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## **The Role of collective unconscious in the Murals of Altamira Cave in Spain**

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### **Abstract**

*The cave men were illustrating on caves for getting to know himself and the world around. The illustrations are full of symbols and meanings and have used signs and different forms by deconstructing totem. To achieve more analyses about his mind needs discussion. Symbolic signs are representative of what is beyond what may seem at first glance. Those are connected with everyday life. In fact, symbols have collective unconscious aspects which stand for thinking method and life style.*

*The importance of knowing Paleolithic art and cognitive grounds for it had formed cultures. The qualities of these works of art and the ambiguities of them in the interpretation of their message to the viewer look mysterious. Thus, methodological and vast studies about prehistoric art till the 16th century are started and still being continued.*

*Such researches are increasing as a result of new findings in the 20th century. Jung's psychological analyses about prehistoric human mind and its connection with unconscious me in attaining unconsciousness is assessed in this paper and the symbolic act of Paleolithic man which originates from his dreams are analyzed. The research method is a descriptive, analytical, and comparative one while the data gathering method is biblical one. By implemented examinations, we can apply Jung's views on the analyses of Paleolithic cave art which follows by mythological studies later on.*

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### **Introduction:**

Unconscious or antithesis is the covert self or nature or human. To understand the psyche and inside of human being is one of the important issues in psychology. The greatest psychologist of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Carl Gustav Jung's theories in regard to the mind of Paleolithic man is where this paper is concentrated. Prehistoric man created cave art by his/her cognition. Her creativity originates from the unconscious; a stimulus which has propelled him toward thought, imagination and creativity. In accordance with Jung, this is not easy to get a comprehensive knowledge about the prehistoric man's mind, but the forthcoming evidences and analyses, which shows his way of cognition, is provided here. Despite the fact that 100 thousand years has passed since human life on earth, the oldest art works discovered backs only to 40 thousand years ago. Some researchers believe that the sort of imagery and symbolic language we are acquainted to today is the result of the grown brain's structure and life style of cave-dwelling human being. The oldest paintings in Europe date back to 32 thousands of years ago which are related to the Aurignacian culture. Almost 350 caves are discovered in France and Spain which are famous for the prehistoric art. Located in the northern Spain, the cave Altamira is one the most famous spots remaining from Paleolithic period when technology is spread out based on human evolution and when human lives across eastern Africa, Europe, Asia and Australia. According to some researchers, genetic mutation changed brain structure providing it with the ability of abstract thinking. Symbolic language and art has been an abrupt growth in human evolution. Paleolithic human's abilities have a great impact on development of human culture either in a gradual way or as a sudden mutation and, as a result, provide more research fields in regard to mental



and social growths. The importance of scrutiny of the attitudes and life style of cave human and their sociological developments are not neglected by sociologists, psychologists, anthropologists and art researchers and still are considered as important subjects in mental and cultural development. Issues such as the way of using tools, dwelling and such are also significant in regard with form and content. When it comes to function and activity of unconscious mind including dream, imagination, revelation, etc., Jung believes that cave man is not different from contemporary man. This research seeks to identify the development of cave man's mind in the process of art production and via collective thinking and unconscious mind approaches. Cave dwelling artist enjoys sort of unity between his inner reality and the reality of world or nature. On the other hand, he holds another unity with the collective unconscious as human eternal soul in meeting the material and spiritual needs which is explained more in the body of the paper. The obtained skills in the process of reflection, creation of works of art, tools, and life style demonstrate the expansion of the soul of collective relationships and formation of sub-cultures all of which leading to the formation of macro cultures. The thing is, to what extent the hunter human's cognitive abilities have been affect by collective unconscious when he created cave illustrations and to what extent its ambiguous aspects are known today. At the beginning of this paper, an explanation is provided regarding Altamira's wall paintings and, in the next parts, Paleolithic art and Jung's theories in this regard is presented.

**Literature:**

For this paper, it was necessary to study the rudimentary resources of art history in the one hand, and psychology texts on the other to combine the two for analyzing and comparing them. Thus, leaning on the main sources in art history, sociology of art and psychology of art, one can relate research grounds to other subjects. There exist papers regarding art history and Jung's theories which is a vast field in the analysis of modern painting. These filed has always been significant for researchers. Jung's views can be assessed in other fields such as art origins and analysis. As the main resources, we utilized "art history" by Johnson and "Human and his symbols" by Jung. Of other important books, "sociological history of art" can be mentioned here. Other sources including papers and books will be mentioned at the end of the paper.

**Research Method:**

The assessments are implemented in an analytical-descriptive method and the way of gathering data is biblical.

**Murals of Altamira Cave:**

The most important illustrative documents are attained by searching in decorated caves. Treasures of Paleolithic art are located in almost confined span between Oral Mountains and The Atlantic. Paleolithic period's art objects can be mostly fined in central and western Europe and toward Don River in Russia. But murals of the era are limited to Spain, France and southern Italy (Eliade, 1394).

As the murals are fined in the walls near to the entrances of the caves, some researchers believe that Paleolithic people used to consider these caves as a sacred place for prayer. Additionally, a lot of caves are not habitable and the difficulty of access to them increases their mysteriousness. The prehistoric paintings were discovered first in 1878 in Altamira cave located in a village named Santillana Del Maro in Northern Spain. This cave discovered by an archaeologist girl who was searching for flint and animal bones when some obvious black lines on the roof took her attention (Figure 1).

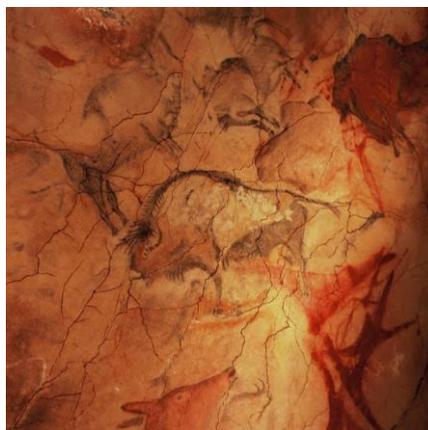


Figure 1. Bull drawing. Altamira Cave, Spain.

Animals were the main subjects in Altamira and other caves discovered. Experts who were assessing the drawings on the caves acknowledged them as developed, original and novel. All in all, murals are the first signs of the emergence of art. The bulls drawn on Altamira are illustrated based on mental images just like those on Chauvet and other caves. But they also demonstrate that the prehistoric human being held high competence in understanding the environment, imagination, and performing skills in painting techniques (Johnson, 1388).

In Altamira's images, bulls are drawn in sitting, standing, rolling or sleeping states in a realistic method. Seemingly, choosing the curve of the wall as a part of the animal body (stomach) has been intentional and the Paleolithic hunter man were recording the animal's physical form meticulously.

"Researchers were assessing a date for the paintings via stylistic analysis and were categorizing them based on being naturalistic (the similarity to the surrounding nature)" (Johnson, 1388).

But the ancient artist was applying other methods in technique as the drawings are here and there abstract, minimal, or naturalistic. Using handmade tools, he utilized the surrounding lines in design and, by materials such as blood and other natural compounds taken from the environment, attained a sort of realism and beauty. The human goal has not been to represent images for recording beauty and proving their competence in drawing but has been concerned with rites and totems.

"Most of the paintings should have drawn by fingers or in some cases by brushes made up of animal hair or horse mane or tail. They should have even made up of plant fibers which are being used even today. Another technique used in the paintings is, undoubtedly, blowing in color by mouth or other tool (Rafieafar, 1381).

In fact, Altamira has a mediocre depth with an easy access entrance with an inside which has three parts: 1. A salon with a painted roof, 2. The main part formed of a winding gallery, 3. The deep part which is a narrow corridor in 50 meters. The excavations of this part show the dwelling of man since Souttreen to Magdalenien eras (figure 2).

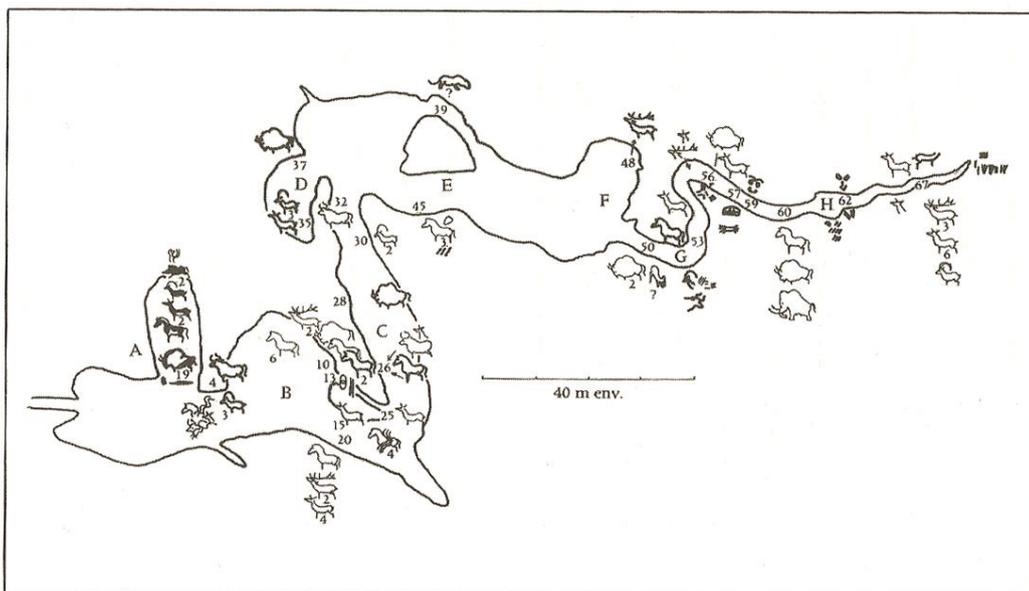


Figure 2. Altamira cave- The numbers written under figures show the number of animals. The numbers along the walls of the cave show the numerical s of Henry Berevi.

Paleolithic periods' artists could see little shadows by the naked eye. This ability was alive till the Paleolithic period when the straight feelings gave place for inflexibility and stability. Cave artist is not aware of the effects of light and the composition of shapes and abstract features of them which we can see in children paintings and ethnographic art and does not know about the drawing of half face and eyes from the front side. Modern art achieved unity of visual perception only after a hundred years of effort to, but apparently Paleolithic art had reached it without a fight (Hauser, 1362).

Why the cave artist sought to record these images? Whether he was enjoying from recording everyday life's images or he tried to show his efforts for hunting? Whether they show sort of magic? Or the play instinct or curiosity in decoration ended in forming these images?

### **Art and Totem in Paleolithic Period:**

Totems are objects that happen to be symbolic and were applied in ritual applications among indigenous people. This art belonged to primitive hunters who had to gather the main part of their food by hunting and other ways. The Paleolithic cave men in the primitive asocial period were living in small groups and did not believe in Gods or a world after death. But, as some researchers consider this art in relation to magic and ritual, Arnold Hauser in the first volume of his book "Social history of Art" utters that the images on the cave walls and roofs do not refer to a ritual and they do not worship any sacred power. In fact, the images were sort of trap for the animals by hunters; it was a trap with the animal both for a representational application and the realization of a dream for man. The painter and the hunter were imagining that he has trapped the animal this way as he was ameliorating his confidence getting to believe that he will get it sooner or later. He also believed that the real animal was suffering from the animal in the illustration's death. In fact, the origin of Totem is the fact that the primitive tribes were naming themselves as animals, plants and objects. For instance, the tattoo on the body was showing that the one belongs to a specific tribe and the tattoo were showing the origin of totemism. It was for the function of separating the one belonging to a tribe from others. Humans, either for people or for the gatherings needed a name which can be permanent and stable by image. "The sign of totem is a pattern of inscription which is easy to draw. But, after the primitive tribes named themselves after an animal, they felt nearness to that animal" (Freud, 1351).

In the examination of Altamira cave's images and many of other caves', it seems like a deconstruction has happened about totemism as the primitive human creates an image which looks inaccessible possessing supernatural power. Paleolithic man enters and permeates the realm of the taboo and deconstructs despite he imagines it as hard to hunt and unimaginable. This deconstruction means no one can enter the realm of totem and taboo and totem concepts and images look separate from human. Image representation in his mind only was a dream of a desired state. Paleolithic artist created a real animal by drawing them on stones or the roofs of caves. For him, the world of image and fiction, the real of art and mere imitation were not separate from experimental realities. An important feature of naturalistic paintings of that era is the fact that they were created directly, freely and immediately.

In the paintings, we see the movements which are reminiscent of contemporary snapshots like which we do not have in the history of art until Edgar Degas and Toulouse-Lautrec. But, even some other researchers believe that they cannot be described as decorative aspect as there are many signs and reasons for it. The most important reasons are the facts that there are paintings at the corners which are not easily detectable. Another reason is that they are drawn by hunters. Thus, they cannot be decorations for visual pleasure. The Paleolithic artist's aim has been the trap to be effective. The scrutiny and naturalistic qualities show that there were some of magic in between as well.

The link between magic and Paleolithic paintings helps us explain other aspects of such images. It is an image which aims to function a dual role; not only to preserve its representational aspect, imitate and emulate, but also replaces the main subject as a result being close to naturalistic aspects. Thus, totemism was born out of the need of everyday life rather than a religious need.

### **Symbols of the paintings:**

In fact, the Paleolithic artist uses important and effective things in his life to create images in line with his aims. The fact that some images locate in dark and far-reaching parts of the cave roof where nobody can reach it attains a symbolic effect and totem. It is a totem as it is far-reaching and anti-totem as it is used by him for realizing his goals. Generally, symbols represent an object, thought or concept. For example, an object or image can be a symbol of something else referring to a concept. Now, these concepts take meanings directly or indirectly and usually presentation of symbols do not originate from human mind's consciousness. As a whole, we cannot imagine an era when human did not dream or did not have a dream and did not enter the realm of ecstasy- losing consciousness and going to the realm of sublime by the soul. Some researchers believe that what is changed in culture and religion is an interpretation, meaning, assessment of an experience in relation to unconscious mind. Generally, the world of Paleolithic period has been full of mysterious connections between animal and human.

Psychologically speaking, symbol is something like libido which, opposing Freud, is defined by Jung as the general instinct of life or psychic energy which cannot be lessened to sexual instincts but includes all human actions like tendency toward imitation and hunger. But, the formation of symbols is not a conscious process or act but happens through intuition and revelation which forms in subconscious. Thus, according to Jung and Freud, symbols originate from symbols directly which possess a compulsive influence full of psychic

and irresistible energies. Paleolithic hunter man seeks to fight life obstacles and tries to find his lost-half and completeness in his ideals and goals and achieve them and controls them.

Alexander Marshack has recently proved a system of symbols is Paleolithic period which has been based on observing phases. These signs which named “time-faced” are gathered during a long period and brings up the presumption that some seasonal or repeatable ceremonies were formed since very long times ago.

Signification systems have been strong for more than 25 thousand years, from the early Aurignacian period to the end of Magdalenien one. According to Marshack, writing and numerical (mathematics) and calendars formed in the first civilizations all of which being related to symbols from which the sign system used in Paleolithic period origins. The explanations provided shows the significant effect of moon in old myths particularly the fact that moon and other symbols such as waters, birth, death, rebirth, etc.

But, what Jung provides is that the psych is not individual solely but collective having a structure similar to that of individual. Collective psyche forms the souls of the era; For instance, the collective psyche of Nazi Germany. But, this can be seen in any social movement or tendency. The people in a sports stadium is a collective self thus creating a shadow of uncontrollable chaos. A scientific event can be a collective shadow as well.

Jung believes that artist has during all periods been the way of expressing the soul of the era. We can to some extent examine works of art and know it. Artist, consciously or unconsciously, forms his era’s nature and values while it is the very values that give him/her life. Being an artist means to represent his utmost completeness and show of his ideals. The goal of cave artist is to show his cognition of the world and illustrate his mind’s dark and unconscious parts. Thus, this art takes a really collective nature and communicates not only with himself and images but with the world outside of his mind and the sublime. Training his unconscious mind, he is able to promote his abilities in hunting and technical skills of painting by painting. But, according to Jung, in no era like the 20<sup>th</sup> century artists described their goals. The images of animals in caves that shows symbolic aspects related to “unconscious” (referring to dream or delusion) and belong to super consciousness which reaches to self-consciousness level by thinking and adapting to the reality which can be discerned in most of the images. Additionally, the manifestations of unconscious and semi-conscious demonstrate values and structure that are compatible with values and structure of consciousness. Since the second one is “rational and reasonable” we can talk about semi-conscious or unconscious ration.

Thus, we can accept this notion that a special part of semi-conscious and unconscious is under archetypes which control and manage consciousness and unconsciousness.

Thus, we see a collection of symbols in Altamira walls and roofs which are endless sequence of these forms in different levels from dream, prayer, rite, super-nature in realistic forms and patterns.

In fact, these images are neither self-emotive nor according to ideal archetypes. A large number of images are “historical” as they originate from frequent developments are imitations in drawing following a pre-existing form. Some titles such as occupation by magic have gained a symbolic nature. Finding a united structure in forming patterns and designs attained a historical and social form.

### **The effects of collective unconscious:**

Collective unconscious theory is one of the most fundamental theories in western psychology that has had great impact on the evolution of psychology. In fact, Jung addresses different aspects of unconsciousness as unconsciousness itself. But, he always concedes that the study of human self and giving a scientific explanation about it is difficult. Jung accepts Freud’s emphasis on unconscious mind and adds the notion of “collective unconscious” to that. In fact, collective unconscious is a milestone for getting to know human soul and psyche which has had great impact on today’s psychology. Thus, we know that human actions and behaviors are not bond only to the environment but to the past which is formed inside humanity and transmitted forward generation by generation. Understanding form as a result of instincts and inherited behaviors of which the one is never aware as they are not formed in his lifespan but is a feature of a group of tribes, relatives, nation or the whole humanity. Collective unconscious is a combination of all experiences of past generations. Despite individual unconsciousness which is common among all ancestors of humanity, our life today is a result of our ancestors’ minds, their way of thinking and feeling and also their take of life, the world and human.

One of the main parts of the collective unconscious is the worldwide imaginations and symbols known as first plans. First plans can be seen in fables, myths, dreams and some psychiatric patients like the first mother plans. The similar mind images to past cultures were the cause of Jung’s fascination. For instance, the first

mother plan can be seen in negative or positive forms. Evils, animals, natural powers and objects express parts of human mind's imagination which originates from collective unconscious seen among all cultures in the past and the contemporary ones.

Collective unconscious is different from individual unconscious as the first one is separate from individual experiences of human gained by him and unique for him. The main content of unconscious of anyone is composed of subjects that were located in his unconscious before and forgotten and thrown away as time passed by. While collective unconscious has ever been a conscious and acquisitive but inheritable. Collective unconscious has two aspects: 1. "archetypes" which helps psychic patterns of the individual in understanding unconscious thoughts, 2. "instincts" which is the inner desires of the one and his behaviors like sexual instincts, hunger, anger, etc.

According to Jung's category, human mind's functions are divided to four parts: 1. Rational function, 2. Emotional function, 3. Sensual function, and 4. Intuitive function. Jung concedes that these four functional categories are only one of the possible states and any individual's conscious direction leans toward one of the four. The overwhelming function is called "the main function" which defines the type of decisions human makes based on his experiences in life. The second function is a conscious one named "assistant function" and the third one is opposed to the assistant one, being almost "repressed and unconscious".

As the conscious function is powerful, the opposing one seeks to attack it here and there. This is called "the return of the repressed" which may be in different forms such as ardors, fears, and moods.

Now we can discern the Paleolithic cave artist's mind in the creation of art according to this category. Hunter man's mind have had a rational function as he were protecting his family from everyday hazards and harms, coming up with solutions for them. He has been a thinker with a questioning mind while adapting to the conditions. In the second category, Jung does not mean sensations by feeling and he provides "valuation" and "evaluative" in which the hunter is creative, inventive and supportive. In the third category, which is the very sensual one, senses are at work. Paleolithic man leans on things that feel via senses, touch and understanding. What he sees the world through them and evaluates it. They are determined and willing people to whom the world is meaningful. They consider everything based on its shape. The last category is the intuition; primitive human creates based on inner gain and inspiration. And thereby can pass obstacles because of his confidence. These intuitions are different from the sensual body for which you cannot find a physical cause.

In the Paleolithic period, intuition has been the source of creativity and inspiration. The creation of art has been a way for the one to record his thoughts and dreams via "intuitive extraversion. Intuitive extrovert human examines an object or subject leaning on his own individual unconscious and he may a lot of subjects may be repetitive for them. That's why the Paleolithic human has been away from a lot of traditions and contradictions neglecting a lot of issues for attaining one.

But if we aim to assess the prehistoric man from "intuitive introversion" point of view, we should say that for the prehistoric man the mysterious, dreams, imagination and collective unconscious is important.

An important part of their concerns are dreams, fantasies and probably religious revelation and tries to interpret the world through the threads. In various periods of history, the shaman (wizard, priest) leads his clan's main themes and rituals based on anything to bring here. Some researchers suggest the characteristics of primitive man they refer to categories.

Jung believes that a sacred experience originates from "a perfect being " and this privilege does not belong only to shamans or priests but to anyone who is in search of his own integrity. In fact, the entirety of cavemen example, in dreams, myths, and there his imagination and the artist has been connected to the subconscious.

Creativity is recorded and he tends toward idealism. He looks for what is ideal, regardless of the difficulty of achieving it, trying to take over entire body and spirit of animal that created. Some researchers believe that primitive man with the help of magic, and increase confidence was dominated by hunting without resorting to religion could not be saved. Paleolithic Age man by creating unity within and outside could overcome difficulties and to consider what your everyday objective approach. But the remarkable thing is that primitive people around the world, both in Spain and France (in the caves of Altamira and Lascaux) and other indigenous tribes in the world, simultaneously and without exchanging images with animal theme has created. Does not this indicate that the collective unconscious?

In fact, collective unconscious fortifies the senses of needs and necessities and propels human for reaching them.

In fact, a person with knowledge of the discovery of the unconscious is conscious with the unconscious in other words, consciousness is completed. subcultures were formed.

The study of prehistoric tribal unconscious types provided Jung with good results one of the most important of which he names "a natural religious act" possessed by every human. In Jung's view, health and stability of human soul needs the appearance and right expression of this act. Tendencies such as considering religion trivial is so widespread that a share of ritual in human history, intense emotions aroused from it, and large powers of it can be seen in art.

Through the study of ancient types of ethnic consciousness, we find that humans have "a religious act" and this action because the stimulus is equally impressive and powerful in his natural instincts. Primitive man and the incidence of these actions, to the Parables, is important to art and religious life.

### **Conclusion:**

Understanding the messages behind cave art is complex. No doubt, this art demonstrates humanity's ability to draw before write. Cave art in Altamira cave shows human's 40 years of effort to communicate messages, beliefs, and mental history. As a whole, we can consider Paleolithic images some mystic signs that show both symbolic value of patterns and drawings and a representative of special functions of primitive human's mind in relation to unconsciousness (dream and imaginations) toward creativity, pleasure and effort in life.

Unconscious mind of Paleolithic human seeks to unify beliefs. As said before, collective unconscious has a great impact on the soul of the history of the time as contemporary human inherits his behaviors and habits that are turned into historical archetypes.

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