Chapter 5
Paleolithic: Unity

ABSTRACT

The examples of Paleolithic painting, their dating and cultural context are given. Basically, these are the works found in the caves of Chauvet, Altamira, Lascaux. The features of space depicting and some other features of the images been analyzed. Their difference from the contemporary patterns of space depicting been discussed. The connection of such signs with the levels of subjective space is established, which allows us to judge the development of its channels. The origin of the World Tree myth dates back to the Paleolithic epoch, there are very few images to judge upon its plot. Nevertheless, it is possible to reconstruct the Paleolithic version of the myth, based upon indirect signs. It also gives the chance to judge upon the state of mind of the Paleolithic humans. The results of the reconstruction of the mind and behavior of the Paleolithic human are presented in the form of a generalized psychological portrait and description of the behavior pattern.

BACKGROUND

The sources for Paleolithic painting can be divided into four groups.

First, those are the reproductions of works presented both in albums Pomerantseva,(2006) and in electronic form.

Second, these are the related historical and archaeological publications, that allow us to specify the periodization of Paleolithic epoch and the dating of the painted works (Leroi-Gourhan, 1967, 1978, 1982; Joiner, 1985; Blednova et al., 1998; Coulson & Campbell, 2001; Maugh & Thomas, 2009), as well as to view the images in the cultural context of this era (Taylor, 1980; Golan, 1993). Surely, there might be some discrepancy in the dating and hypothetical nature of culture reconstructions.

The next group of sources belongs to the attempt to understand why a primitive human began to paint at all, and why he did it in such a way, but not otherwise.

A range of hypotheses are evident here - he used to paint in such a way because a primitive human did not know how to do differently (being based upon some similarities with the children’s drawings...
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(Osorina, 2016), he also used his drawings as the elements of cult and magic rituals (Abramova, 1971; Stolyar, 1985; Levi-Strauss, 1994; Gutrie, 2005), as well as he painted in an altered state of mind, which caused a significant difference from the contemporary painting (McKenna, 1995).

The arguments pro et contra of such hypotheses are also widely present in the related publications. Some publications are devoted to the technique of depicting space – without any reference to the human mind (Rauschenbach, 1986, 2001) and with this reference (Kovalyov & Nitsyn, 2012).

The third group of sources relates to the research of the myth of the World Tree. Both the images of the World Tree and the hypothetical reconstructions of the myth plot have been presented (Golan, 1993).

And the fourth group of publications is the reconstructions of the human mind and behavior (Heaven & Furnham, 1998; Boehm, 1999; Kelly, 2000; Lewis-William, 2002; Eshleman, 2003).

SPACE IN PALEOLITHIC PAINTING

Samples of a primitive painting are known all over the continents except Antarctica. The oldest of them date from 60 thousand years ago, and the new ones are being created by our contemporaries who live in the distant “corners” of our planet. According to its geographic scope and time evidence, the primitive painting has been the unprecedented human creative works. At the same time, it remains amazingly homogeneous, recognizable, and makes the viewer feel strong impressions.

The phenomenon of primitive painting has been studied for more than a century. It should be noted that any work is unconditionally individual - and nevertheless, it possesses a certain “spirit of the epoch”, evident in the canonized artistic methods, social tastes, typed of mentality. The similarity of these features determines the homogeneity and recognition of primitive painting and makes it possible to evaluate the mind of a primitive human.

To perform such a reconstruction, it is necessary to solve the following tasks beforehand:

- Consider the localization and periodization of the works of primitive arts.
- Present a visual series of the most outstanding and illustrative works.
- Identify the features of space painting, including the comparison of the paintings with the other manifestations of material culture.
- To give the interpretation of a primitive human’s state of mind.

Localization and Periodization

In 1879, the amateur archaeologist M. S. de Sautuola discovered the Cave of Altamira (Spain, Figure 1), there were many paintings of the ancient people. One year later, Sautuola, along with J. Villanova-e-Pierre, published the results of their research, where they referred to the images to the Paleolithic epoch. Many scientists considered this message to be incredible.

Some similar caves with the paintings exist in different parts of Europe and all over the world, but most of them are located in the Pyrenees on both sides of the Spanish-French border.

Apart from the images found in the caves, there are many rock paintings. They look close to the bone carving and relief patterns, that have been traced on a soft stone surface, such as sandstone.

The traditional periodization of the Stone Age includes the Paleolithic, Mesolithic and Neolithic epochs, which have been defined primarily by stone processing techniques. Therefore, each of those epochs...
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