rest of the ledge, which is generally light coloured and filled with sparkling mineral inclusions (Figure 5.10). This is a characteristic that I noticed on my last trip, when the layout and the characteristics of the site started to become more familiar. Furthermore, in various places the ledge is criss-crossed by thick quartz veins which disappear into the lake. Their sinuous forms reminded me of snakes. Their submersion by shallow water further brings out their sparkling nature and both the sun rays and the reflections from the minerals dance on the water (Figure 5.11; Figure 5.12).

The horse and rider panel (X) follows (Figure 5.13 and 5.15). Due to its large size and the precarious nature of the ledge, it would have been best appreciated from a canoe, as indeed is the case for the entire site. A panoramic view would not only encompass all of the paintings, but would also allow for the appreciation of the cliff's variation in colour and the deep chasms and fissures present at the site. Looking up from panel X, a massive overhang, the edge created by the missing section above the *Mishipeshu* panel, towered above me (Figure 5.14). A remarkable interplay of rock art and the cliff's surface is seen in panel IX, where a canoe with occupants is located above a dark contrasting rock (Figure 5.16); panel XII where two bears are placed within a triangular quartz line (Figure 5.17); panel XIII known as "Santa and his reindeer" where the images are located

[36] The actual measurements of this pictograph have not been published.

on two quartz veins intersecting under the belly of the middle animal (Figure 5.18); panel XIV where a feldspar(?) vein running vertically to the left of the two drummers, a lighter coloured rock streak to the right and a tiny projecting overhang all effectively frame the painting (Figure 5.19).

A deep crevice, which separates the lower part from the massive upper part of the cliff, runs diagonally across the cliff from north-west to south-east and trails off into the water as the ledge slopes down. Thus, the last panels (XVI and XVII) can only be viewed from water and consequently, I was unable to see them. When the deep crevice reaches the level of the ledge, it separates the latter from the vertical mass above (Figure 5.20). Thus, the huge cliff appears to be almost floating. Another deep crevice, resulting from a partially eroded dike, runs from the top of the cliff to the water, where it takes on a darker colour than the surrounding ledge. At eye level, it forms a niche, which permits a person to literally enter the rock (Figure 5.21). Its depth and jagged edges make the cliff look more fragile than it is. Another smaller niche, which can be climbed up into, is located nearby.

The view from the site added further to the experience at Agawa Bay. Standing on the ledge, I could see the vast and the then-calm Lake Superior shimmering in the sunlight. The nearby and distant islands with their low and heavily forested shorelines heightened the uniqueness of Agawa, a vertical rock that contrasted with the horizontal expanse of the water. The depth of the lake at this site is significant, yet occasional rocks can be seen below the surface, thus canoe travellers would have had to be careful (Figure 5.22; Figure 5.23).

Standing on the precarious ledge, face to face with *Mishipeshu*, the vast unpredictable Lake Superior behind me and the sheer vertical cliff before me (Figure 5.24), I felt trapped and at the mercy of the elements. I felt small, insignificant, and merely a spectator to the natural drama unfolding before me. It seemed that the entire walk through the enclosed and protected forest space served to heighten the experience on the ledge, where all was open to Lake Superior's assault, but more importantly, where the four elements of water, fire (sun), earth and air really had the chance to meet and interact and thus, I felt that arriving on that ledge was like reaching the end in a journey where all comes together. Sitting on the ledge, the massive rock behind me and basking in the sun, listening to the monotonous lapping of the waves, I realized that this place where the rock is endowed with unique characteristics is great and propitious to meditation. I felt eerie: all around me was bathed in sunlight and brilliance, yet I felt a presence of someone or something at the site, a feeling further corroborated by one of my friends. The existence of these paintings attesting to past human presence in such a beautiful and wild place, transformed Agawa into a more familiar setting. I envision that conducting a ceremony or a vision fast, at or near Agawa, must have felt to Indigenous people like attending a mass at Notre-Dame de Paris for a Catholic.

I left the open space of the site and began the ascent on the forest path. On the way back, the parking lot was reached through an eroded dike where modern-day steps have been carved into the rock (Figure 5.25). Once again, the steep walls of the narrow passage created the feeling of enclosure, so different from the open site. Subsequent visits to the site further strengthened the initial experience and reasserted that Agawa is one of the most spectacular rock art sites in Ontario and probably in the Canadian Shield.

Blindfold Lake Pictograph Site (DjKn-1)

The Blindfold Lake site is located near Kenora in the Lake of the Woods area in north-western Ontario on the southern portion of a massive cliff formation; however the cliff on which the paintings have been executed is around 12 meters in height. The cliff is roughly dome-shaped and faces south-east. The site is situated near a water passage from Blindfold Bay to Route Bay and according to Lambert (1986:24-25), travellers between Lake of the Woods and Blindfold Lake have to pass near the site at a distance ranging from 3 to 50 meters. The site was visited for roughly an hour on a beautiful and sunny May 9, 2006, early afternoon. It was accessed by a canoe with the help of Jamie Boulton, the local employee of the Ontario Ministry of Culture.

Blindfold Lake was calm and deep blue. On the way to the site, I passed heavily forested shorelines where no major rocky outcrops were visible. Going north, we paddled along a gently curving shoreline and I noticed a taller vertical cliff among the pine trees. The dome shaped cliff began to emerge gradually as we paddled towards it (Figure 5.26). The pictographs, though faint, stood out on the pinkish-white coloured portion of the cliff. The cliff's surface consists of alternating grey and white vertical bands, a characteristic that Lambert (1986:27) attributes to a uniform coat of precipitate that covers the cliff. The cliff, unlike that at Agawa, is not smoothly vertical, but is divided into three step-like rock shelves which are roughly dome-shaped, the lowest having the red pictographs (Figure 5.27). A small ledge would have permitted the painting of a part of face I ("tripod" and quadruped) (Figure 5.28). A deep crack separates this panel from face II on which are painted the "anthropomorphs" with uplifted arms (5.29). I continued further on towards the massive cliffs located to the north of the site. These tall, jagged

grey cliffs, surrounded by a large talus slope and boulders, also contain patches of white precipitate. One such patch is located under a stone shelf surmounted by an overhang. On the shelf was located an active raven nesting site (Figure 5.30).

The canoe headed back towards the site (Figure 5.31), stopping by a beaver lodge, and then it was stopped at a convenient landing spot located near the site. I climbed the steep cliff and found myself at the top of the site. Sheltered and shaded by the trees, I admired the surrounding scenery. The site faces a narrowing in the lake (Figure 5.33). The heavy vegetation provides privacy from potential travellers on the lake yet allows its observation. A rocky outcrop located among the trees provides a focal point for the visitor, and if surmounted, would have offered an even better view of the environs (Figure 5.32). The site is also visited by deer as evidenced from the many droppings left by these animals. Sheltered and quiet, the site is like an oasis where one can go and meditate in peace.

Lake of the Woods Sites - Annie Island Pictograph Site (DiKm-4); Picture Rock Island Pictograph Site (DhKm-3); Devil's Hole/ Devil's Bay 1 Pictograph Site (DhKm-4); Devil's Bay 3 Pictograph Site (DhKm-18); Hayter Peninsula Pictograph Site (DiKm-1)

The Lake of the Woods sites, located in north-western Ontario, were all examined in the afternoon of May 9, 2006, in a motor boat with an Indigenous guide from the Whitefish Bay community. The length of stay at each site was only enough to offer tobacco and take a few pictures. The sites are located in the Whitefish Bay area of the Lake of the Woods, a labyrinthine network of islands and peninsulas.

The Annie Island site was examined first. The site faces east and is located at a narrows. We stopped the boat in front of a talus slope by the vertical pinkish-coloured granite cliff, which is part of a larger dark-coloured cliff (Figure 5.34). A single

"anthropomorph" with a long sinuous line emerging from its head is depicted on a white vertical streak of precipitate, located between dark vertical bands of lichens. Another vertical streak of white precipitate runs parallel to the figure's right side (Figure 5.35). Once again, natural features and their colours are used to frame and enhance the painting. The site faces onto small islands and the opposing shoreline, which are overgrown by pine trees. I think that the singularity of the site lies in the painting itself, a lone anthropomorphic figure placed strategically on the cliff in order to utilize the natural features present and thus blend into a balanced composition. Dewdney and Kidd (1967:52-53) report that offerings of clothing, prayer-sticks and tobacco were left on the rocks below during Dewdney's visit; however, no offerings were observed at the time of my visit.

We proceeded south in the motor boat and soon we came upon the Picture Rock Island site, located on the southern tip of the island. This site faces south-east and is located on an imposing, jutting cliff (Figure 5.36). Due to its impressive height, I was able to guess upon approach that a site would be located someplace on that big cliff. The massive cliff is surrounded by a talus slope on which some offerings, apparently of cloth, were observed. Another feature of the cliff that makes it stand out from the surrounding landscape is the presence of a heavy and widespread coat of precipitate in its upper section. The precipitate is visible at a great distance and is not uniform but ranges from white to grey. From a distance, this characteristic makes it resemble a frozen waterfall issuing from the rock itself. Halfway through the cliff is located a large ledge, and it is above this ledge on a smooth, concave surface that the site is located; the red pictographs of a deer and a thunderbird clearly stand out against the white background. Dewdney and

Kidd (1967:55) wrote that "[f]or individuality of setting this was supreme – an eagle's eyrie rather than an artists' easel, fifty feet and more above the lake. The red of the paintings clearly visible 500 yards away." I was unable to climb onto the ledge, but Dewdney and Kidd (1967:55) claim the ledge is 20 feet (6 meters) wide thus, there is enough space there to sit down (see Dewdney 1970b:18). This site clearly evokes wonder at the spectacular cliff coated in white as well as awe at how someone climbed the cliff and painted the figures. The unusual location of the site would probably accentuate its sacredness and belief in its supernatural powers.

The next site examined was Devil's Hole, which is located near the entrance to the Devil's Bay and faces south-east. Upon approach, it was the colourful offerings of clothing that caught my attention. The pictographs are located on a smooth, light-coloured portion of a rock rising from deep water. One sinuous line was identified by the Indigenous guide as a snake. The peculiar aspect of this site is a deep fissure that runs diagonally from east to west across the rock and disappears into the water, creating a probable echo-producing grotto; however, no sound amplification was confirmed at the site due to the brief length of stay. It is into this deep crevice that neatly folded clothing and tobacco were deposited as offerings by pious Indigenous people (see also Dewdney and Kidd [1967:54] for an offering of chinaware at the site). The fissure separates the cliff into two portions, and once again, it makes it seem that the upper part is almost floating precariously on top of its sturdy base. The upper portion of the cliff is a tall, protruding rounded greyish-white mass, its round aspect being best appreciated from the profile. The peculiar shape of the cliff renders it different from all the other cliffs in the vicinity, as well as from all the other cliffs that I saw during my travels. The rock is not

straight and angular, but resembles more the belly of a pregnant woman, evoking connotations of maternity and care which could have prompted its selection for the deposition of supplicative offerings. It is however the sight of the offerings that has created the longest lasting impression, as these attest to a long tradition which is still alive. The sight of the offerings makes even a layman appreciate the sanctity of the place.

The boat was turned into the entrance to Devil's Bay, where the next site is located. Devil's Bay is an artificial extension of a narrow passage created by the 1928 damming of the lake (Lambert 1986:11). The site is located on a 12 meters high angular granite outcrop and the pictographs are located on a smooth and vertical light pinkish-grey coloured portion (Figure 5.37). At first, I had trouble seeing the faint thunderbird, which is located around 2 meters from the water. Even the guide could not locate it and it was my friend who spotted it. The faint paint and the glare from the sun prevented me from seeing it. Other faint figures have been discovered at this site, but I did not see them. The portion of the cliff on which the pictographs are located is angular and treeless, and thus stands in stark contrast from the rounded forested cliffs in the vicinity. Into a fissure to the left of the painting, where boulders jut out from water below, neatly-folded clothing was also deposited. Two projections are located above the pictograph. They are unusual in that they look as if the rock has been scooped out and thus, they are round and concave. On these overhangs, the dancing sun reflections from water were observed, adding lightness and gaiety to the heavy cliff (Figure 5.38).

The last site I examined that afternoon is located on Hayter peninsula in a small secluded bay. No offerings were observed at this site, but Dewdney and Kidd (1967:52) once noticed an offering of a china cup placed in a horizontal crack. The vertical rock

rises smoothly from the water and the paintings of, among others, a cross and hands, are located on a smooth grey part, above which a ledge overgrown with bushes is located (Figure 5.39 and 5.40). The rock is much lower (3-4 meters) than the spectacular ones that I saw on that day. The hidden site looked private and quiet, as the sky darkened because of an approaching storm. As all of the other sites in the Whitefish Bay area, the view of this site can be obstructed by the numerous islands and peninsulas present on the lake (Figure 5.41), thus causing the site to suddenly appear and disappear and possibly adding an element of surprise and mystery when travelling.

Peterborough Petroglyphs Site (BdGm-10)

The well-known Peterborough Petroglyphs site, known by the Indigenous peoples of the area as the "Teaching Rocks" is located in the Petroglyphs Provincial Park and today is an active spiritual site for the local Ojibwa population from the Curve Lake First Nation. Due to its recognized sacred nature, photography is no longer allowed at the site. The site was examined twice, on June 21 and July 23, 2006. The immediate landscape around the site has been altered significantly. Petroglyphs are covered by a glass-windowed building, where a raised walkway has been constructed for viewing purposes. I can only rely on previous descriptions and personal communication (e.g. Joan Vastokas) relating to the natural condition in which the site was located. The site is situated in south-eastern Ontario on the edge of the Canadian Shield in a terrain of low hills. It is located north of Stony Lake, an area that in the past was covered by extensive pine forests. Nearby, to the west of the site runs a small stream, which joins with Eels Creek three miles to the south and a mile and a half east, is Jack Creek (Vastokas and Vastokas 1973:7). Other lakes in the surrounding area include McGinnis Lake, located around 3.5

kilometres to the south and Minnow Lake, located around 2.5 kilometres to the south-west. The site has been described as located in deep and dense bush in the vicinity of which are swamps and marshes. Located in rugged landscape, the site was originally difficult to access and isolated (Mallory and Mallory 1961:130-131; Sweetman 1955:102; Vastokas and Vastokas 1973:9).

The petroglyphs have been carved on a low sloping white crystalline limestone outcrop, though it appears that it has darkened somewhat in the past few years (Joan Vastokas, personal communication 2006). The rock outcrop slants gently at a low angle towards the south-east and the engraved area is roughly rectangular measuring 12 by 21 meters (Vastokas and Vastokas 1973:9). At the time of its discovery, the outcrop was overgrown in places with vegetation and small trees were growing out of the numerous fissures present at the site. Around 300 clear petroglyphs have been identified. However, hundreds more exist at the site, but due to weathering and superimposition they remain unidentified. The rock outcrop is criss-crossed by numerous cracks and fissures, the largest of which separates it diagonally into northern and southern halves. From the depths of this large fissure, which is around 30 centimetres wide, the trickle of an irregular underground stream has been reported (Vastokas and Vastokas 1973:9); however, I did not hear it because its flow has been affected by the construction of the building and of a road around the site (Joan Vastokas, personal communication 2007). The carvings are often arranged around the natural fissures, rendering them an inextricable part of the rock itself. Furthermore, the carved images were originally lighter in colour than the surrounding outcrop and have been described by Vastokas and

Vastokas (1973:14-15) as smooth to the touch in comparison to the uncarved, abrasive rock surrounding them.

The glyph which stands out the most is the so-called sun-figure interpreted variously by writers as *Kitchi Manitou* or a *Jessakid* medicine man. This large figure, endowed with a human body, has a head composed of two concentric circles out of which rays emerge. The figure is placed centrally on the rock outcrop. It is oriented so that noontime sun rays on June 21 shine directly on it. Another glyph which especially caught my attention was a large female figure, measuring around 1.5 meters in height, located on the western side of the outcrop. Natural crevices are used to portray what may be its womb and genitalia and a red mineral seam runs the length of the figure. Other crevices on the site have also been used to depict female genitalia. Sinuous forms interpreted as snakes have also been depicted near crevices and in some instances it appears as if the snakes were coming out of the ground.

Wanting to get a better appreciation of the surrounding landscape, I set out onto the Nanabush trail (5.5 kilometres in length), which is situated near the site. This trail took me around Minnow Lake, through a mixed forest, swamps and marshes (Figures 5.42 and 5.43). Many other rock outcrops were located along the route but all of them were much darker than the petroglyphs' outcrop (Figures 5.44 and 5.45).

The site is definitely unique. It is a large concentration of carved images located on a white crystalline outcrop which is rare in the Canadian Shield (Vastokas and Vastokas 1973:19) and it is not located directly near water. Other petroglyphs sites, for example those reported from the Lake of the Woods area, are located on rounded outcrops sloping directly into water. The extreme isolation of the site would have made it

a suitable place for fasting. Doug Williams (personal communication 2007), an Elder of the Curve Lake community, informed me that most energy emanates from the area towards the bottom of the site. He attributes this energy to the practice of standing at the bottom of the outcrop, looking up at the glyphs and telling sacred stories.

Lake Mazinaw Pictograph Complex (BfGh-5)

The Lake Mazinaw Pictograph Complex is located in south-eastern Ontario in Bon Echo Provincial Park. The name of the lake which stretches north-south for over 20 kilometres is said to derive from the Algonquian word for "painting" or "writing" (Dewdney and Kidd 1967:97). The site was visited on sunny August 5 and 6, 2006, and was viewed from a tour boat and a paddle boat. The pictographs, now extremely faded, are spread along the base of a 90 meters high cliff for 2.5 kilometres, on 28 faces with around 250 images (McMullin 2006:3, 16). The imposing cliff rivals that of Agawa Bay, and rises abruptly from the water that is around 100 meters deep (Boyle 1971[1896]:6) (Figure 5.46). The cliff is a rugged formation of pinkish-grey granite arranged in diagonal bands running from bottom right to upper left. The rock is also interlaced with black diorite dikes, which follow the diagonal arrangement (McMullin 2006:3-4). The cliff is situated north of a narrows that divides Lake Mazinaw into Lower Lake Mazinaw and Upper Lake Mazinaw (Figure 5.47). The narrows, which are around 8 meters in width, are formed by a longitudinal projection of land from the western shore of the lake. The huge cliff, whose face is rather straight as if cut, is not a barren rock formation: it teems with life. Lichens, plants, shrubs and trees grow in various places throughout the cliff's face. However, it is the ancient cedars that are the most spectacular (Figure 5.48 and 5.49). These eastern white cedars, which grow directly out of the cliff, bent and twisted

into fantastic shapes in search of light, can live up to 1,500 years and the oldest specimen on the cliff is reported to have died at the age of 941 years (McMullin 2006:9-10). The rock is also home to various bird species such as the turkey vulture, whose nests are located in depressions in the cliff, and merlins. Snakes such as the eastern garter snake and northern water snake are also encountered near the cliff (McMullin 2006:11-15).

The excursion in the paddle boat brought me closer to the cliff, literally and metaphorically, as I was able to better feel its magnitude and dignity. The pictographs I saw are executed on smooth surfaces and must have been done from a canoe, as no standing ledges were observed (Figure 5.50). Many of them are located near echo-producing grottoes, which did amplify the sound of the waves hitting against the rock. Significant amounts of precipitate, cracks and niches have also been observed (Figure 5.51). Some pictographs are located near or on quartz veins and calcite deposits. One thunderbird was observed holding a quartz vein, and below a turtle, precipitate, which seemed to be coming out of a crack, was seen. When traveling north from the narrows, an effigy rock formation interpreted by the tour guide as a turtle can be seen coming out of the cliff around a meter above the water level (Figure 5.52). It seems almost as if the turtle was supporting the cliff on its back, like the mythical turtle that supports Earth in Algonquian mythology. As has been discussed in Chapter 4, effigy formations were often interpreted as beings transformed into rocks. The sight of such a supernatural transformation at the Bon Echo cliff, might have further added sacredness to the site. The echo effect at the site, which was tested out, is quite pronounced and recognized, as the name of the provincial park implies. Furthermore, the presence of a cave on the cliff

which is said to be "a room-sized space that is mostly surrounded by rock" (McMullin 2006:5) could have been employed in fasting.

The large cliff is another location where the four elements are juxtaposed in stark contrast (Figure 5.53 and 5.54). Paddling along the great cliff illuminated by the sun, and knowing how deep the water below is, I felt small and insecure. The depth of the waters, as well as the height of the cliff, made me feel like being situated at the center of the worldly plane, with the Upperworld and Underwater/Underworld surrounding me. The majestic cliff commands respect from the passers-by with its ancient cedar trees, which are important in the Algonquian beliefs system (see Densmore 1974[1928]:385; Jenness 1935:38), and the large birds soaring high, which could have stood for Thunderbirds (see Jones [1973[1861]:160] and McGee [1898:178] where an eagle can stand for a Thunderbird). Furthermore, the sight of a snake revered among Algonquian-speaking peoples (see Quaife [1921:170] for reverence accorded to snakes) could have also added importance to the site. I think that these characteristics, and especially the sight of the cliff and the feeling of insignificance I experienced in response to its imposing height, would have prompted the recognition of this site as sacred by Indigenous people. Dewdney described his experience at Bon Echo in a similar manner:

> For Christopher, Irene, and me it was sobering experience merely to paddle along the base of the cliff, sensing the depth of the water beneath and the height of the rock above, where occasionally jutting crags eighty or ninety feet overhead seemed ready to plunge down on us. ... One afternoon we were more than a little startled to see the water nearby begin an inexplicable whirling motion, accelerating till it lifted suddenly into a miniature waterspout, then vanishing as quickly as it had appeared, a trick of the air currents, no doubt, with thermals playing around the cliff on a hot summer day, but uncanny for all that (Dewdney and Kidd 1967:102).

Fairy Point Pictograph Site (DcHw-2)

The Fairy Point site is located on Lake Missinaibi, which is more than 40 kilometres long, in Missinaibi Provincial Park in north-eastern Ontario. The name Missinaibi is reported to mean Pictured Water (Bell 1878:3C). Three sites have been located on Missinaibi Lake: the Fairy Point site, the Reva Island site and the Whitefish Falls site. Whitefish Falls, formed where the Missinaibi River falls into the lake, "was a traditional summer fishing grounds for native Ojibway and Cree" (Anonymous, n.d.:7). The Fairy Point site contains the most extensive collection of pictographs in north-eastern Ontario, with over 100 paintings covering the rock cliff for 800 meters (Anonymous, n.d.:8).

I examined the site with a friend on a sunny August 30, 2006, in the early afternoon. We attempted to access the site the day before with a canoe, but being inexperienced canoeists and misinformed about the length of time it would take to reach the site, we never arrived at our destination. After an entire day of paddling we haven't even reached Whitefish Falls, though we heard the faint sound of rushing water. We started to head back in order to reach the campsite before nightfall. With the rising wind, high waves began to form on the lake, which in its deepest point reaches 100 meters (Anonymous, n.d.:7) and I was authentically frightened. The prospect of spending the night on shore was not appealing, as the nights were very cold and the park has a large concentration of black bears. As we continued paddling, we were "saved" by a motor boat that picked us up because they noticed we were paddling in the wrong manner! Needless to say, after our failed attempt at canoeing, the next day we rented a motor boat. We set out from the campground dock before noon on a beautiful sunny day. We reached

Whitefish Falls in twenty minutes. I didn't see the faint pictographs on the cliffs of the small bay where the falls are located, but the amazing sight of the falls issuing from a canyon-like formation compensated for the lack of rock paintings (Figures 5.55 and 5.56). We continued west towards the Fairy Point site. On our way we passed shores of wooded cliffs and rocky outcrop beaches, dotted with bays and inlets. I was encompassed by the blues of the vast lake and of the sky which were only interrupted by the distant shores (Figure 5.57).

The Fairy Point site is located on the south-western tip of a large peninsula, which separates the lake into two arms running southwest to northeast. Reva Island can be seen from the site. As we approached the tip of the peninsula, the shore became rockier and the cliffs became higher. As we turned a corner, a jutting portion of the cliff obscured the view onto the rest of the rocky wall. Suddenly, a very dark coloured cliff, contrasting starkly with the grey rock around it came to my view. This dark cliff was so unusual that I sensed that pictographs had to be located near it. Indeed, a very light coloured portion of the cliff was located adjacent to the dark portion, and on it the largest and most impressive panel of Fairy Point was located (Figures 5.58 and 5.59). The anticipation of seeing the site after the failed attempt added to the excitement of spotting the pictographs. The red figures stood out on the light background and thus, could be seen from far away. This panel contains figures such as caribous and a shield motif, which are framed by a V shaped quartz vein (Figures 5.60 and 5.61). Another significant feature at the site is a fault in the straight vertical cliff, which produced a large vertical echo-producing grotto (Figure 5.62). Pictographs, including that of a lone "anthropomorph," are also located around this formation (Figure 5.63). Fairy Point is also one of the few sites in the

Canadian Shield where white pictographs in the form of two crosses are found (Figure 5.64).

Fairy Point is a physically dangerous site, which is often plagued by perilous winds (see Dewdney and Kidd [1967:86] and Wilson [2004:61] for recent accounts of drownings associated with that site). Located on very deep water, on a large cliff, where winds prevail, the site once again evokes the four elements of water, air, fire and earth, as well as the metaphorical representations of the Upperworld and the Underwater/ Underworld. Here, it is not the height of the cliff which mesmerizes the visitor but the abyss below which introduces an element of insecurity and of the great unknown and which once again made me realize that I am at the mercy of the elements (Figure 5.65).

The experience of feeling as if being situated at the junction of the worlds, which I experienced at some of the sites, has also occurred to Norder (2003:203) at a Lake of the Woods pictograph site.

> While I did reach the site, after several harrowing climbs and drops, it was before I got there, while I was standing at the top of the cliff over the site some 60 or 70 feet above water, that I had a brief epiphany. I had to do with where I was and what I was seeing. For a moment I was looking not across a portion of the earth's surface, I was looking out across a world. A universe, really, composed of four worlds: Earth, Air, Underwater and Underground. It was in front of me, above me, below me, and beneath me, and where I was standing was a place where these worlds met. It was not difficult to understand why such a place would be important.

Phenomenology of Landscape in the Context of Algonquian Religious Beliefs

The Three-Tiered Universe and the Experience of the Sacred

Among the Algonquian-speaking peoples, the universe is conceived of as being multi-layered, with the Upperworld, Earth and Underwater/Underworld populated by different manitous. As among other shamanic religions, the space of the earthly plane is

not uniform but is punctuated by places more sacred than others. At these places, hierophany, that is, "the manifestation of something of a wholly different order, a reality that does not belong to our world, in objects that are an integral part of our natural 'profane' world" has occurred (Eliade 1959:11, 20, 26). This religious experience of the sacred was first characterized by Otto (1958[1917]) as numinous, an experience of the holy or of the "wholly other." In the face of divine revelation, the religious human being feels an overwhelming awe-inspiring mystery "which is beyond the sphere of the usual, the intelligible, and the familiar, [and] therefore falls quite outside the limits of the 'canny', and ... contrasted with it, fill[s] the mind with blank wonder and astonishment" (Otto 1958[1917]:26). Furthermore, the human being feels the majesty that emanates from the superior power and experiences a feeling of fear and nothingness in relation to that power (Otto 1958[1917]:10). The experience of the numinous is triggered by "objects which are already puzzling upon the 'natural' plane, or are of a surprising or astounding character; such as extraordinary phenomena or astonishing occurrences or things in inanimate nature, in the animal world, or among men" (Otto 1958[1917]:27; cf. Jones 1905).

Among Algonquian-speaking peoples, the supernatural powers of the cosmos can be manifested in natural formations, such as mountains, caves, trees and waterfalls and phenomena such as thunderstorms and sunrise (Vastokas 1992:30; Vastokas and Vastokas 1973:33, 47-50). For example, in a myth recorded among the Ottawa, the aurora borealis is a "reflection of the great fire kindled" by *Nanabush* (Hamilton 1903:231). Places where the sacred manifests itself can also be conceived of as "Centers" where, via an *axis mundi* in the form of, for example, a cosmic mountain or a tree, the

other layers of the universe can be accessed (Eliade 1959:36-38, 2004[1964]:259-260, 266).

At the Junction of the Worlds and the Four Elements

For the Algonquian-speaking peoples, sacred places, such as rock art sites, where the Upperworld, the Earth's plane and the Underwater/Underworld met were often located at waterside cliffs. Communication between the cosmic levels was effectuated through whirlpools or openings in the rocks such as caves and crevices where manitous lived (Conway 1992:251; Hamell 1987:78; Köhl 1985[1860]:423-424; Molyneaux 1983:5; Rajnovich 1989:187, 1994:35). In Algonquian myths, communication and travel between the worlds could take on the form of an ascent or descent in a basket through a hole (e.g. Jones 1916:371; Radin and Reagan 1928:114). Rock art sites can be envisioned as "the middle-point, the meeting place of earth and sky, located at the same spot in the cosmos as the first *Midewegan* [*Midé* lodge]" (Vastokas and Vastokas 1973:53-54). Waterside cliffs were also locales where the four elements of water, earth, air and fire met and could be experienced (Gehl 2006; Shirley Williams, personal communication 2007). The four elements are essential in Ojibwa religious thought because they are the primordial substances from which all of the physical world, that is earth, celestial bodies, plants, animals and people, have been fashioned (Johnston 1976:126, 136). Thus, sacred places seem to be located at the junction of these elements as evidenced by the cliffs (earth), the water, the wind (air) and the sun (fire).

Cliffs and mountains are significant for Algonquian-speaking peoples because they can act as cosmic mountains endowed with portals to other worlds in the form of caves and crevices. This property rendered them conductive to practicing rituals by

medicine men as mountains were also linked with medicine (Brown and Brightman 1988:55-58; Tanner 1979:98-99). High mountains were also associated with *Kitchi Manitou* and Thunderbirds (Chamberlain 1890a; Johnston 1995:76; Ray and Stevens 1995:20; Smith 1906:219). Furthermore, "vertical cliffs were believed to be 'cut-rock' – powerful places where earth's energies were exposed" (Conway and Conway 1990:11) and a preference for straight vertical cliffs has been observed at rock art sites (e.g. Lambert 1983, 1986; Norder 2003:156; Rusak 1992).

Water is considered a universal metaphor for life and rebirth (Eliade 1959:129-130). Among Algonquian-speaking peoples, it is also considered a spirit or a manitou (Radin 1914c:355). Water was also employed in divinatory practices, where it would be stared at in order to learn about the desired subject (Miller and Hamell 1986:316; Speck 1977[1935]:164-165; Thwaites 1896-1901:VIII:123). Winds are considered spirits, while the sun, along with other celestial bodies, is one of the most important spirits within the pantheon of Indigenous peoples (Radin 1914c:355-356). According to Johnston (1976:22, 136), among the Ojibwa, the first whiff of tobacco was offered to the sun and upon waking, a person would step out of the lodge, turn east and say a prayer to the sun. Jones (1973[1861]:84) also reported that morning and evening prayers of praise and thanksgiving were uttered to the sun. Copway (1972[1850]:165) claimed that "[t]he sun is the wigwam of the Great Spirit, and it is as the abode of this being that the Indians view that luminary," while Schoolcraft (1851-1857:I:113) reported that medicine men strove to dream of the sun in order to gain superior powers. A dream of sun bestowing guardian spirits was also regarded as positive (Köhl 1985[1860]:207-209). Sun motifs are

also prominent on Algonquian ceremonial objects such as the Naskapi painted hides, as well as more mundane objects such as mittens (Phillips 1987:58-59).

Conducting ceremonies at locales inhabited by spirits, where the four elements and layers of the universe joined, brought one closer to the sacred power and to the ultimate reality and truth about the cosmos, which was often concealed behind the veil of the physical world (Eliade 1959:12, 21; Hultkrantz 1981:126; Neihardt 1972[1932]:71; Vastokas 1992:30). Thus rock art sites are located in spiritually charged locations and could have been envisioned as replicas of the cosmos. As evidenced from the phenomenology of rock art sites, the four elements and the sense of the connection between the layers of the universe would have been important at rock art sites, while their location on high cliffs, above deep waters instilled feelings of awe and insignificance, feelings which might have been nothing short of numinous for Indigenous people.

Acoustic Phenomena at Rock Art Sites as Manifestations of Spirits

The importance of being at one with, and experiencing the entire universe (i.e. water, air, wind, rock) during religious ceremonies is essential for North American Indigenous people (Brown and Cousins 2001:35). For example, the *Midewigun* (*Midé* lodge) was constructed so as to be "open at the top, free to receive life, light, and the sound of the whole world and the universe" (Johnston 1976:85). The phenomenon of interconnectedness can also be observed at rock art locations where light and sound can be experienced. The acoustic and visual phenomena experienced in the form of echoes, or pictographs and petroglyphs, which appear and disappear depending on the light conditions, take on an important role, as they can be indicative of the presence of manitous. Gatschet (1899:258) recounted a story, according to which pictographs were

believed to have been created by the *maymaygwayshi*, because the paintings appeared and disappeared depending on the weather.

Among Indigenous peoples, spirits can manifest their presence visually in the form of, among others, animals and trees; audibly in the form of voices or the whistling of the wind; or by making a sign such as lightning (Radin 1914c:352-353; see Hallowell 1975:158 for sound of thunder interpreted as the voice of Thunderbirds). Jones (1973[1861]:88) remarked that during the puberty vision quest, youth would pay attention to "supernatural sounds" as indicators of manitous. Diamond et al. (1994:67-68) have commented upon the importance of natural sounds and the "sensitivity to the[ir] nuances" among sub-arctic Algonquian-speaking peoples, who have various descriptive terms for, for example, the sound of water streaming over rocks or rushing down a cliff. According to Indigenous accounts, at some rock art sites, the *maymaygwayshiwuk* were heard drumming, while sounds resembling those of a chicken were heard at the Rooster Rock pictograph site (Conway 1985:5). Thus, the presence of the echo effect, of echo-producing grottoes, which amplify the sound of the waves, as well as the sound of an underground stream at rock art sites, can all be perceived as messages from the spirits. Furthermore, since art in Indigenous cultures is deeply embedded in ritualistic performance, which also includes song and dance, characteristics at rock art sites which would amplify the sound of drums or human voices would contribute to the "spiritual dimension of the sacred place" (Arsenault 2004c:305; Phillips 1987:53; Turner 1987; Vastokas 1992; see, for example, Pelshea [1980:54] for the Thaddeus Lake pictograph site [EaKf-1] where the sound of voice is amplified).

Metaphors for Light at Rock Art Sites

Visual phenomena at rock art sites, such as the reflections from water dancing on the cliffs or the reflection of images in still water (Steinbring 1998:92), are not only aesthetically pleasing but could also be manifestations of the spiritual world (Arsenault 2004c:305). The presence and incorporation of silica or calcite drips and of quartz veins at rock art sites can be explained in terms of Indigenous ideas about certain materials endowed with spiritual powers. Vastokas (1992:30) explains that:

> In contrast to the Western perception of reality, which is grounded in awareness of physical matter, it is the intangibles which have primacy in Native world view. The material world is simultaneously spiritual and that spirituality is manifested in the material. Access to spirit, to feeling, to meaning, however, is by way of the metaphorical qualities of the actual world.

Among North-eastern Woodland Indigenous peoples certain substances which can be characterized as shiny, translucent and light-coloured, such as native copper, shell and crystal, are metaphors for light and life. Hamell (1983:5) claims that:

> When consecreated [sic] to ritual use, shell, crystal, and native copper, and artifacts made from these substances are traditional material culture expressions of a "metaphysics of light" shared by the Northeastern Woodland Siouans, Algonquians and Iroquoians. Within this metaphysics "Light" is a metaphorical conceptualization for semantic domains of highest cultural value or significance: "Life," "Mind," "Knowledge," and "Great Being". As light, bright, and white things, shell, crystal, and native copper, are "good to think (with)."

These substances, appreciated for their whiteness, transparency, reflectiveness and lustre, which are also aesthetically pleasing, were obtained from Underwater manitous such as the mythical snake whose body "looked like brass" and "eyes and horns shone like a mirror" (Hamell 1983:5-6, 1987:75; Miller and Hamell 1986:318, 324; Radin and Reagan

1928:145-146). Recipients of such gifts could expect a long life, filled with good fortune and success (Miller and Hamell 1986:318).

White

White is not a colour but an amalgam of all the colours of the visible light spectrum and objects that appear white reflect light of the entire visible spectrum. White shiny objects in Algonquian beliefs were endowed with special powers. In the beliefs of the *Midewiwin* medicine society, the white cowrie shell, the sacred symbol of the society, led the Ojibwa west in their migration and supplied light and warmth for the travellers by reflecting sunrays (Hoffman 1888:212, 1891:167; Vennum 1978:755). Köhl (1985[1860]:414-415) recounted a story relating to the sacredness of white:

> An Ojibbeway, of whom I inquired why a white colour was so specially esteemed by the Indians, told me that the cause was as follows: "When the first man on earth fell sick, and saw death before his eyes, he began to lament and complain to the Great Spirit about the shortness and suffering of this life. [To help the Great Spirit sent messengers bringing the *Midewiwin*]. These messengers brought down at the same time a white hare-skin, the feathers of a white-headed eagle, and a medicine-sack of white otter-skin. These contained all the Indian medicines and benefactions of the Great Spirit to mankind. And from this time forth white became a sacred colour among the Indians.

Powerful spiritual entities were often perceived as white, thus *Nanabush* was known as the white rabbit (Chamberlain 1891:210-211) and Thunderbirds were likewise thought to be white (e.g. Jenness 1935:37; Smith 1906:219). The underwater spirits, such as the Great Lynx and the bosses of animals, such as the bear chief, were also white or silvery-white (Carson 1917:491; Chamberlain 1891:197, 200, 212; Jenness 1935:23; Kawbawgam et al. 1994:25-29; Morriseau 1965:27; Radin and Reagan 1928:73). The hair of powerful spiritual beings was also white and denoted long life (Hallowell 1992:90; Miller and Hamell 1986:324; Köhl 1985[1860]:207). Natural formations that

were white were also held in reverence and were associated with spiritual powers. Jones (1973[1861]:43) recounts that "[t]he La Cloche mountains, ... being principally composed of white flint rock, when viewed from a distance ... have all the appearance of snow-capped mountains. It is on these mountains ... the thunder-gods, or eagles, have their abode, and hatch their young." The bark of the birch-tree, which is also sacred (Densmore 1974[1928]:381-384) and out of which the sacred *Midewiwin* scrolls were made, is also white.

White is present at pictograph sites in the form of the calcite or silicate precipitate, but it can also be the rock itself that is white, such as the white granite boulders at the Gros Cap site (Conway 1984b:3), the limestone background of the Burnt Bluff pictograph site (Lugthart 1968:98) and the rock outcrop of the Peterborough Petroglyphs. Through their ethnographic research, Conway and Conway (1990:12) were able to obtain seventeen original rock art sites names. The names such as *Ka-Gaw-Gee-Wabikong* or "Raven Rock White Cliff Beside the Water" alluded to birds of prey, which were a metaphor for Thunderbirds.[37] The White is said to refer to bird excreta, which can be observed below nests. Thus, Thunderbird droppings take on a metaphorical appearance of white calcite washes on rock walls (Conway and Conway 1989:55, 1990:12-13). Light colours were also positively valued (Miller and Hamell 1986:324) and pictographs are often located on lighter backgrounds. Therefore, the presence of white at rock art sites might denote sacredness, spiritual powers and positive ideas, such as long life.

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[37] See chapter 4 for *Tsanhohi Arasta,* named after a bird of prey; compare to raven nest observed near Blindfold Lake site.

Dark Colours

Ideas regarding dark colours, such as dark blue, stood in complement to those associated with white and embodied ideas of death and mourning (Hamell 1983:7; Miller and Hamell 1986:324). Algonquian-speaking peoples' objects, such as bark-containers, were often decorated with contrasting colours (Phillips 1987:89-92). Dark coloured sections of the rock are sometimes present at rock art sites, and contrast with the lighter coloured rock on which pictographs are painted, perhaps reflecting the aesthetic values of Algonquian-speaking peoples. For example, the light background on which the main panel at Fairy Point is painted is adjacent to a very dark section of the cliff.

Red Ochre and the Colour Red

Pictographs were executed with red ochre whose use has a long tradition in human history. The use of red ochre has been documented archaeologically as early as the Mousterian period (250,000 - 50,000 years ago) of the Old World (Wreschner 1980:632). In North America, evidence for mortuary use of red ochre has been documented among the Paleo-Indians (18,000 - 9,500 B.C.) and populations of the Middle Archaic through Middle Woodland periods (ca. 4,500 B.C. - A.D. 600) (Spence et al. 1990; Wreschner 1980:633; Wright 2004:246-254). Ethnographic research among the Innu people has demonstrated that ochre is associated with earth (Arsenault et al. 1995:31) and Morriseau (1965:19) claimed that red ochre was a stone medicine acquired from earth itself. Red ochre could be used to emphasize the sacredness of an object, as with the *Midewiwin* scrolls whose surface was sometimes rubbed with the substance (Dewdney 1975:16). A similar practice was undertaken on rock art sites. Rajnovich

(1989:186) remarks that the red ochre "wash" found at many pictograph sites is said to signify "special spirituality of the site."

Red is a spiritually significant colour, which is associated with life, blood, animation and emotion (Conway 1993:42; Hamell 1983:7, 1987:76; Miller and Hamell 1986:325; Vastokas 1992:30). According to Miller and Hamell (1986:325), red served as a mediator between "light-life and dark-death." Redness could signify life in contrast to death, or aggression in contrast to peace and harmony (Hamell 1987:76). According to Köhl (1985[1860]:16-17), red for the Ojibwa meant "joy" and vermillion was used to enhance the redness of native copper. Medicines obtained from underwater manitous could also be red (Köhl 1985[1860]:424). Thus, the employment of red ochre at pictograph sites further strengthens the sacred character of the images and of their message.

Quartz Veins as Metaphorical Lightning and Snakes

The importance of bright and translucent materials and their association with light and life can possibly find expression in the presence of quartz veins at many rock art sites and the employment of crystalline bedrock at the Peterborough Petroglyphs. According to one legend, the shimmering inclusions have a supernatural origin.

> Kitche Manitou wrought the mountains, the cliffs, precipices, and escarpments. Thinking that perhaps the massive rocks were too imposing and dark and grey and dreary, Kitche Manitou fashioned small stones, the size of plum pits and of brilliant hues of white, crimson, green, blue, yellow, amber, azure. He hurled these brilliant pebbles against the mountains and rocky sides of the earth. Immediately, the rocks and mountains began to sparkle (Johnston 1976:167).

Furthermore, shamanic visions are often regarded as brilliant and filled with light and colour, and supernatural beings are often radiant (Hultkrantz 1981:118; Saunders

2002:213 see for example Köhl 1985[1860]:206; Neihardt 1972[1932]:19-39; Thwaites 1896-1901:V:177, VI:163). Indigenous people consulted by Conway, report that quartz veins were caused by lightning that has struck the cliffs (Conway 1993:89). These lightning marks produced by the Thunderbirds enhanced the spiritual charge of the place. Furthermore, serpents have been depicted near or on these quartz veins, thus replicating the eternal battle between the Thunderbirds and the underwater creatures (Conway 1993:90). Quartz veins could also stand for the underwater snakes. De Charlevoix (1966[1761]:I:231) reported that "[a]ccording to the Montagnais, [lightning] is the effort of a certain genius, in order to vomit up a serpent he had swallowed, and they support this opinion by alleging that when thunder falls on a tree they discover a figure on it, something resembling that animal."[38]

Importance of Cardinal Directions in Indigenous Thought

Algonquian-speaking peoples attach a great significance to cardinal directions. Religious ceremonies are performed "sun-wise" (i.e. clockwise) in relation to the cardinal directions. Jenness (1935:30) explained this custom as originating from the Great Spirit who made the sun move in that order. The ceremonial pipe is always pointed clockwise to the four cardinal directions (east, south, west and north) in order to offer smoke to spirits (Chamberlain 1891:206; Franklin 1969[1823]:75; Hallowell 1992:62, 70; Jenness 1935:30; Landes 1968:34-35). The clockwise, "sun-wise" movement is also observed in other ceremonies. Among the Mistassinni Cree, the "Walking out" ceremony, which is held when a child is finally able to spend time outside of the tent, follows this pattern as does dancing among the Ojibwa (Hallowell 1992:74; Tanner 1979:90-91).

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[38] See page 114 where a Thunderbird "holds" a quartz vein and Owen's (1852:318) description of the feldspar vein regarded as a snake figure in Chapter 4.

The ritualization of space is evident from the preference towards facing east. The importance of east is evident, for example, among the Ojibwa of Berens River, who construct their *Wabeno* pavilion with an entrance facing east (Hallowell 1992:74). Ojibwa lodges' entrances also face east (Johnston 1976:22). During initiation into the *Midewiwin*, the candidate entered the *Midewigun* (*Midé* lodge) from the east (Johnston 1976:86, 91). Among the Ojibwa, participants in the sweat lodge sit facing east (Redsky 1972:45). This preference for an eastern and south-eastern entrance was also recorded among the Cree. Franklin (1969[1823]:74) described a Cree sweat-house ceremony at Carlton House and noted that the door was oriented to the east. Among the Mistassini Cree in particular, the doors facing east were the only decorated part of the tent. Among the Mistassini Cree, the bather in a steam tent faces southeast and the lake (Tanner 1979:117). The shaman performing the shaking tent ceremony among the Mistassini Cree is usually facing east, but the direction inside the tent determines which spirits will be communicated. Thus, when facing west, spirits associated with death can be contacted (Tanner 1979:102). According to an informant from Manitoba, fasters lying upon scaffolds would often face the sun (Steinbring 1998:5).

Tanner (1979:102-103) and Johnston (1976:22) explained this preference for eastern entrances in terms of an association of the east with a dawn spirit and the rising sun, which are positively valued. Therefore, decorated doors among the Mistassini Cree become a form of offering. A sunrise ceremony among the Eastern Cree and Naskapi involved the presentation of a decorated moose or caribou hide to the rising sun. The hide would absorb the power of the rays and would later be worn to ensure luck in hunting (Tanner 1984). Doug Williams (personal communication 2007) states that ceremonies are

often held in relation to the position of the sun. Sun is the source of light which is associated with "knowledge, wisdom and far-sightedness" (Phillips 1987:89). Thus, the prevalence of east and south-east facing sites can be explained in terms of their ritual context and the importance of facing the sun (see pg. 96).

Furthermore, east has a generally positive connotation and is associated with life and, among the Ojibwa, with the creation story (Fenton 1962:294; Johnston 1976:136; Wendy Phillips, personal communication 2007; Shirley Williams, personal communication 2007). According to Chamberlain (1891:207), "the spirit of the east gives light." An eastern manitou came to teach the *Midewiwin* and according to one *Midewiwin* scroll, bark from a tree used to make medicine should be collected from its eastern side (Vennum 1978:769, 771, 773). East is also believed to be the home of *Nanabush* (Coleman et al. 1971[1961]:61; Densmore 1974[1928]:384; Radin and Reagan 1928:67, 75, 87). White or red are also sometimes associated with east (Hoffman 1889:217-218). According to Dixon (1899:11), the colours associated with east and west are often the colours of the rising (white) and setting (red) sun.

South also carries positive connotations and is associated with warmth, growth and food plants (Chamberlain 1891:207; Johnston 1976:139). West is usually associated with the Thunderbirds (e.g. Chamberlain 1890a:52; Jones 1973[1861]:86; Ray and Stevens 1995:20; Smith 1906:220) but also with the land of the dead to which Thunderbirds escort people (Danziger 1978:15; de Charlevoix 1966[1761]:II:153-154; Jenness 1935:23; Johnston 1976:143; Wendy Philips, personal communication 2007). North has sometimes negative implications and is also the direction where the sun shines the least and towards which the paintings tend to face the least. The spirit *Pah-kack*

associated with death and starvation is said to reside in the northwest or west (Brown and Brightman 1988:53, 111). Among the Naskapi, "Man of the North" personifies winter and brings misfortune (Speck 1977[1935]:50, 52). Thus, sites might have been oriented to face particular directions depending on their ritual use and in order to communicate with particular spirits associated with these directions.

Preference for sites facing at points intermediate to the cardinal directions also deserves a mention. According to the origin story of the *Midewiwin*, the ancestors of the Ojibwa people "occupied the four quarters of the earth- the northeast, the southeast, the southwest and the northwest" (Hoffman 1891:166). Jim Dumont, an Ojibwa elder, explained that ritual gestures may be directed at these intermediate cardinal points in order to reduce the strong forces emanating from the actual cardinal directions (Diamond et al. 1994:132).

The Importance of Winds

The importance of prevailing winds at rock art sites has also been remarked upon (Arsenault 2004c:307). Wind was one of the primordial elements from which creation sprang (Johnston 1976:136). Winds were envisioned as the personification of spirits and their sound was perceived as spirits communicating or engaging in various activities (Coleman et al. 1971[1961]:56; Hallowell 1975:153; Johnston 1995:34; Radin 1914c:352-353; Speck 1977[1935]:50; Tanner 1979:96). Winds are often present in Algonquian mythology. Thus, the East wind is associated with *Nanabush* and the West wind is perceived as his brother or father (Radin and Reagan 1928:84, 108; Reid 1964:36-41). Among the Mistassini Cree the term for the east wind comes from the same root as the term for "light" (Tanner 1979:102; cf. Ray and Stevens 1995:62). North wind

is associated with cold and winter and the south wind with warmth (Désveaux 1988:113-114; Kawbawgam et al. 1994:52-54; Ray and Stevens 1995:62). Furthermore, the water-oriented Algonquian-speaking peoples had to pay special attention to winds while travelling and sacrifices were made to appease strong winds (e.g. Densmore 1970[1929]:81; Nelson 2002:41; Quaife 1921:107). Winds were also associated with the seasons (Phillips 1987:58; see Speck 1977[1935]:50). Thus, the strong winds that prevail at a site like Fairy Point might have been an important factor in creating rock art at that location because they might have been indicative of spirits' presence. Underwater and Upperworld spirits were also credited with influencing the weather (i.e. thunderstorms) (Tanner 1979:96). Thus, conducting rituals for propitious weather at rock art sites located on deep waters or near rapids, where underwater beings dwell, and high cliffs where Thunderbirds live, could have been a possibility.

According to Jones (1981:7), "[f]uture pictograph researchers may be able to measure the rock faces where paintings were once found, the compass direction of such faces and so forth, but the content of the symbols was the most important thing to the artist." However, a phenomenological inquiry into the landscape at Canadian Shield rock art sites undertaken within the context of Algonquian-speaking peoples' spiritual beliefs suggests that rock art sites were not only important for their pictographic content, but that their placement within the landscape as well as the direction they were facing were embedded in deeper ideas of Algonquian-speaking peoples' spirituality.

Multifunctional Rock Art Sites

Rock Art Sites: Propitious Locales for Communication with Spirits for Medicine Men and Fasting Youth

According to ethnographic evidence, rock art is created by medicine men that have obtained medicine from the *maymaygwayshiwuk* living in the rock; by the *maymaygwayshiwuk* themselves or by fasting youth (see Chapter 4). Fasting in order to obtain a spirit guardian at a special secluded location constituted a rite of passage, a liminal state of being where a person separated (rites of separation) from his/her normal state of being would be undergoing a transformation (rites of transition) and would emerge as a socially and spiritually transformed individual to be reintegrated within the society (rites of incorporation) (Turner 1987:25; van Gennep 1960:11). This precarious state of limbo offered the opportunity to connect with the spiritual world.

The location at which these rites were undertaken was also significant. Van Gennep (1960:15) discussed the "magico-religious aspect of crossing frontiers" which could be defined by natural features such as a rock or a river as well as by objects placed at particular locations by people, such as stakes and rocks serving as landmarks. These frontiers were located between "neutral zones" where hunting and travelling was carried out. Reaching places at the margin of these neutral territories transported people into a liminal space where higher powers resided and could be communicated with (van Gennep 1960:15-16, 18).

As has been discussed previously, rock art sites were placed at such liminal locations where the four elements and the layers of cosmos joined, and where communication with spiritual entities could be undertaken though cracks or caves. Ethnographic evidence supports this, as medicine men were said to literally enter the

rocks in order to obtain medicine. Favourable fasting locations were located at the junction of the worlds. High cliffs would have permitted communication with Upperworld manitous, as is indicated by ethnohistoric and ethnographic sources that claim that fasting was often done at high locations to reach out to Upperworld spirits. Thus, for example, the Blindfold Lake site, with its secluded location, where all of the cosmos seems to converge, would have been ideal for fasting and entering communion with all of the creation. The presence of white precipitate or quartz veins further imbued the locality with supernatural connotations.

The location of rock art on islands might have also been significant, as the deep waters surrounding islands were also portals for spiritual communication (Hamell 1987:78). Ethnographic evidence indicates that fasting was sometimes undertaken on islands. Once a location has been established as propitious to fasting, it would be marked with rock art to please the guardian spirits (Doug Williams, personal communication 2007). Ethnographic evidence also indicates that objects were decorated in order to please spirits (see pg. 28).

Locating rock art sites near rapids and waterfalls might have also served the purpose of establishing a better connection with spiritual entities, which are said to inhabit these locations. The location of sites at narrows and other dangerous places was another liminal place where local spirits would have been placated for safe passage or where ceremonies related to the entrance to a different territory could have been held (Masson ed. 1960[1889-1890]:II:153; Wendy Phillips, personal communication 2007; Radin 1914c:358, 368).

Sacred Images and Rituals at Pictograph and Petroglyph Sites

The sacred nature of rock art sites is also communicated through the style of their execution. Algonquian-speaking peoples' rock art is characterized by iconic images, which "are static ..., frontal, and symmetrical in composition. They rarely communicate information about a specific time or place. They contain no landscape settings; they avoid ground lines; they make no use of visual perspective" (Vastokas 1984:429). Iconic images are associated with divine figures whose frontality commands authority and power as well as a "hypnotic grip" over the spectators (Vastokas 1984:429-430).

Iconic images are associated with sacred cosmological stories and vision quest experiences (Vastokas 1984:429). Though, they are present at both pictograph and petroglyph sites, petroglyphs and pictographs could have served different ritual functions. Northern Algonquian-speaking peoples have two types of stories: stories relating to the events which happened to "the narrator, his relatives or ancestors"; and mythical stories about the exploits "of ordinary and supernatural beings" (Conway 1992:247). According to Wendy Philips (personal communication 2007), the difference between pictographs and petroglyphs lies in the knowledge which they convey. Pictographs are specific to human creation stories, while petroglyphs are about mythical legends, therefore different stories could have been told and different rituals could have been enacted at pictograph and petroglyph sites. Thus, pictograph sites could be representations of stories relating to the events which occurred to the narrator and his ancestors, such as obtaining medicine from particular cliffs, and sacred legends were represented on petroglyphs. Mythical creation stories might have also been associated with petroglyphs as attested by prevalent sexual imagery (Reid 1979:247, Vastokas and Vastokas 1973:83), which might have had

that connotation. Sexual themes are also prevalent in shamanism (Eliade 2004[1964]:71-74, 79, 153), thus the images might also be representations of the sacred visions of medicine men (Vastokas and Vastokas 1973:86-89). Pictographs, on the other hand, rarely display sexual themes (Conway 1984a:10; Dewdney and Kidd 1967:117).

Wendy Phillips (personal communication 2007) informs that rituals were held at rock art sites every four years or farther apart depending on the *Midewiwin* fraction and its responsibilities, which revolved around star and sun knowledge. For example, those responsible for the rotation of the sun painted images every sixteen years. Paintings also were done for teaching purposes. The *Wabeno* medicine men who also specialised in star knowledge, might have also been responsible for some rock art (see Conway 1992). Other religious activities besides fasting could have been performed at rock art sites "such as prayer, offerings, spirit world contact, ... sorcery rituals, bear cult rituals [and] specialized celestial observations" and a site could have been used for more than one of these activities (Conway 1985:24-25).

The Time of Execution of Rock Art

Speculations have also been made on the time of the execution of pictographs. Many researchers indicate that they could have been done from ice in the winter when the surface was stable (e.g. Arsenault et al. 1995:27-28; Rajnovich 1981b:18; Jones 1981:48; Lemaître 1997:52). Others have pointed out that the microclimate at the sites in winter was exceptionally warm due, in some cases, to their sheltered location (Conway and Conway 1978:36; Molyneaux, cited in Norder 2003:153, 206). However, executing rock art in the winter might have not been propitious if communication with spirits was desired. Wintertime was hunting time and spiritual activity tended to occur in the spring

and summer. Among the Algonquian-speaking peoples, sacred stories were powerful, thus they would only be related in the wintertime when potentially harmful manitous, such as *Mishipeshu,* were held captive by the ice and it was safe to utter their name (Chamberlain 1900; Fenton 1962:283; Smith 1995:99). Schoolcraft (1851-1857:III:492) claimed that:

> The genii and spirits who inhabit the solid ground are covered during the winter season by beds of snow, and the lakes and rivers with ice, which make them insensible to hearing. The fanciful and grotesque tales that are told in the winter-lodge, ... often produce jeers and remarks from the listeners, and create merriment which would be offensive to the genii if they were overheard.

Chamberlain (1900:147) related that "[t]he Ojibwa and certain other Algonkian tribes of the Great Lakes give as a reason for not telling the 'tales of the fathers' in summer, that 'frogs and other disagreeable things would enter into the camp;' moreover, during winter, the great Nanibozhu [*Nanabush*] is at leisure, and can listen to the tales of his own mighty deeds." Thus, if rituals accompanied with the creation of pictographs were held in the winter, not all of the manitous would be able to participate.

A more plausible cause can be made for creating rock art and holding rituals associated with it during the spring and summer months when communication with spirits would have been possible (Vastokas and Vastokas 1973:48) and when bands would come together into larger groups after winter hunting. Schoolcraft (1851-1857:III:492) reported that:

> As soon as spring opens freely, these tales [of manitous] cease. The earth is now reanimated. The snows disappear, the lakes and rivers open... It is now that the spirit-world in which Indians live, assumes its most intense state of activity, and the red hunter, who believes himself dependent on the spirits and genii for success in every path of life, is regardful of the least word which might give offence to these newly-awakened powers.

Fasting was especially undertaken in the spring, thus youths would be more likely to paint pictographs during this warmer season. Conway (1985:18-19) reported that the Rooster Rock pictograph fasting site (see pg. 86) was used in the spring and summer. Regarding the creation of the petroglyphs, they could have been done only when the heavy snow cover of the boreal forests was gone. Norder (2003:207) observes that obtaining medicine from the rock could have been done during any season, depending on the need. Furthermore, holding rituals at rock art sites did not necessarily imply the creation of rock art.

The Role of Offerings at Rock Art Sites

The offerings deposited at rock art sites can also contribute to our knowledge of the function of rock art within Algonquian socio-religious beliefs. According to Eliade (2004[1964]:265-266) "[t]he shamans have the power to fly and to reach the sky through the "central opening", whereas for the rest of mankind the opening serves only for the transmission of offerings." The "central opening" can be understood as cliffs and their crevices. Offerings at rock art sites are sometimes deposited in crevices (e.g. Devil's Hole [Ontario]). Offerings at rock art sites consist most often of tobacco, cloth and prayer sticks[39], but money, brass-bottom shotgun casings, cutlery, enamelware, glass marbles and a china cup were also observed (Conway 1985:7; Dewdney and Kidd 1967:44-45, 51-53, 55, 111; Lambert 1986:25, 107; Steinbring 1998:77). Vastokas (2004:280) suggests that the discovery of ceramic sherds, apparently from a small vessel, at the Peterborough Petroglyphs, might indicate that this vessel held offerings of materials such as tobacco.

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[39] According to Dewdney and Kidd (1967:51) these "sticks were thumb-thick, peeled, and daubed with red and blue paint."

Rajnovich (1989:193) has suggested that the offerings could have been deposited as "payment for the knowledge received from the Medicine Manitous." However, the offerings seem to have a strong connection to curing rituals and thus to the *maymaygwayshiwuk* and the medicine they dispense from their rocky abodes. The gift of clothing seems to be widespread among Algonquian-speaking peoples. According to Speck (1977[1935]:189):

> A gift of some article of clothing or an ornament is believed to act as a superinducement to … dreams. After giving the informant just mentioned one of my red neckties that he admired, he told several of us that later during the winter, when he was short on food, he would wear it about his neck and would then have one of these dreams, which should be followed by a good hunt.

Among the Ojibwa, annual presents of cloth in the form of blankets and gowns, shirts, leggings, as well as deerskin for moccasins were offered to *Nahneetis*, the Guardian of Health (Jones 1973[1861]:95, 97). Scraps of cloth would also be hung on medicine poles for, among others, assisting in curing of the sick (Densmore 1973[1910, 1913]:II:248-249, cited in White 1994:376). Doug Williams (personal communication 2007) states that spirits like cloth, also known as "colour," and the brighter the cloth's colour the more pleased they are. Wendy Phillips (personal communication 2007) informs that new clothing would be offered upon a spirit's request if someone was sick or passed away. The link between cloth and the *maymaygwayshiwuk* has also been suggested. According to Jones (1973[1861]:157) the *maymaygwayshiwuk* "are reported to be extravagantly fond of pieces of scarlet cloth and smart prints; and whenever they appear to an Indian, if he can only bestow some such gaudy present upon them, however small, the giver is sure to be rewarded either with long life or success in hunting."

Morriseau (1965:32) recounted a legend which further suggests the connection between rock art sites, offerings and curing of illness.

> An old Ojibway Indian at Lake Nipigon [Ontario] had six sons and each summer one died of sickness. Finally the youngest of the sons, who was sixteen years old, was the only one left alive. One summer day the Ojibway Indian set out for the Orient Bay rock painting site and took with him a bundle of goods, including tobacco, and placed it in the waters and said, "Great Misshipeshu, hear my plea. I ask you by your power to save my only child. I offer these. In return, show me a sign that my plea is heard." The Indian went further down the bay, and when he reached Reflection Lake Camps on Lake Nipigon, behold, from the bottom of the water, he saw two eyes looking at him, which came to the surface with a splash. It was a very huge, red sturgeon, the keeper, or watcher, of the offering rock. This he believed was a sign of good luck, and from that day the only son recovered and lived.

The symbolism of bundles of painted sticks has been debated. Dewdney and Kidd's (1967:51) informants claimed that the sticks painted blue and red were offered "when someone was sick, different colours being placed on the sticks for different illnesses." However, another one of Dewdney informants claimed that the sticks were offered in order to renew a medicine man's power (Dewdney Collection 1960-1966; Dewdney and Kidd 1967:111).

The offerings of money, brass-bottom shotgun casings, cutlery, enamelware, glass marbles and china could be understood in the context of sacred symbolic substances, for which they were substitutes. These offerings were shiny and sometimes made with copper (i.e. money and brass-bottom shotgun casings, brass being an alloy of copper and zinc). The importance of translucent, bright and brilliant substances has already been discussed. Copper, as well as other metals such as silver and meteoric iron are imbued with deep spiritual significance because of their reflective characteristics (Hamell 1983:6). Associated with redness and "the animate and emotive aspect of Life," copper

was obtained from the Underwater manitous and was held in great reverence (de Charlevoix 1966[1761]:II:45; Hamell 1983:7, 16-17; Köhl 1985[1860]:60-62, 440-441).

Rock Art as a Navigational Sign System

Research on land tenure patterns among hunter-gatherers has demonstrated that they envision landscape linearly in terms of places and the paths and trails that interconnect them, in contrast to agriculturalists who view the landscape in terms of "two-dimensional ...plots" (Ingold 1986:153). Thus, rock art situated within such a landscape could have served as a repository of information regarding, for example, territorial markers and would thus have participated actively in the organization of landscape (see Bradley 1997). Previous researchers and scholars have suggested that the placement of some Canadian Shield rock art sites in conspicuous locations near narrows or portages might have rendered rock art an effective means of communication as a navigational system, while its location at routes' endpoints, might have indicated gathering places (Arsenault 1998:27, 2004c:297; Jones 1981:74; Lambert 1986:6-7, 202-203; Norder 2003:16-17, 137).

Further speculation about the meaning of the messages (i.e. "rapids ahead") or as territorial, or specific events markers have also been put forward (see Arsenault 2004a:360; Dewdney and Kidd 1967:42, 82; Lambert 1986:188; Norder 2003). Conway's (1984a:3-4) research indicates that certain rock art sites in north-eastern Ontario have been linked with 14 specific bands. The creation of rock art to commemorate specific events has also been reported (e.g. Conway 1984b:17; Schoolcraft 1851-1857:I:406-407, 414). According to a story collected by Laidlaw (1915:9):

> The Ojibwa were once entering Lake Couchiching [Ontario] by the west side in winter time on the ice. They were going across to fight the

> Mohawks on the east side, when an old Mohawk woman came down to the ice hole to get some water. She saw the Ojibwas coming and turned her back to them and exposed her anus in contempt and otherwise made fun of them. Then she went and told her people. The opposing warriors fought on the ice and the Mohawks were beaten. After the battle the Ojibwas painted a red woman in just the same position as the Mohawk woman posed, on the rocks on the east shore near where the fight took place (now called McPherson's Quarry or Geneva Park). This figure now remains and can be seen to day. (It is about 5 or 6 feet above water and is about 1 ft. high.).

Though the discussion of the elusive meaning of rock art iconography is beyond the scope of this thesis, further general comments on the function of rock art as a navigational sign system among the Algonquian-speaking peoples can be made.

Ethnographic research carried out among the Ojibwa of Berens River in Manitoba and the Ojibwa of Big Trout Lake in Northern Ontario indicates that places are often associated with specific events and their names might incorporate topographical features, demonstrating that experience is firmly grounded in the landscape (Désveaux 1988:26-27; Hallowell 1955:193-194). Furthermore, when creating maps, trails and their interrelations to landmarks are emphasized. This is because travel, whether on land or by water, is done point by point, instead of following one direction to a goal (Désveaux 1988:26-27; Hallowell 1955:196). The Ojibwa people identify directions with places and speak of going "toward x." Landmarks are crucial in orientation (Hallowell 1955:190-191). Köhl (1985[1860]:181) observed a similar method of travel among the Ojibwa of Lake Superior.

> Indians and Voyageurs rarely make greater traverses across the lake than fifteen miles from cape to cape, so that we may be easily able to pull our boats ashore in the annoying caprices of our weather and water. A passage of twenty-five or thirty miles we call a "grande traverse," and one of seventy miles is an impossibility.

This particular way of travelling, from one point to another along the lakeshores, would have exposed the travellers to rock art, thus possibly making it a landmark used in navigation.

Though some researchers claim that there is no correlation between rock art and Indigenous canoe routes as some are located at "dead-ends" (Conway 1984a:3; Dewdney and Kidd 1967:74-75; Rajnovich 1981b:25-27), others have pointed out that rock art sites are often placed on traditional Indigenous travel routes (Arsenault 2004a:344; Furtman 2000:47). Researchers have also noted that in particular cases, sites are best viewed when approached from particular directions, thus possibly guiding travellers (Arsenault et al. 1995:46; Lambert 1986:163). Many sites are located on major travel routes such as the Missinaibi Lake sites, which are sited along an old travel route from Lake Superior and the St. Lawrence system to James Bay (Anonymous n.d.:1; Morse 1971:69). The Churchill River sites are located on a river that leads north-west from Hudson Bay (Jones 1981:1; Morse 1971:36), while the Temagami Lake sites are located on a frequently travelled water body (Herrick 1967:8). Other sites seem to be located in labyrinth-like places, such as the Lake of the Woods, where they would have served as useful landmarks on the landscape. According to Morse (1971:81) "the voyageurs[40] seem to have got lost more often in Lake of the Woods than in all the other miles of their long voyage put together" and Dewdney and Kidd (1967:48) report that "[e]ven old-timers stick to the channels they know." Some sites are also frequently encountered on the pages of journals of the early explorers and travellers such as the Picture Rock located at a narrow at the entrance to Crooked Lake (Minnesota), Roche à l'Oiseau (Québec) and

[40] Voyageurs were men engaged in the fur trade from the seventeenth to nineteenth centuries. They travelled by canoes.

Painted Stone Portage (Manitoba, now destroyed) (Caron 1918:37; Coues 1965[1897]:15-16; Franklin 1969[1823]:40-41; Mackenzie 1971[1801]:liv; Quaife 1921:27; Tyrrell:1934:32). A closer study of the patterns in landscape placement of the sites located on popular routes versus the sites located on water body endpoints might reveal functional differences associated with these sites.

Algonquian pictography was not exclusively reserved for sacred purposes. According to Schoolcraft (1851-1857:I:351-415), Indigenous people recognize two types of pictographic modes: *Kekeewin* images which were generally understood by all and served for recording travelling and hunting information, as well as to record historical events; and *Kekeenowin* images which were used for sacred purposes by medicine men and had a restricted audience. Algonquian-speaking peoples did use a sign system along their terrestrial and riverine paths which consisted of sticks to which often birch bark was attached and on which messages relating to the number in the party and their direction of travel, as well as, regarding important events were painted (Nelson 2002:72, 74, 120-121; James 1956:41, 166). Information signs were also painted on trees (Köhl 1985[1860]:143; Schoolcraft 1851-1857:I:335). Trees, whose branches have been trimmed except for the top, known as lobsticks, also functioned as trail markers and conveyed various messages (Allen 2002:65-66; Mackenzie 1971[1801]:69). This tradition of marking the paths with information might have been reflected in some rock art. Some Indigenous people have pronounced the opinion that pictographs functioned like a map on the landscape, indicating directions to take for travellers (Arsenault et al. 1995:31; Dewdney Collection 1960-1966; Vickery 1991[1982]:27). However, some rock art sites are not associated with any travel route (Peterborough Petroglyphs) or some of

the images are hard to see from water (Lambert 1985:75, 81), indicating that marking trails was not a universal or primary function for rock art.

The location of these rock art sites could have alerted travellers of the presence of narrows and rapids and could have guided their travel. However, the simple assumption that these sites served only as guiding signs does not correspond to ideas on landscape held by Algonquian-speaking peoples. These sites also marked liminal locations where spirits lived. Thus, rock art sites located within a sacred landscape could be imbued with multiple meanings simultaneously. Sites which would have been considered more public, such as the one on Mazinaw Lake, where the huge cliff is adorned with many images and is located near narrows, would have also produced a different experience and would hold a different meaning from the more private sites located on smaller cliffs, away from main travel routes.

Ambiguous Images in a Sacred Landscape

In Algonquian thought, concepts are often polyvalent and metaphors are prevalent. Metaphors and transformations are common in myths and in the waking life (i.e. transformation of medicine men into bears) (see Black 1977; Hallowell 1975:158-168; Radin and Reagan 1928:64; Rajnovich 1989:182; Smith 1906:221). Pictographs on birch bark scrolls are known to have had multiple meanings and some images were employed in both secular (*Kekeewin*) and sacred contexts (*Kekeenowin*) thus a plurality of meanings was possible (Schoolcraft 1851-1857:I:351). Johnston (1976:8, 70) further sheds light on the importance of metaphor in Algonquian thought and claims that upon hearing a story "readers and listeners are expected to draw their own inferences, conclusions and meanings according to their intellectual capacities… A story well told

should have at least four levels of meaning: enjoyment, moral teaching, philosophic, and metaphysical." According to the Jesuit father, Brébeuf, "Metaphor is largely in use among these Peoples; unless you accustom yourself to it, you will understand nothing…" (Thwaites 1896-1901:X:219).

Rock art sites might have conveyed various types of information on many levels, from a simple indication that a rapid is to be expected ahead, to spiritual ideas about the presence of manitous at particular locations, and to cosmological concepts pertaining to upper and lower worlds. Though the images might have had ambiguous/polyvalent multiple meanings, their location within a sacred landscape, where rocky outcrops and high cliffs located at the junction of the layers of the universe and the four elements, and adorned with white precipitate washes and sparkling quartz veins, which all had deeper ideological and usually positive meanings, suggests that the "sacred and profane" should not be separated. The meaning of the images and their placement at a particular location would have been understood in the context of the passers-by, their knowledge and their experience, whether religious or more mundane, at or near the site (see Bradley 1997:11). Images present on rocky cliffs or rocky outcrops could have denoted not only practical information, such as territorial boundaries and passages, but also sacred locales and their sighting would have shaped one's experience of the place. An encounter with a rock art site by an Indigenous person would have also conditioned their identity as their spiritual beliefs and tradition would have been reaffirmed (Taçon 1990:30-31). Rock art cannot be separated from its landscape setting, as it can only make sense within the spiritual and cosmological belief-system of Algonquian-speaking peoples.

Chapter 6: Summary and Conclusions

This study has attempted to elucidate why Canadian Shield rock art sites are placed in their particular locations and why certain landscape attributes present at rock art sites might have influenced the choice of site location suitable for creation of rock art. Furthermore, the various socio-religious functions of rock art have been investigated. This contextual approach to Canadian Shield rock art was guided by the landscape approach, according to which landscapes are socially constructed by people who assign to them different meanings and thus, can be best understood within their specific cultural context. Furthermore, a phenomenological approach to landscape studies, which takes into account the researcher's experiences at rock art sites, has been undertaken in order to try to understand the impact that landscape had on the choice of site location. To adequately elaborate on these problems, various strands of evidence have been combined, such as ethnohistoric, ethnographic and mythological sources pertaining to Algonquian-speaking peoples' spiritual and cosmological beliefs and rock art.

Canadian Shield rock art survives mainly in the form of pictographs or red ochre paintings which are especially distributed along water ways on vertical faces of cliffs, and petroglyphs or engravings incised into rocky outcrops which are located on water bodies or in the bush. Canadian Shield rock art is believed to have been created by Algonquian-speaking peoples who envision a multilayered universe populated by various manitous, such as the Underwater spirits which dwell in deep waters and rapids and Thunderbirds which dwell on high mountains. Indeed, the entire landscape is sacred for Algonquian-speaking peoples and particular locations on the landscape are believed to be inhabited by manitous. These locations are not only the high mountains or the deep waters, but also

unusual landscape features such as effigy rocks, which are believed to be beings transformed into stone, threshold locations, such as narrows, and even particular trees. Algonquian-speaking peoples were able to communicate and enter into reciprocal relationships with manitous either through dreams, especially those associated with puberty fasting, or through conjuring ceremonies. The latter were performed by medicine men known as *Jessakids*. However the *Wabeno* and *Midé* medicine men also communicated with spiritual entities through various rituals.

According to ethnographic evidence, rock art sites were places on the landscape where communication with manitous could take place, either during a vision fast or during a ritual for acquisition of medicine by a medicine man. Rock art sites are associated especially with the *maymaygwayshiwuk*, which were said to dispense the medicine in exchange for tobacco or other offerings. Thus rock art sites are sacred locales that form an integral element of the wider sacred landscape.

The phenomenological investigation carried out at ten rock art sites in Ontario was informed by Algonquian-speaking peoples' spiritual beliefs. It helped shed light on the role that landscape played at rock art locations. The placement of rock art sites reflects spiritual and cosmological beliefs of Algonquian-speaking peoples. Rock art sites are believed to be placed at the junction of the Upperworld, Underworld/Underwater and the Earthly plane. As such, they were liminal places; cosmological maps that acted as an *axis mundi* which facilitated communication with the spirits' realm, especially via the cracks and fissures present in the rock substrate. Their frequent placement on cliffs or rocky outcrops at the edge of a water body also evokes the four primordial elements of fire, water, earth and air, which would have further heightened the spiritual experience of

fasters and medicine men, since for Indigenous peoples, experiencing all of the Creation during religious ceremonies is essential.

However, it is not only their wider landscape setting, but also landscape attributes present at the sites, such as cracks, precipitate deposits, quartz veins and echo-producing grottoes, which were decisive factors in rock art placement. Understood within the context of sacred substances, such as copper or shell, which were prized for their colour, brightness, translucence and reflective qualities, landscape attributes, such as white precipitate deposits and quartz veins, might have signified positive ideas about Light, Life and Knowledge. Thus, they further reinforced the sites' functions as locales where fasting in order to gain Knowledge and medicine quests in order to sustain Life were undertaken.

Auditory qualities at rock art sites, such as moving waters and the echo effect, and the amplification of sounds that can be achieved with overhangs and echo-producing grottoes, also are important. Spirits were believed to communicate through sound, thus unusual acoustics at rock art sites might have been interpreted as messages from the manitous. The alteration of sounds might have also been important within the context of ritual performances carried out at rock art sites, as it might have heightened their dramatic effect. The appeal of visual effects, such as shimmering light reflections on waterside cliffs, might also be understood within the larger metaphysics of Light.

Algonquian-speaking peoples' spiritual beliefs might also shed light on the ideology behind the cardinal orientations of rock art sites. These sites seem to face especially from south-east to south-west and very few face north. This orientation bias towards the south-east to south-west exposure can be indicative of the generally positive

associations with East and South. However of greater importance is that Algonquian-speaking peoples perform their ceremonies in relation to the sun, thus an orientation towards south-east, for example, would guarantee exposure to the sun, which generates Light thus, Life and Knowledge. In contrast, north facing locations would receive much less light. The desire to communicate with various manitous associated with the different cardinal directions might also explain the various orientations of rock art sites.

This study has also argued that rock art sites might have served multiple functions simultaneously and might have expressed ideas of the spiritual and cosmological order as well as more mundane ones, such as a navigation system. While offerings left at rock art sites reinforce the sites' sacred nature, the clothing especially might attest to their association with healing and curing rituals. Other religious ceremonies could have been held at rock art sites and they would have been performed by laymen as well as medicine men, rendering rock art sites versatile. Pictographs and petroglyphs would also serve various functions, with petroglyphs possibly being linked to Creation stories, while pictographs might have recorded more personal experiences, such as the acquirement of medicine from the *maymaygwayshiwuk*. Rock art sites encountered within the landscape would also, by the virtue of their water location, become a sort of a marker in a navigational system, as they would mark locations of narrows, portages or falls. However, since falls and narrows might be viewed in terms of liminal locations where spirits dwell, rock art sites emerge as bearers of a complex set of information regarding spiritual, cosmological and secular ideas, which can only be understood within the landscape setting. The understanding of this information would depend on the knowledge of the social actors as well as the particular personal or collective experiences associated

with the sites. Rock art sites would have helped to create a storied landscape, where personal and group identities would have been forged and where spiritual and cosmological ideas regarding the universe would have been reaffirmed.

This study situates Canadian Shield rock art within the wider context of its landscape, which is an approach that so far has been rarely explored. Art is both a visual and a cultural phenomenon and it provides tangible expressions of a people's religion and ideology. Art permits one to endeavour the study of these seemingly intangible concepts and in the process enriches our knowledge and understanding of the richness of human thought. Thus, this thesis contributes to the studies of art and religion in the archaeology of Algonquian-speaking peoples.

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FIGURES

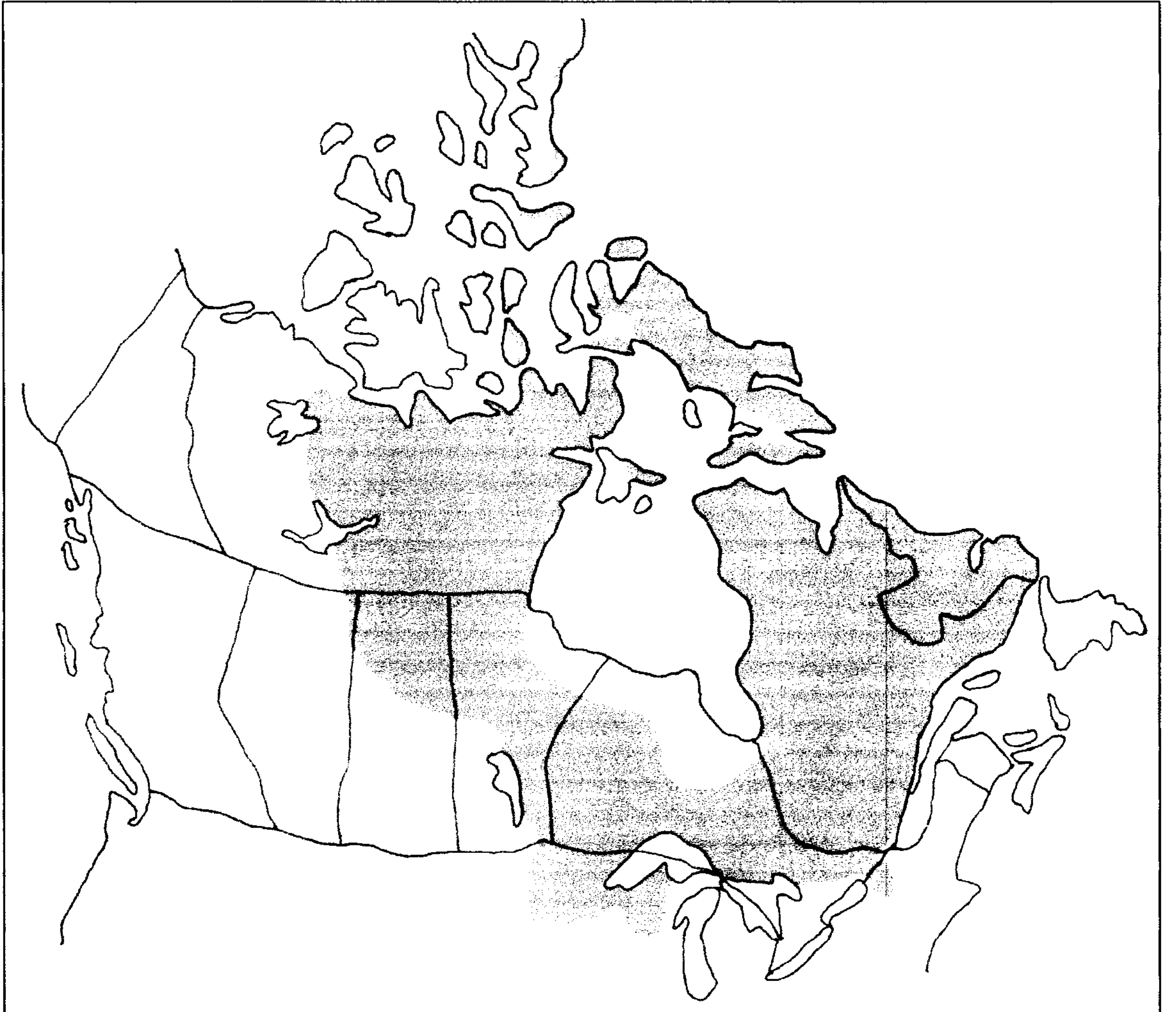

Figure 2.1: The Canadian Shield

Redrawn from http://www.nucleartourist.com/images/shield1.jpg by Martin Kopec

Figure 2.2: Typical Canadian Shield Landscape (Missinaibi Lake, Ontario). All photos by author.

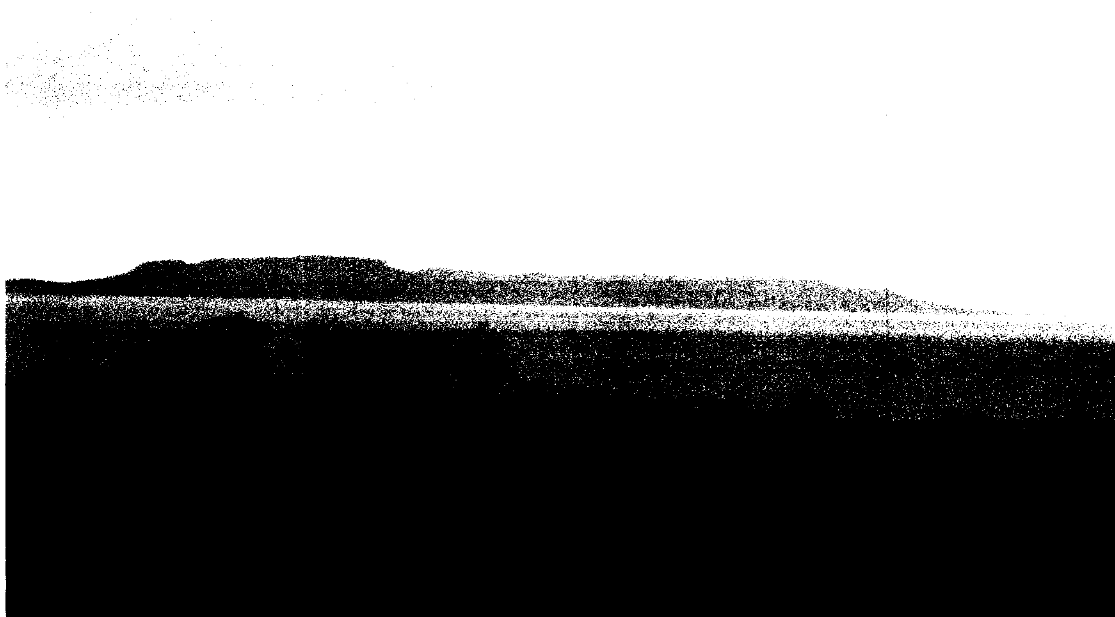

Figure 4.1: The Sleeping Giant (Thunder Bay, Ontario)

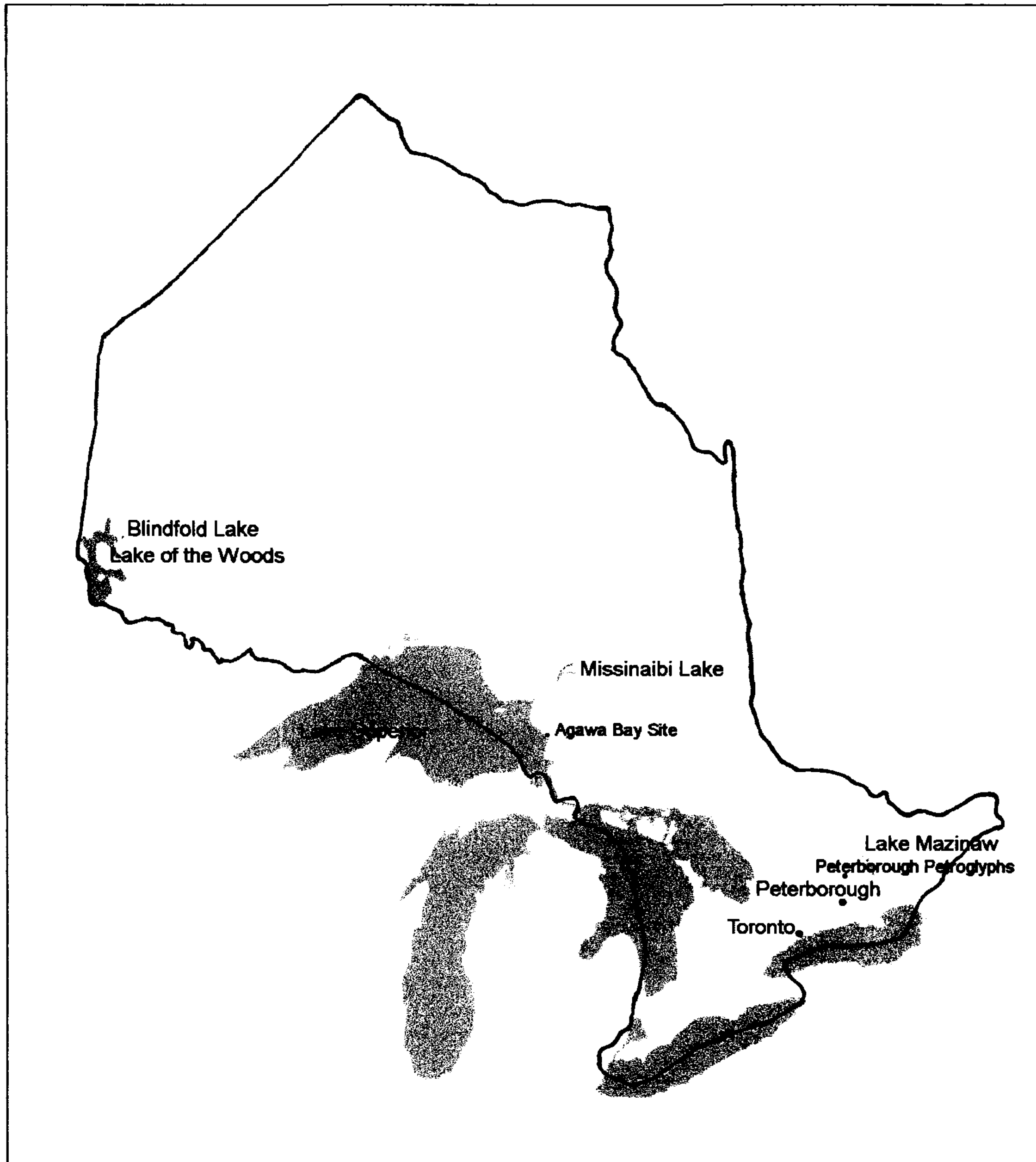

Figure 5.1: Map of Ontario indicating lakes on which visited rock art sites are found

Redrawn from http://www.mnr.gov.on.ca/MNR/youthprograms/sep_ontmap.html by Martin Kopec

Figure 5.2: Stone stairs leading to the path to Agawa Bay site, Ontario

Figure 5.3: Eroded dike, Agawa Bay, Ontario

Figure 5.4: Boulder wedged in the eroded dike, Agawa Bay, Ontario

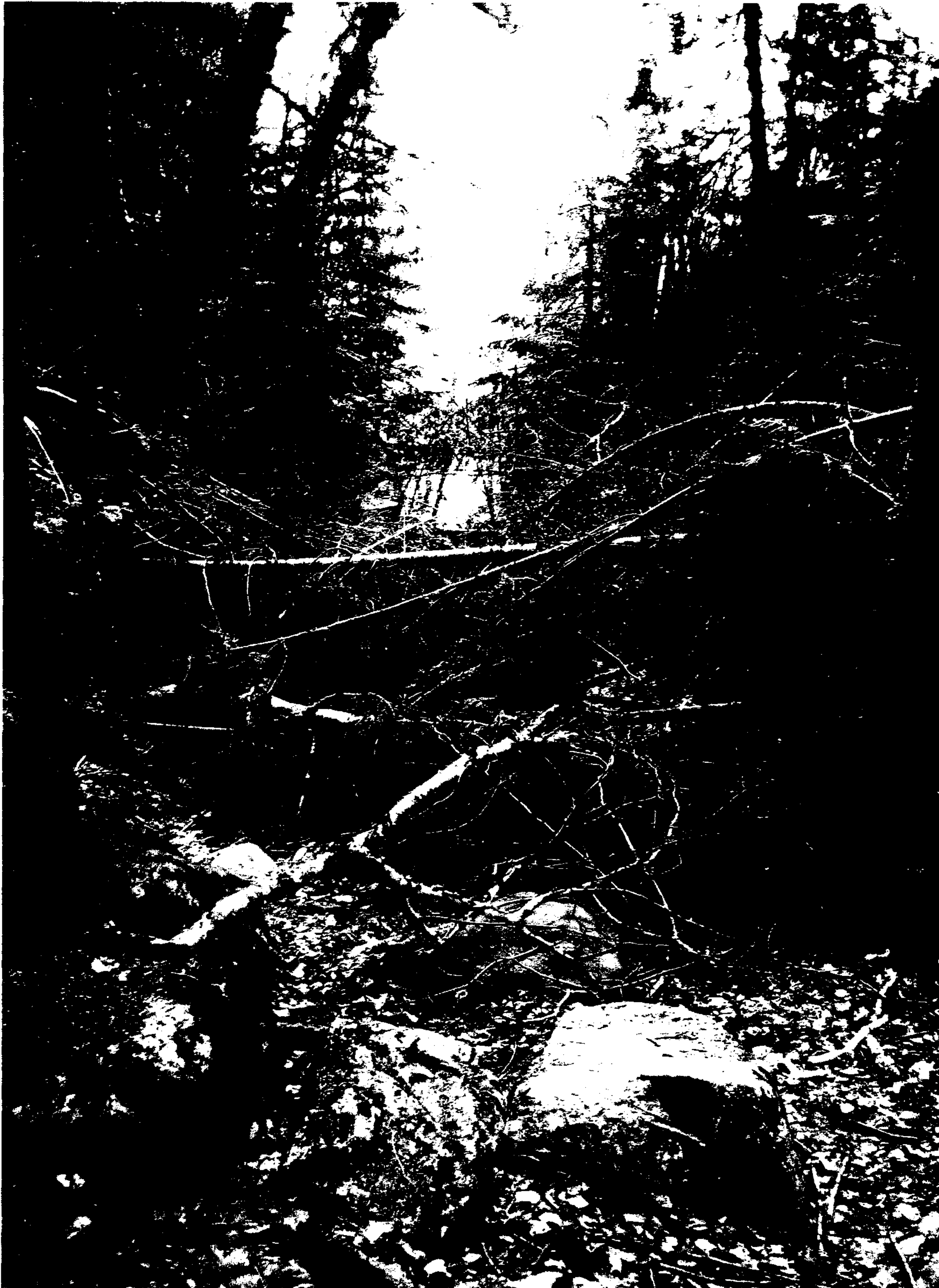

Figure 5.5: Path towards Agawa Bay site after a storm

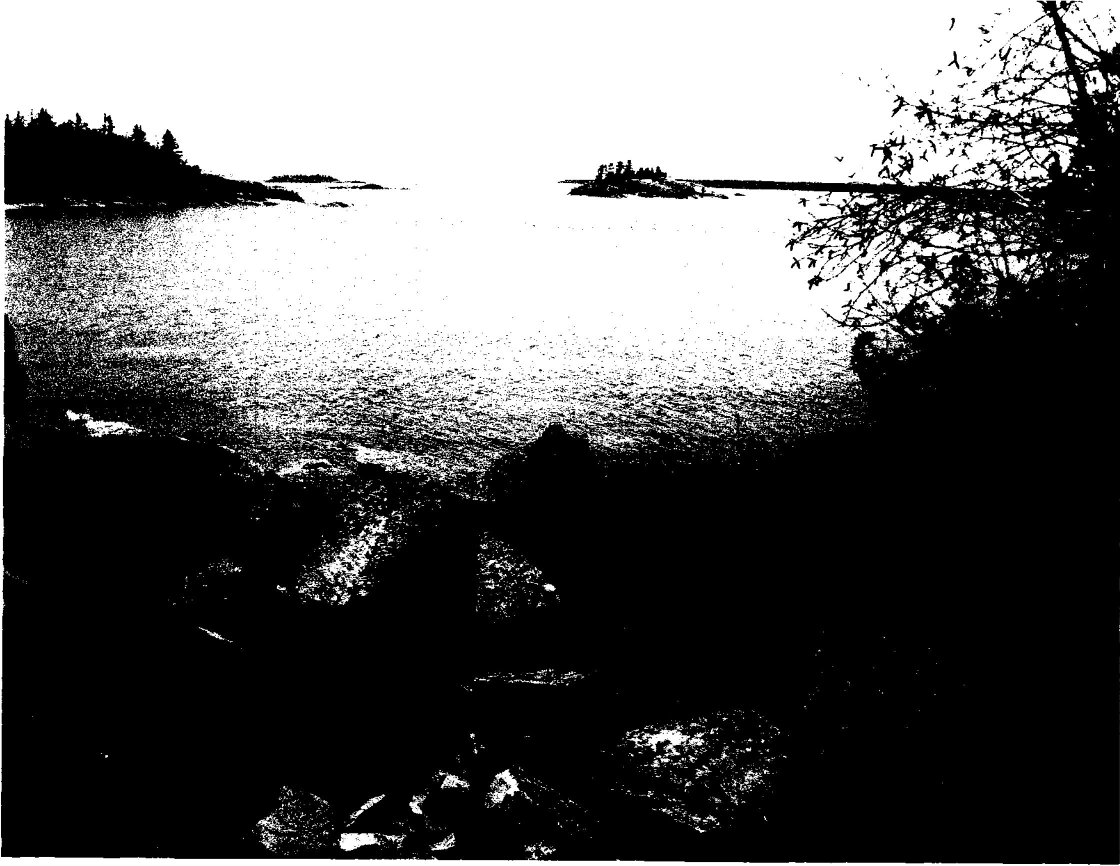

Figure 5.6: View onto Lake Superior, Agawa Bay, Ontario

Figure 5.7: View of the Agawa Bay site, Ontario

Figure 5.8: Panel I, Agawa Bay site, Ontario

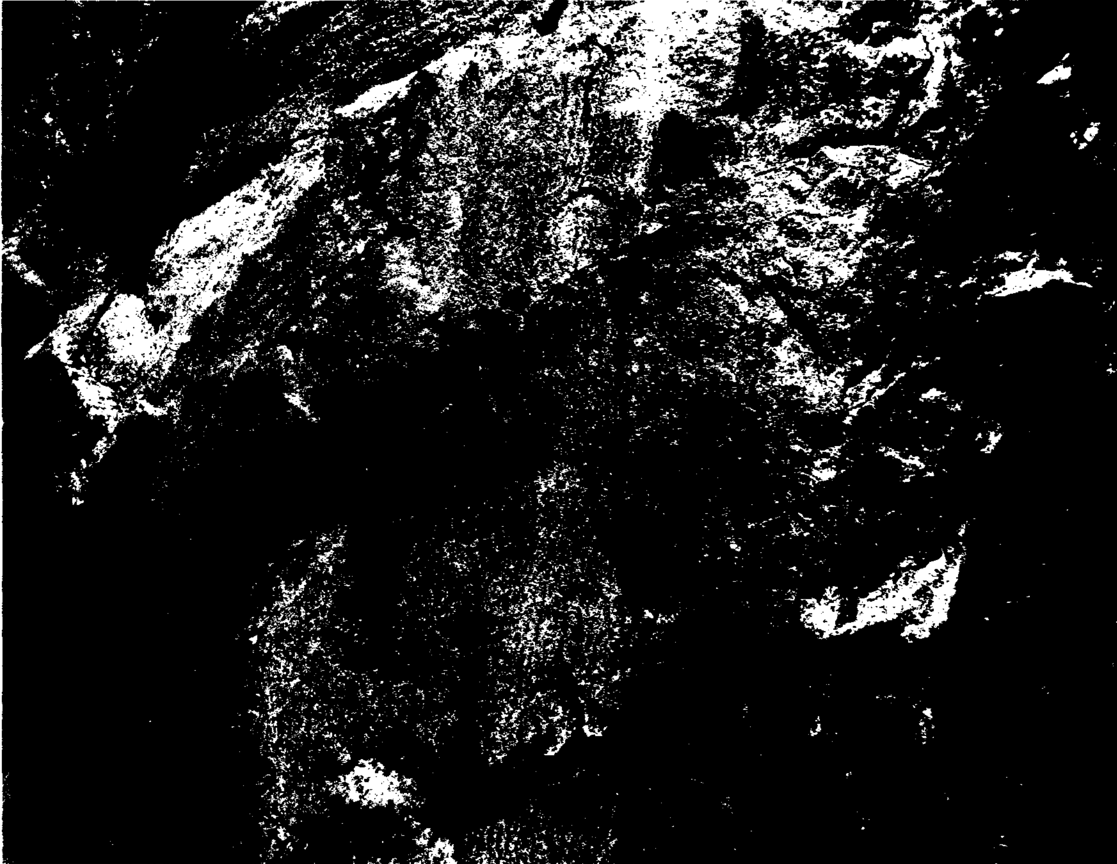

Figure 5.9: Panel VIII, Agawa Bay site, Ontario

Figure 5.10: Ledge in front of the *Mishipeshu* panel, Agawa Bay site, Ontario

Figure 5.11: Quartz veins (lighter in colour) on the ledge, Agawa Bay site, Ontario

Figure 5.12: Quartz veins (lighter in colour) on the ledge, Agawa Bay site, Ontario

Figure 5.13: Section of panel X, Agawa Bay site, Ontario

Figure 5.14: Looking up from panel X, Agawa Bay site, Ontario

Figure 5.15 Area around panel X (pictograph can be seen in the lower left corner), Agawa Bay site, Ontario.

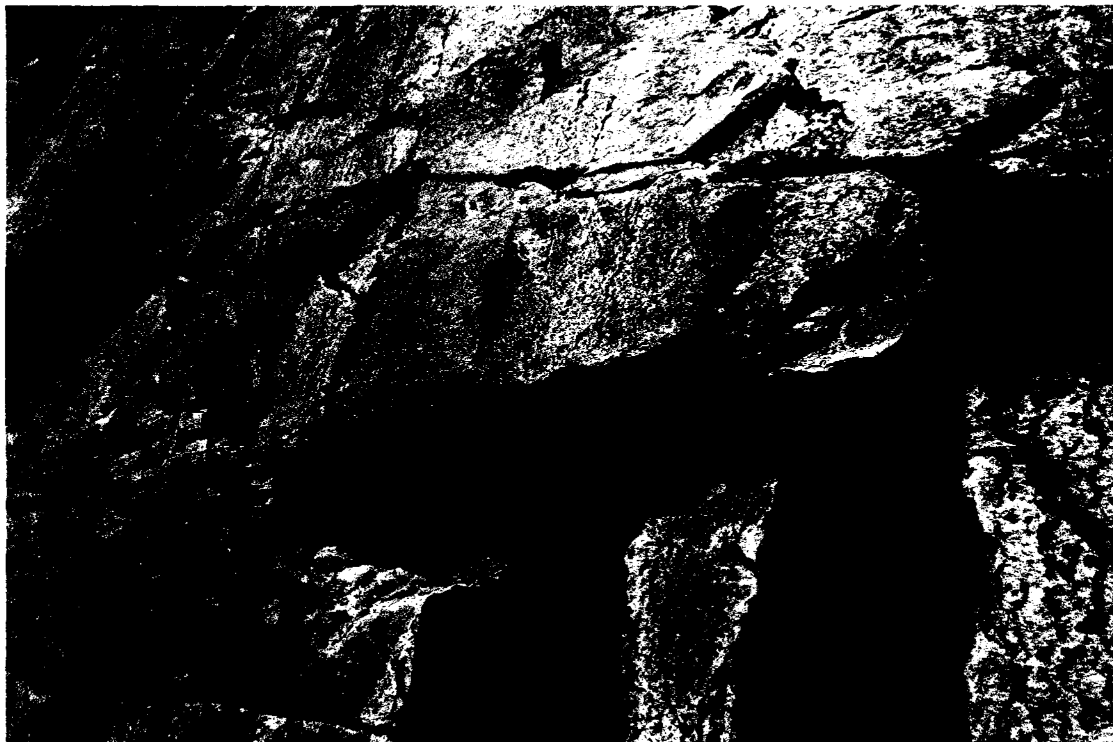

Figure 5.16: Panel IX, Agawa Bay site, Ontario

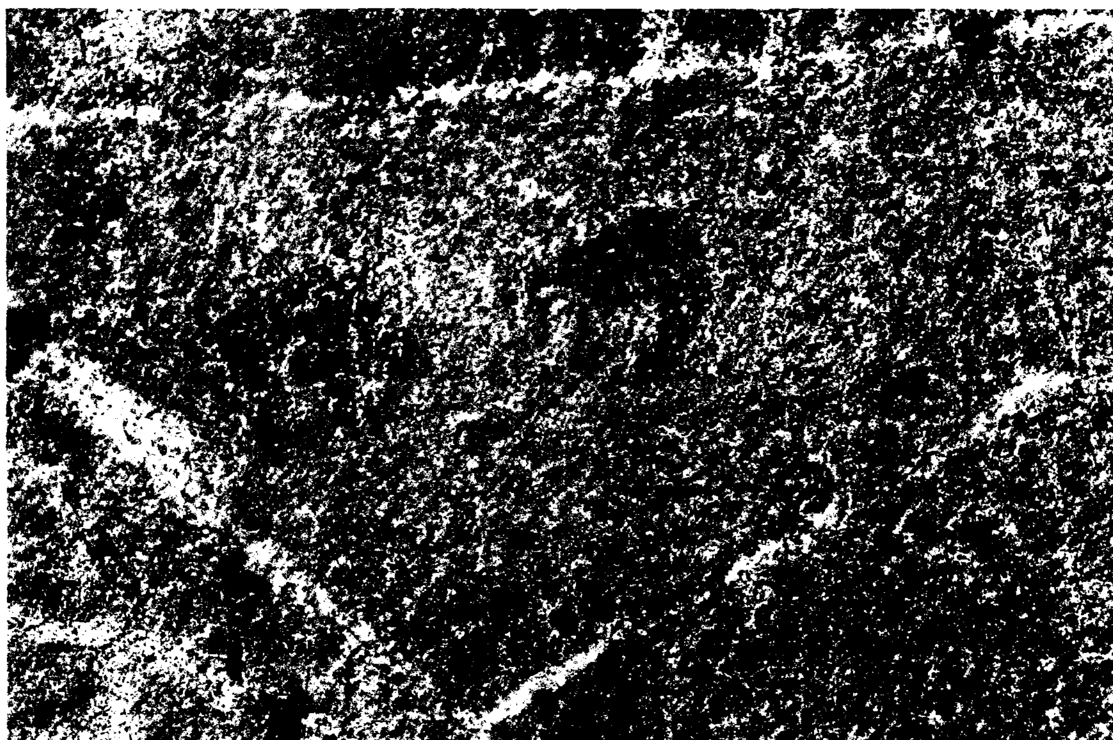

Figure 5.17: Panel XII, Agawa Bay site, Ontario

Figure 5.18: Panel XIII, Agawa Bay site, Ontario

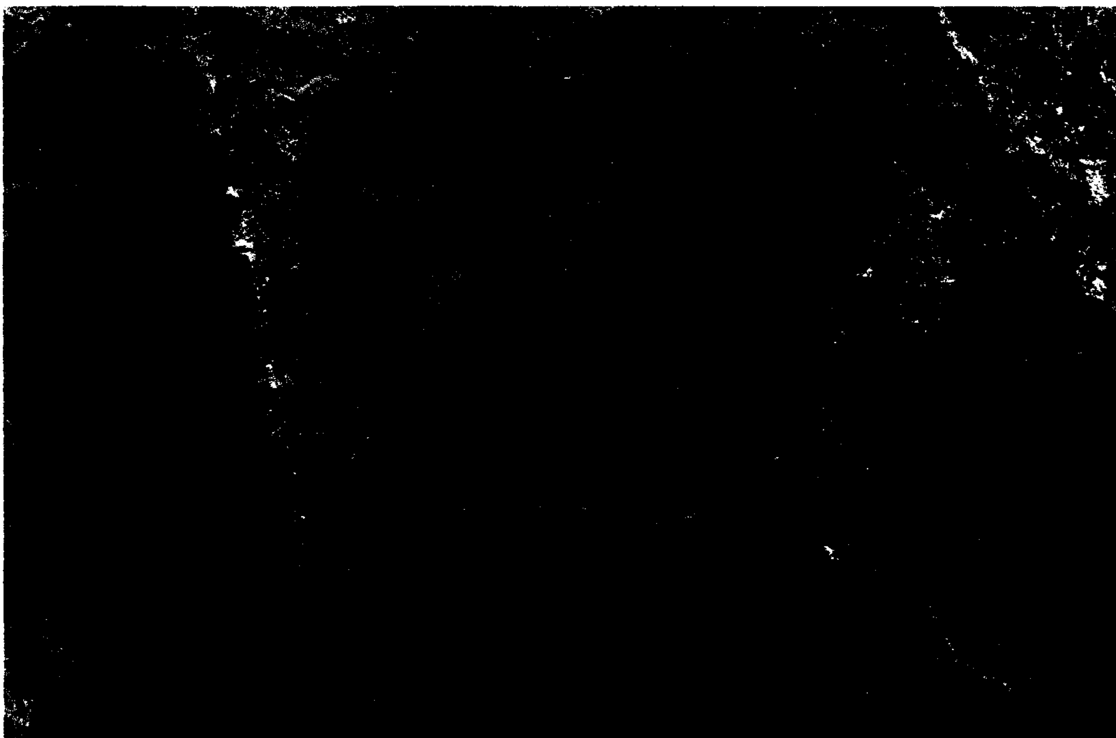

Figure 5.19: Panel XIV, Agawa Bay site, Ontario

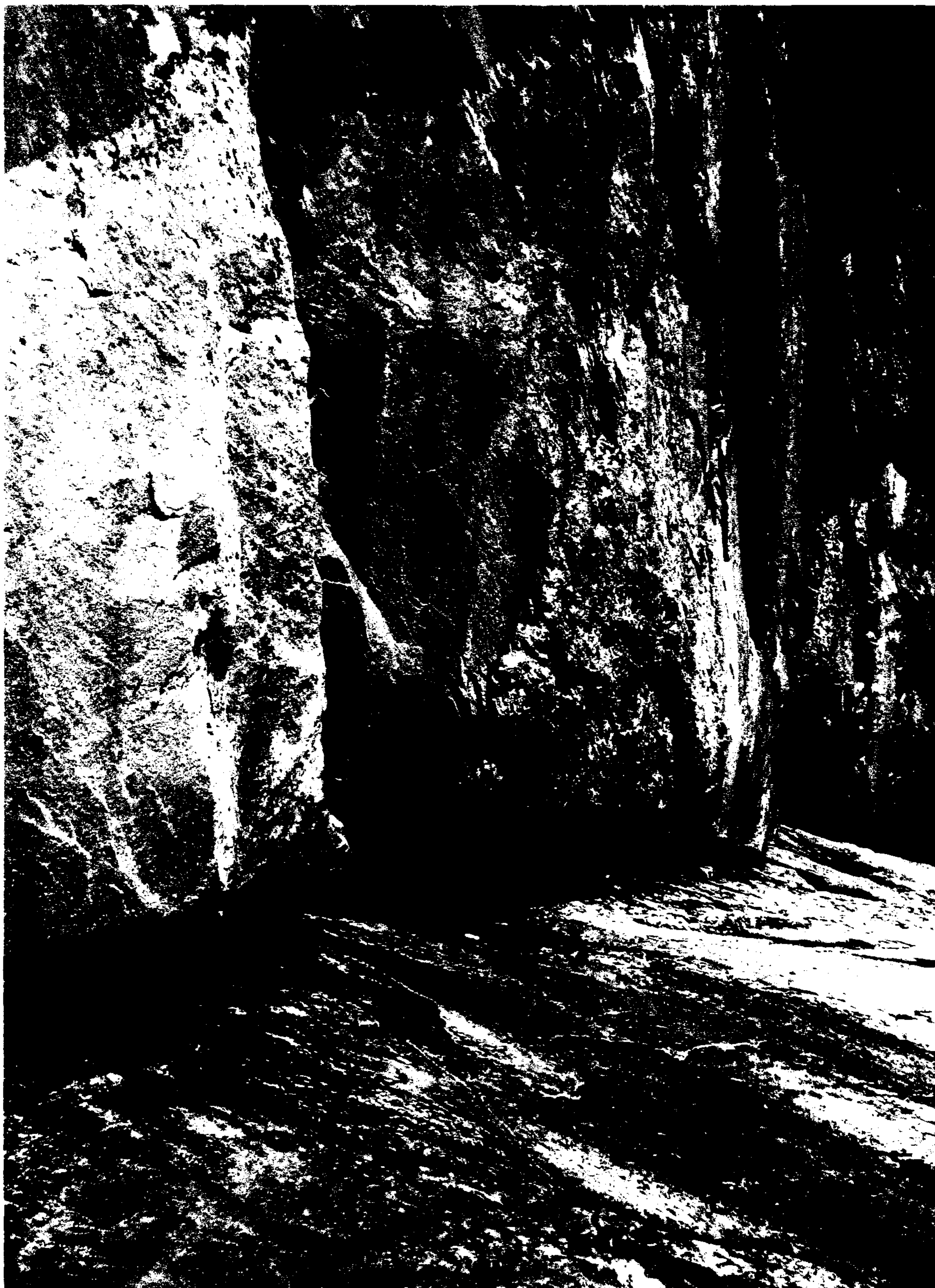

Figure 5.20: The deep crevice in the area of panel XIV, Agawa Bay site, Ontario

Figure 5.21: Deep crevice created by the eroded part of the dike, Agawa Bay, Ontario

Figure 5.22: View onto Lake Superior from Agawa Bay site, Ontario

Figure 5.23: View onto Lake Superior from Agawa Bay site, Ontario

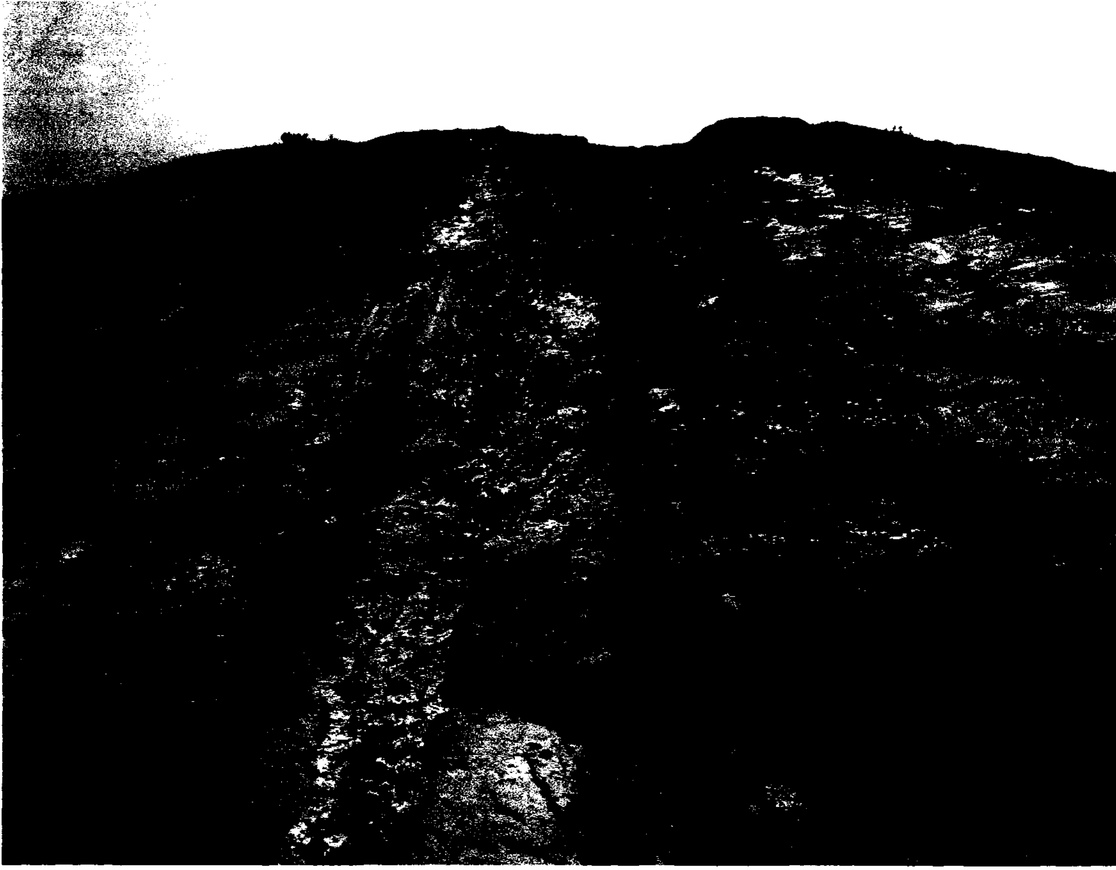

Figure 5.24: Looking up the Agawa Bay cliff

Figure 5.25: Stone stairs in the eroded dike leading to the parking lot, Agawa Bay, Ontario

Figure 5.26: Canoeing towards the Blindfold Lake site. The vertical cliff is on the right side of the photograph.

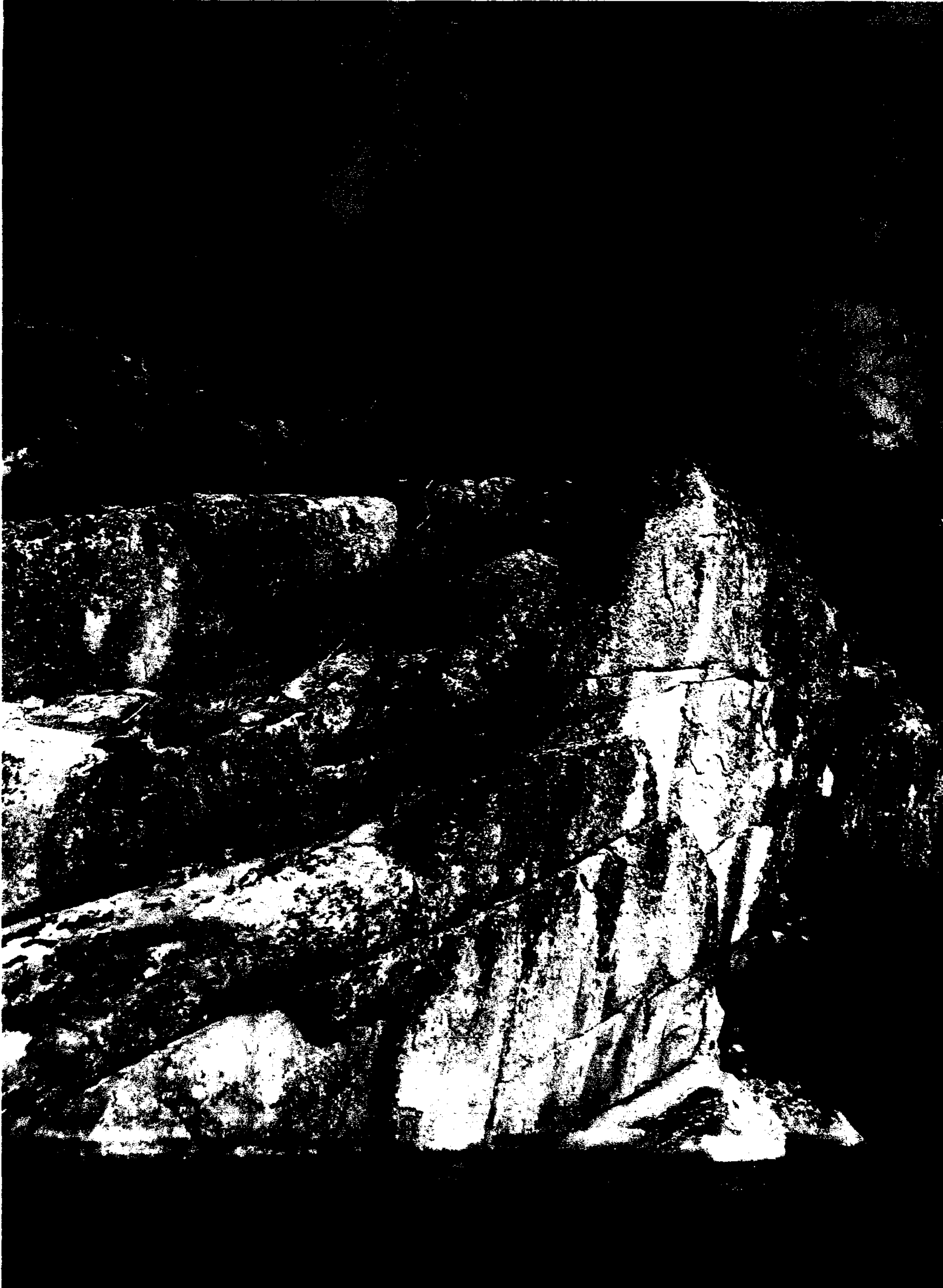

Figure 5.27: Blindfold Lake site, Ontario

Figure 5.28: Face I, Blindfold Lake site, Ontario

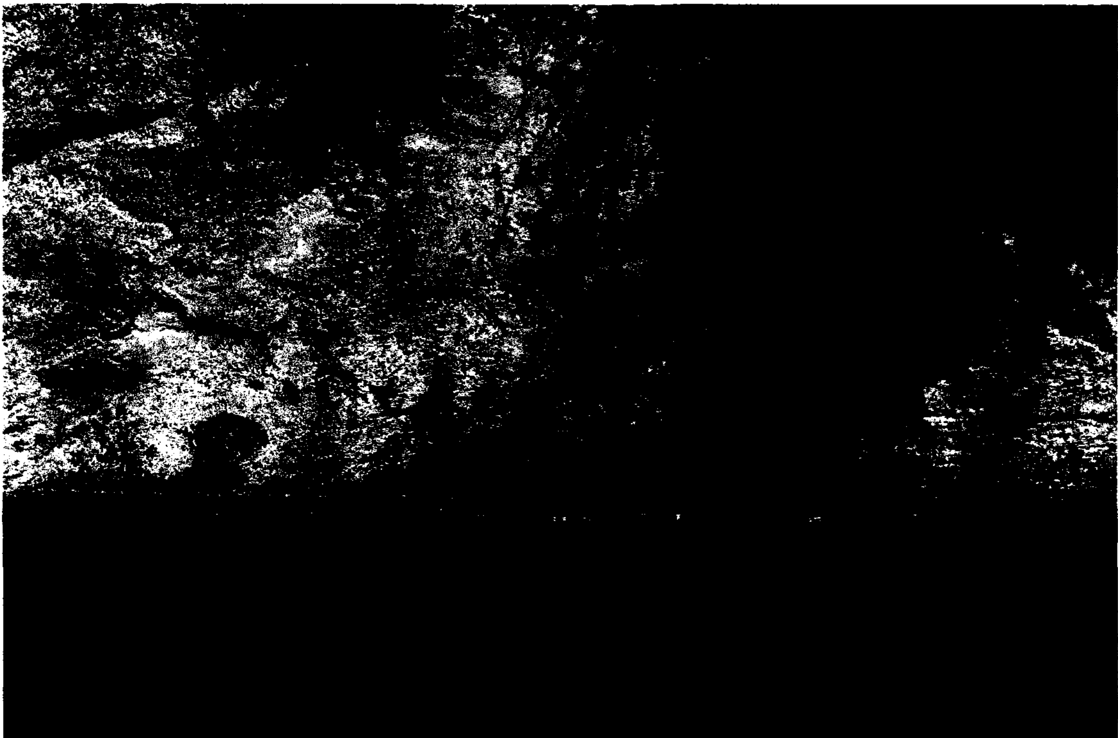

Figure 5.29: Face II, Blindfold Lake site, Ontario

Figure 5.30: Cliff formation north of Blindfold Lake site, note the whiter patch of precipitate and the deep overhang between which a raven nest is located (centre of photograph).

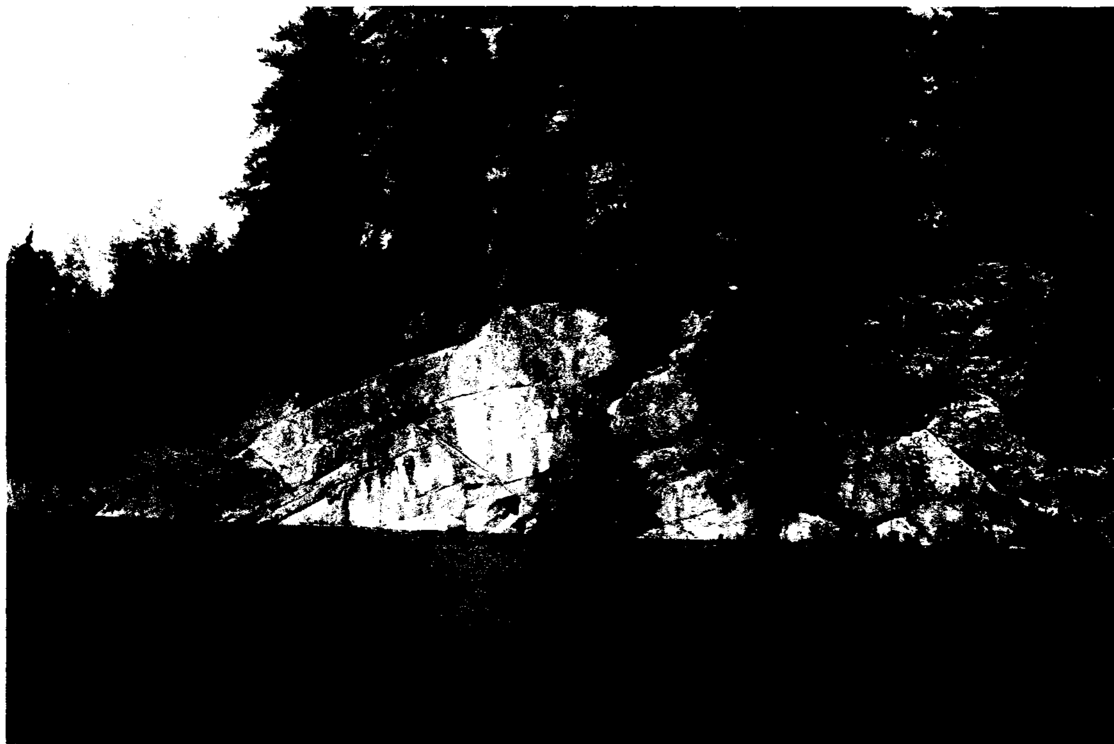

Figure 5.31: Paddling south towards Blindfold Lake site, Ontario

Figure 5.32: Rock outcrop on top of the Blindfold Lake site, Ontario

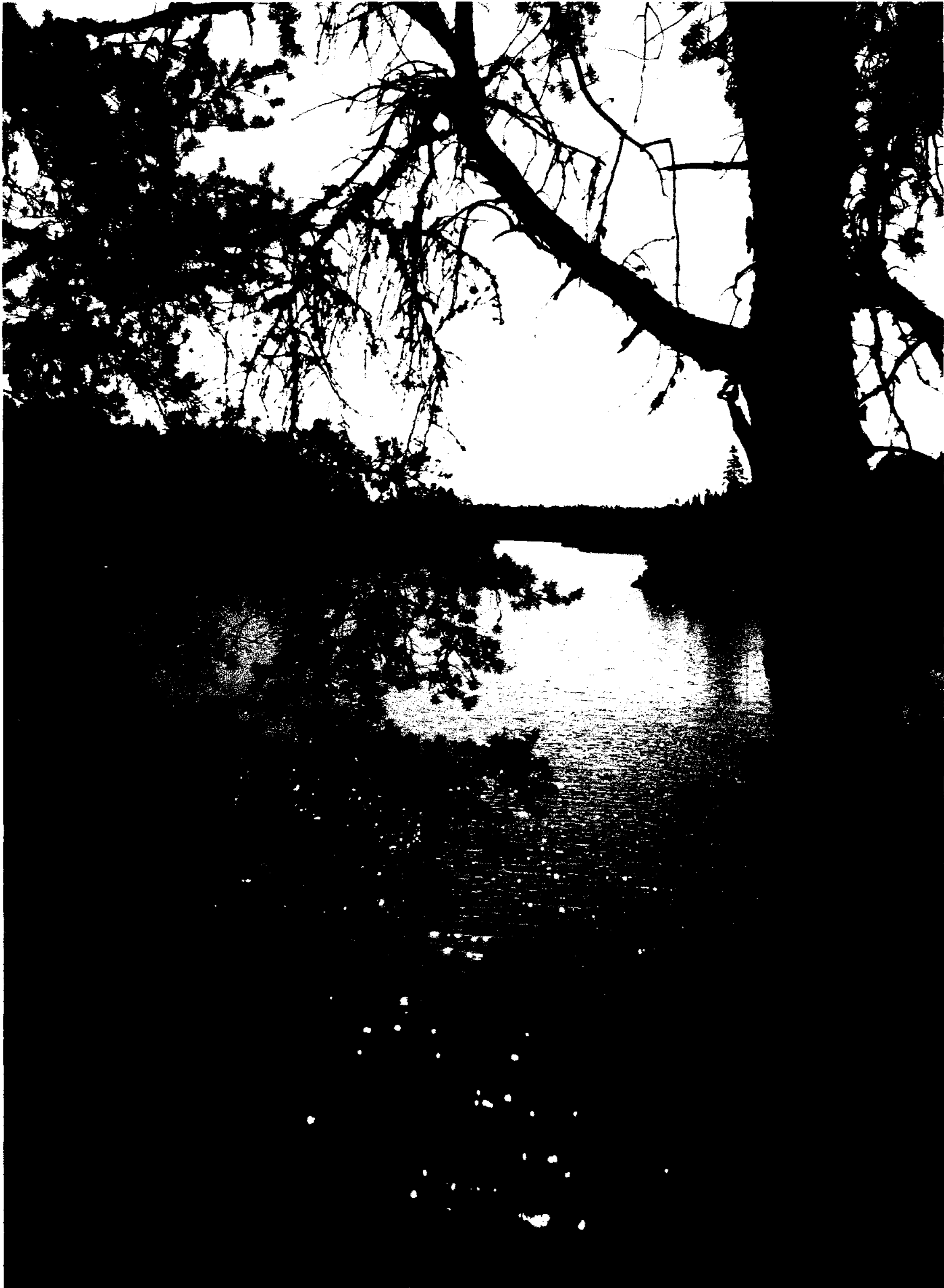

Figure 5.33: View from the Blindfold Lake site, Ontario

Figure 5.34: Annie Island site, Ontario

Figure 5.35: Close-up of the “anthropomorph,” Annie Island site, Ontario

Figure 5.36: Picture Rock Island site, Ontario. Note the white precipitate and the ledge above which the site is located (centre of photograph).

Figure 5.37: General view of the Devil's Bay site, Ontario

Figure 5.38: Devil's Bay site, Ontario. The pictographs are located on the central smooth portion of the cliff.

Figure 5.39: Hayter peninsula site, Ontario

Figure 5.40: Pictographs at Hayter peninsula site, Ontario

Figure 5.41: View onto the many islands and peninsulas in the Lake of the Woods, Ontario. Photograph taken near the Hayter peninsula site.

Figure 5.42: Along the Nanabush Trail, Petroglyphs Provincial Park, Ontario

Figure 5.43: Along the Nanabush Trail, Petroglyphs Provincial Park, Ontario

Figure 5.44: Along the Nanabush Trail, Petroglyphs Provincial Park, Ontario. Note the rock outcrop in the foreground.

Figure 5.45 Along the Nanabush Trail, Petroglyphs Provincial Park, Ontario. Note the rock outcrop in the background.

Figure 5.46: The Bon Echo cliff, Ontario. Note the white motorboat in the right-hand corner.

Figure 5.47: Looking south towards the narrows, Bon Echo cliff, Ontario

Figure 5.48: Cedar growing out of the Bon Echo cliff, Ontario

Figure 5.49: Cedar growing out of the Bon Echo cliff, Ontario. Note the vertical precipitate deposits.

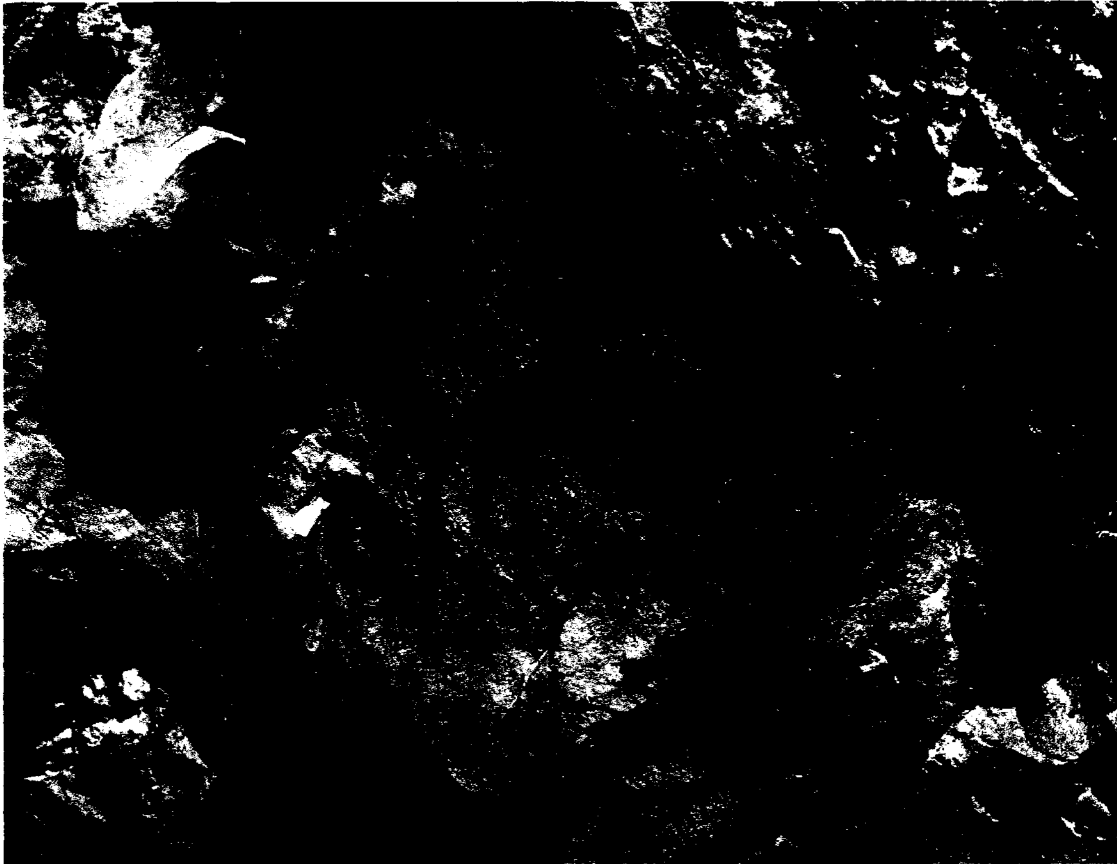

Figure 5.50: The *Mishipeshu* panel, Bon Echo, Ontario

Figure 5.51: White precipitate on the Bon Echo cliff, Ontario

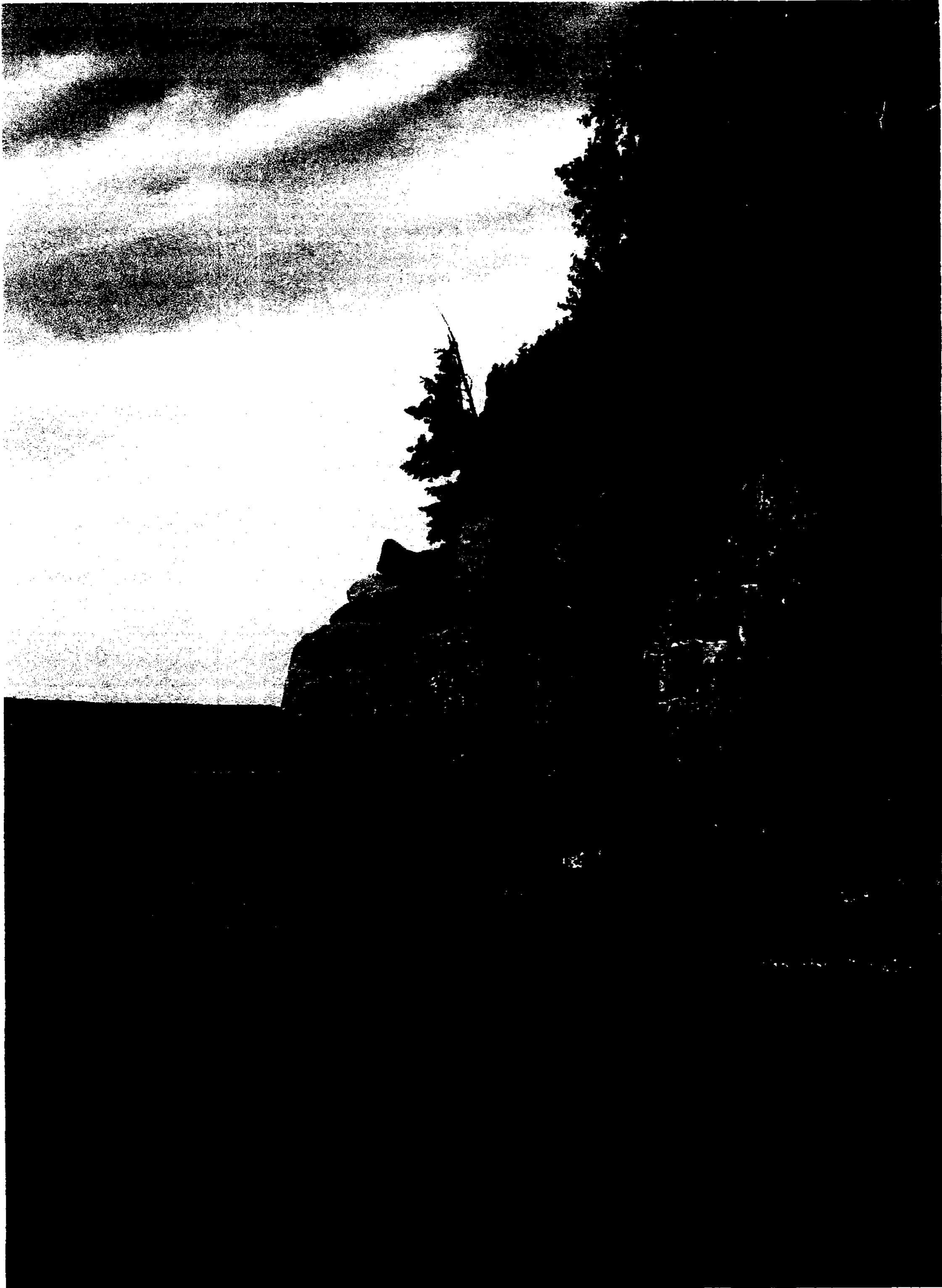

Figure 5.52: Turtle effigy at the Bon Echo cliff. Note the projection above the water resembling a turtle's head in the centre of the photograph.

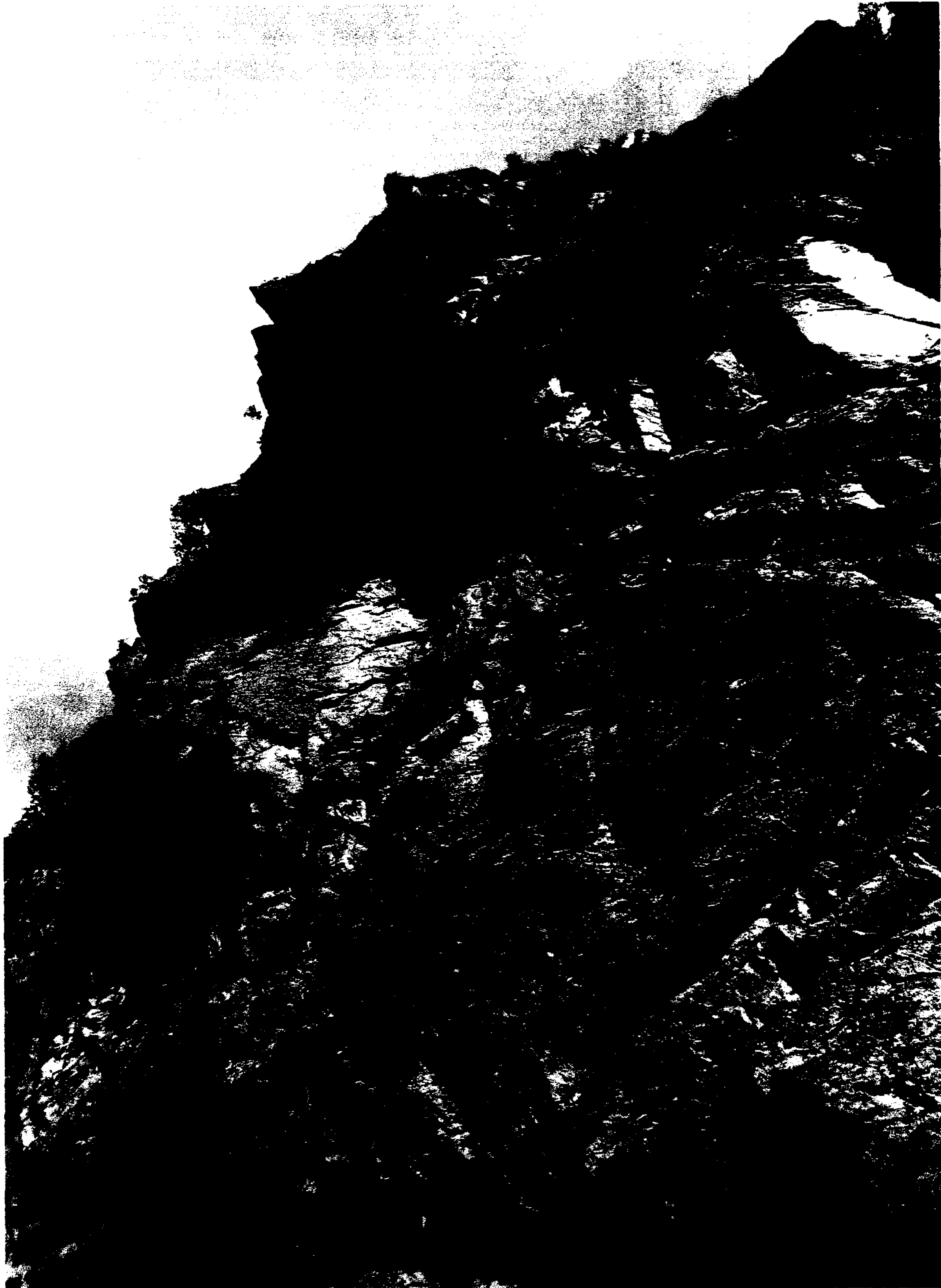

Figure 5.53: Looking up the Bon Echo cliff, Ontario

Figure 5.54: The Bon Echo cliff, Ontario

Figure 5.55: Whitefish Falls, Missinaibi Provincial Park, Ontario

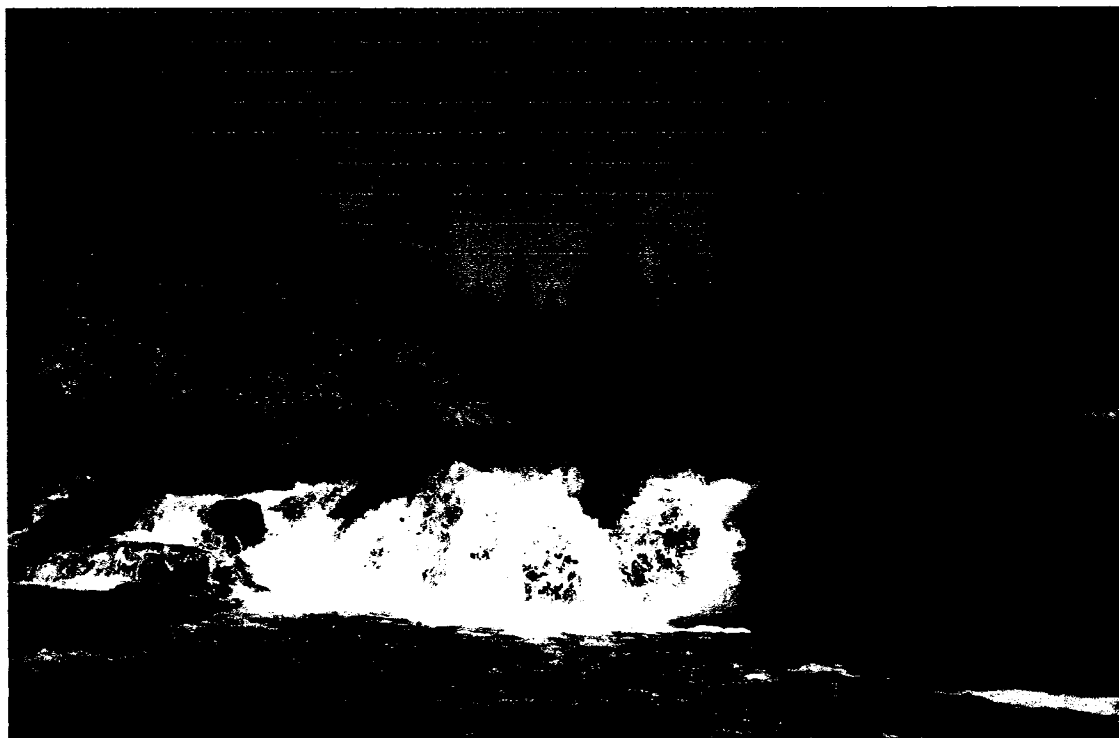

Figure 5.56: Whitefish Falls, Missinaibi Provincial Park, Ontario

Figure 5.57: Shores of Missinaibi Lake, Ontario

Figure 5.58: Fairy Point site, Missinaibi Provincial Park, Ontario. Note the dark coloured portion of the cliff in the center of the photograph and the lighter coloured portion to its right.

Figure 5.59: Fairy Point site, Missinaibi Provincial Park, Ontario

Figure 5.60: Fairy Point site, Ontario. Note the pictographs on the lighter coloured portion of the cliff.

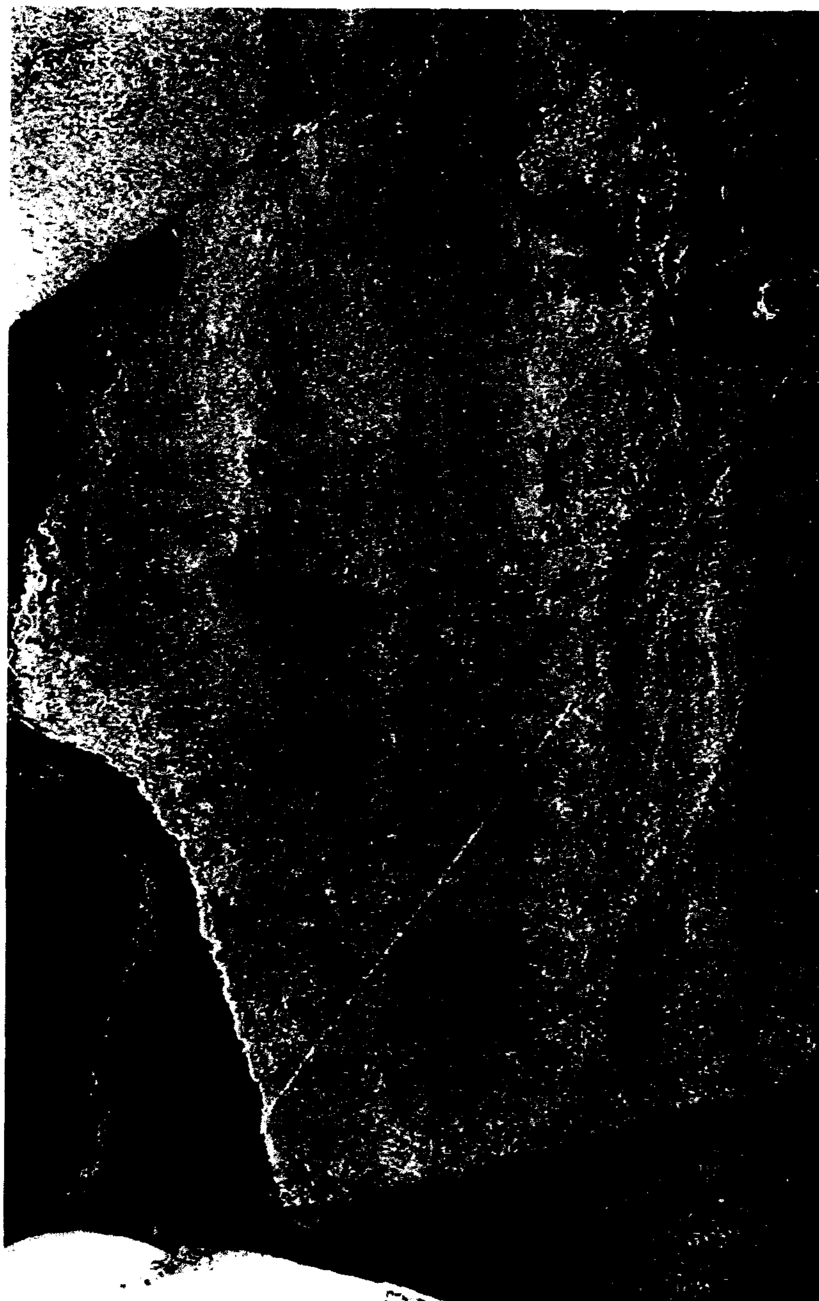

Figure 5.61: Fairy Point site, Ontario. Note the “V” shaped quartz vein under the pictographs.

Figure 5.62: Vertical fault in the cliff creating an echo-producing grotto, Fairy Point site

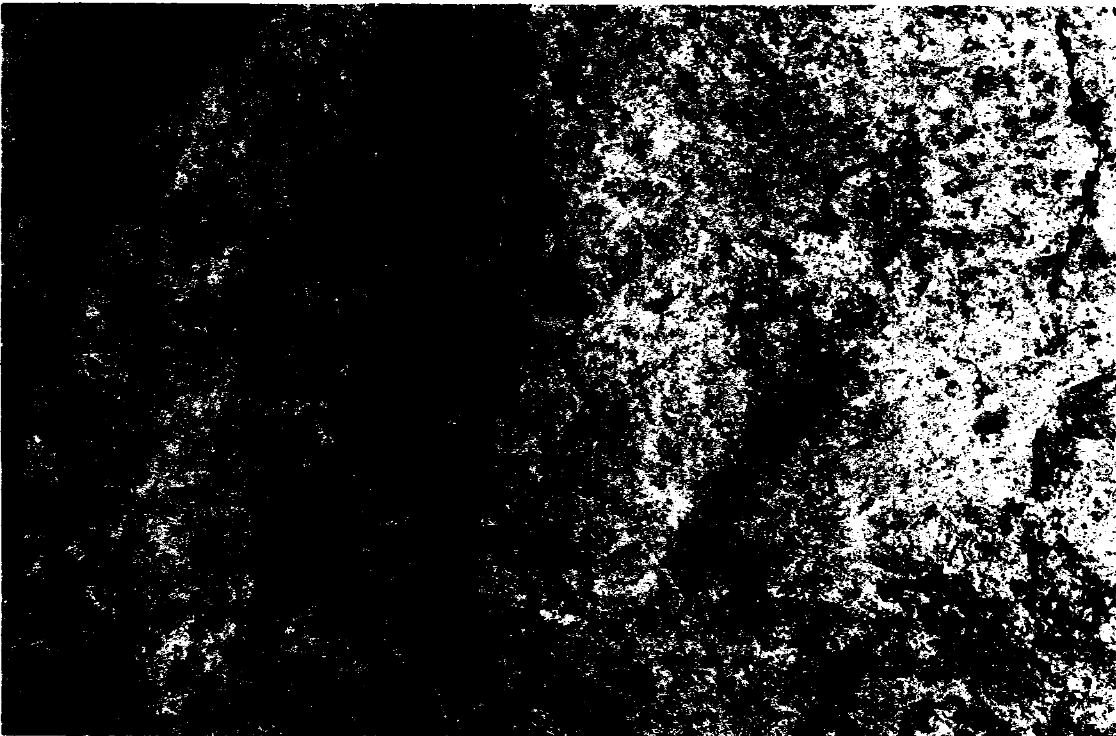

Figure 5.63: Red “anthropomorph” on a light background, Fairy Point site, Ontario

Figure 5.64: A unique pictograph of two white crosses located under the precipitate deposit, Fairy Point site, Ontario

Figure 5.65: General view of the Fairy Point cliff, Missinaibi Provincial Park, Ontario. The main panel is located where the arrow↑ points.

APPENDIX 1

The Legend of the Oxford House Rock Painting

A woman of the Oxford House Band was very sick. The woman's family asked an old man named Mistoos Muskego to come and cure her of her illness. The old man tried again and again to cure the woman but nothing seemed to work. Finally the old man said that there was only one hope left and that was to go and ask the men who lived in the rock if they could give him the powerful medicine needed to cure the woman. The old man left in his canoe and paddled up to where he knew the men who lived in the rock dwelt. (This spot is today a high granitic rock face rising sharply straight upwards from the Semple River even as it was in Misttos Muskegos' day). The old man was very powerful and used his power to enter into the rock unto the home of the men who lived in the rock. The old man talked for a long time with the men who lived in the rock and asked for the medicine that would cure the woman and in the end he was given the medicine he requested. The old man then left the rock and paddled back to the home of the woman who was ill. The medicine of the men who live in the rock was given to the woman who was ill. This medicine cured the woman. The old man said that all should remember it was the men who lived in the rocks who were powerful and could give medicine to a powerful old man. The old man then made a paint and asked all people to come with him to the home of the men who lived in the rocks. The old man and the people then paddled their canoes up to the solid rock where the old man left his canoe and stood on the rock ledge by the water. He told the assembled people how he had received the medicine. He then said that no one should forget the men who lived in the rock and that he would draw a painting of them. (He then drew a painting approximately two feet high, stick figured and with lines running from the head giving a rabbit-eared look). The people now would remember [where] the men who lived in the rock lived and what they looked like and all returned home (Wheeler 1975:710).