II. THE NATURALIST ENCUMBRANCE

The Domination of Naturalism

The methodological remarks of the preceding chapter must be clarified, for a large number of the expectations with which we begin our approach to the traditional African arts are naturalist ones. That means that we are not dealing with isolated terms and concepts but with a more or less elaborate constellation of terms. It is necessary to be aware of this anticipatory system, if only to render it more precise in its role as a detector of differences that might allow it to change its function, in order to help us avoid ethnocentrism.

The predominance of naturalist conceptions is easily enough understood. We are surrounded by naturalistic images. We remain attached to an artistic heritage that, as a whole, is naturalist. Moreover, where a discussion of art is concerned, we have a vocabulary available to us that has been elaborated over the course of the last four or five centuries; André Chastel recently remarked that "every useful notion of art history has been formulated in connection with Italian art." (1983, p. 9) This naturalist character of our mental, verbal, and conceptual constructs thus runs the risk of bearing down heavily on our knowledge of the non-naturalist arts, such as many of the arts of traditional Black Africa. We must therefore remove this encumbrance; we begin by grasping it.

Specifying Naturalism

But this label is not applied merely to conceptions, theories, or philosophies of art. It is therefore not enough to characterize naturalism in general; its diverse forms must also be delineated. Generally speaking, a theory is called naturalist when it confers an explanatory role upon the concept "nature." This is true for the naturalist theory of art, and its shortest formulation is enough to demonstrate this: art imitates nature.

While a theory or a philosophy of art treats or claims to treat art in general, art criticism deals with specific works, encountered one by one in a tête-à-tête with the aesthetic experience. The English aesthetician Harold Osborne (1968, p. 38) characterizes naturalist criticism by the fact that one's sight does not come to rest on the work of art but crosses through it on its way to what it represents or imitates; furthermore, since it is under this naturalist form that art criticism developed in Western culture, the vocabulary it elaborates is a naturalist one: it is better adapted to the description of things represented than to the works of art themselves.

We shall also encounter a naturalist conception of expression, seeing the latter as a natural and therefore universal phenomenon. (*see* p. 161)

Naturalism can also, through the social sciences, take the form of a borrowing of concepts or theories from the natural sciences that serve as models because they are more advanced. This is so for the concept of function (*see* Chapter III), and more generally for the concepts of natural genera or the theory of evolution. In that very fine work *The Shape of Time*, George Kubler expresses on numerous occasions the art historian's distrust of "biological analogies."

Naturalist Expectations

What immediately interest us here are the naturalist conceptions of art that intervene as expectations and direct our inquiry toward the objects and their perception. But naturalism, then, appears in forms that are very unevenly developed. The formula "art imitates nature" is an ambiguous one, since both of its parts, "art" and "nature," are ambiguous, signifying both an ability to produce and its product. Thus the formula may signify that "the artistic ability imitates the productive ability of nature," but also that "works of art imitate natural things," resemble them or faithfully represent them. The first, more developed, meaning is less prevalent; it is the second meaning that engenders the majority of naturalist expectations. It is that one, in particular, that results in the character that Osborne ascribed to naturalist criticism. Consequently, less-developed naturalist expectations can coexist with conceptions that are not only different but incompatible.

"These conventionalized features" writes Frank Willett, for instance, "are most important in establishing the origin of the art style, for, once given the idea of naturalist representation, since human beings resemble each other, the works of naturalistic art will similarly resemble each other in a general way." (1967, p. 20; *see also* p. 127) Here it is the exoteric form of naturalism that intervenes: one thinks in terms of things, not faculties: the model is natural, and therefore universal; the imitation of this model engenders the identity of the copies. The author speaks of resemblance instead of identity; but his argument is conclusive only if the connection is transitive; either it is the identity that is transitive, or it is the resemblance that is not and the argument is not conclusive. Naturalism, in the second sense of the formula, coexists here with the notion of conventions, which is opposed, from the Sophists on, to the notion of nature, and which thereby can furnish us with one of the alternative expectations we are seeking.

Naturalist Conventions

If the naturalist theory of art is abandoned, the use of the word "naturalist" need not be prohibited, because it has several uses or meanings that are not all incompatible with the notion of *conventions*. It can define a theory of art and, as it claims to be universal, it is then incompatible with the convention that implies ideas of particularity and variation. It can also designate characteristics common to several historically distinct styles and the common category in which these have been placed; it then serves as a label for a "historico-aesthetic category." (E. Souriau, 1960) Finally, it can designate the characteristics common to the works of the same period, school, or artist; it then serves as a label for an "historical category." These three usages are also those of the word "expressionist" when applied to a general theory of art, to a style common to several arts (painting, sculpture, cinema) in different periods and

places, or to a school of cinematography of Northern Europe around the 1920s. In describing a particular style as naturalist, as is done for example with the styles of the arts of Ife, Benin, and of the Baoule, Luba, and Kongo, we are using the "historico-aesthetic" category, without, for all that, adopting the naturalist theory of art. In other words, only the first usage is incompatible with the notion of conventions; the two other usages alone allow us to speak without any contradiction of naturalist conventions.

The distinction between these three types of categories and the recognition of their epistemological level must be carried out by a comparative study of African art. "Criticism has borrowed part of its vocabulary from modern Western art. But to write of a Bamum mask that it is Expressionist (or Baroque), of a Bambara or Dogon or Senufo mask that it is Cubist, of an Ibo or Ibibio mask that it is Surrealist, makes no sense. . . . One cannot make universal aesthetic categories out of categories of art history without introducing serious confusions into the analysis." (J. Laude, 1966, pp. 216–17) This condemnation may be qualified. The confusions Jean Laude deplores may be avoided if 1) one avoids the use of these terms in terms of art theories or universal categories; and 2) in using them in the sense of historico-aesthetic categories, one distinguishes this usage from the use of the historical category; this requires that one respect and describe the differences between styles classified under the same historico-aesthetic category—that is to say, for example, not only between Bamileke and European expressionism, but also between Bamileke and the other African expressionisms. This is, after all, nothing more than bowing to the comparative rule as formulated by Descartes in order to avoid a misreading through abusive assimilation.

The conventional character of naturalist styles is attested to by a double diversity. First, in terms of the historical category, there is the diversity between all the styles one has decided to identify this way. The differences are often so clear that even a neophyte needs very little time to distinguish and recognize an Ife or a Benin head, a Dan or a Baoule mask; we noticed this on several occasions in the course of teaching an introductory class on the African arts. The second diversity, which involves the historico-aesthetic category, is between styles identified as naturalist and those that are not. In both cases, these categories are not clearly demarcated concepts; but that only means that certain styles cannot be classified in a univocal way—but the categories are usable in many cases. The styles, corresponding to these two categoric levels, must, then, be described in terms of family resemblance predicates, set up through figurative conventions.

But it must not be forgotten that the naturalist character of a figurative convention cannot be recognized and established merely on the basis of the observation of the plastic object alone isolated from its context of use. The naturalist character of a convention runs the risk that its conventional characteristic be forgotten and that we fall back into a naturalist interpretation.

Several pieces reproduced here represent faces covered with grooves. What do these grooves represent? To answer that, information must be available to us which these works themselves do not furnish. For example, the Ife faces [figs. 93, 95] are naturalist. One must learn that the grooves represent facial scarifications. It is up to the historian to establish this and inform us. Once we have learned this, we may be tempted to interpret an Ibibio mask [fig. 112] in the same manner. First we must be sure that it represents a human face; the mask alone is not enough to confirm that for us. "The striations on the surface, with the exception of the ridge leading from the top of the head to the bridge of the nose and the two lines running from the corners of the eyes to the jaw, are probably not

scarifications but a stylized depiction of hair" (A. L. Scheinberg, 1975, p. 21), for the mask probably represents a monkey's head. By "stylized representation," the author means what we would call a non-naturalist convention. Similar grooves are found on a chimpanzee mask of We origin [fig. 53]; this difference in origin prevents us from giving the same representative value to these grooves in the absence of ethnographic data and therefore on the sole basis of a resemblance between the two masks. Comparing objects allows us only to raise the possibility. In the case of the Sao head [fig. 923], archeology confirms this interpretation. (J. P. and A. Lebeuf, 1977, no. 69, p. 87) A fortiori, a comparison with "reality" may be most deceiving. In the lateral parts of a Luba mask—the Luba style having been termed naturalist—there seemed to be a representation of horns [fig. 188]; in fact, what's involved are "braids brought forward to the front of the head." (J. Cornet, 1972, p. 210)

The representative value is thus not an intrinsic property of the representation—which it would be if the representation were natural—for there would then exist a natural, and therefore an invariable, connection between the representation and its object; this connection is conventional and variable. Even more, the examination of the object alone does not allow us to know whether there is representation. Every detail of a representative figure is not necessarily representative. Of a detail of a Yoruba figure of a caryatid, Robert Farris Thompson (1978) writes: "The royal mother is shown dressed in a brief wrapper of velvet (aran), for the delicate cross-hatching of a carefully bordered area is a shorthand rendering in traditional Yoruba sculpture for the sheen and glitter of this expensive cloth" (p. 111). The metaphor of shorthand, a form of writing that stands in for the convention of longhand writing, emphasizes the conventional character of this kind of figuration. But in the absence of autochthonous information, summarized in the citation of the term Yoruba, we were not able either to identify what is represented nor even to know whether there is representation; we might have taken the cross-ruling as a decorative motif, that is to say as nonfigurative, or as the representation of the motif of the pagne's fabric; in the latter case, we would be committing a double mistake: in terms of the nature of what is represented and of the figurative convention: the motif of the fabric would seem to be represented in a naturalist fashion, while that of the shimmer and lushness of the velvet are in fact not.

Converting the Gaze

In a naturalist framework, vision crosses through the work toward what it represents. By converting the gaze and one's attention, we are returned to the plastic object itself. Such conversion is neither simple nor comfortable. It is difficult to rid oneself of old habits of looking and thinking. Looking at a work of art is not a simple business; neither is converting one's way of seeing. The hardest part comes at the beginning.

Since the involvement of expectations is inevitable, we must replace those that are not pertinent by discovering alternative concepts that are. But these can be chosen only by confronting them with the encountered object, while holding on to the traits of the latter that make it different from the object we expected due to our initial expectations. It is critical to retain these gaps instead of excluding them through negation or assimilating them by force. Taking advantage of what is available, we must then begin by using the initial expectations as *detectors of differences* and, to that end, gain as clear an awareness of them as possible.

To note differences and deviations already focuses our attention on the very object evidencing them. On the other hand, it allows one to give

direction to the search for comparative elements. In comparisons, the object examined is no longer related to what it represents, but to other works with which it has traits in common, chosen on the basis of deviations. Consequently, initial expectations also do not suit the comparative data. Now, the latter have already been studied, and when they have been studied correctly, they are matched with commentaries using pertinent concepts that, albeit provisionally or hypothetically, may be substituted for initial expectations.

To bring the comparative method into play, thus, can kill two birds with one stone: it furnishes means for converting our way of seeing by proposing new concepts able to be substituted for naturalist initial expectations.

Anatomy is a good example of a detector of differences. Most often our anatomical "knowledge" suffers a good deal from the imprecision of expectations and is used in naturalist descriptions. Read the notes in sales catalogues: descriptions of objects are crawling with anatomical terms; the same is true, moreover, for certain monographs boasting a morphological method. Vague notions, associated with terms known by everyone, enter into descriptions, not of a statuette, but of a human being which, represented by the former, would resemble it like a twin.

The imprecision of these notions and the poverty of the current vocabulary may be put forward as evidence thanks to the example of the ear, so dear to Giovanni Morelli. Try, without any living or photographed copy of an ear in sight, to describe, or if you prefer, to draw, an ear with some precision. You will probably be surprised by your own uncertainty, your hesitations and constraint, much like Socrates, with an admission of ignorance. Recourse to a treatise on anatomy will furnish expectations that are still naturalist, but more detailed and more precise, offering the words we lacked, which will permit us to register and describe with greater precision the deviations between these "anatomical" ears and the shapes of the parts of sculptures representing ears.

The shapes of the drawings of ears will reveal themselves to be surprisingly diverse—one of the reasons for Morelli's predilection. Let us note in passing how unfair it is to reproach his technique of attribution for corrupting, due to its analytical character, aesthetic perception; this technique may be the opportunity for a productive education of our way of seeing. One is then able to discern differences, not between the ears of statues and those of humans, but between the various shapes of the representations of ears, a diversity that reveals their conventional character.

The rest of this chapter will describe several aspects or forms of the conversion of our way of seeing related as closely as possible to actual works. We have chosen aspects of works that seemed to us to furnish naturalist interpretations with their most frequent opportunities for resistance and persistent images.

Representation of Proportions and the Proportions of Representation

The Question of Proportions

The proportions of a figure are obvious because they concern the figure globally perceived, because they can be intuitively grasped before any analysis, and because we have available to us simple and current terms to formulate them. Thus, judgments on proportions are expressed from the very first encounter with African sculpture. But often these judgments

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merely obey the mechanism of misreading by reducing difference to negation, as described in Chapter I. One still comes across such negative judgments, even in specialized literature: the neck is too long, the legs are too short, the head is too large, the limbs are out of proportion, etc. Since such negative diagnoses are brought to works that otherwise, because of their quality, impress us with the mastery of the artists who produced them, these judgments do not hold up. We have noted that such diagnostics used classical, Greco-Roman conceptions of the proportions of the human body as the norm, while these very obviously are not suitable for African sculptures. Therefore, a certain number of alternative solutions have been proposed, either expanded to fit, or borrowed from other fields of art history, whose canon was not precisely applicable either.

The question then is: do these alternative solutions realize their true intention, do they succeed in ridding themselves of naturalist preconceptions? This question deals not with negative diagnostics and individual works but with general interpretations, with theories.

The Persistence of Naturalism

Hans Himmelheber (1960b, p. 53 *ff.*) describes a theory that perfectly exemplifies misreading by abusive assimilation using naturalist expectations. But his sophistication masks its naturalism. It brings together two principal ideas.

The proportions of statues are regarded as infantile, likened to the proportions of a small child's body, which are proportions as natural as those of the adult, although different. Thus the essence of naturalist theory is preserved: a natural model and a faithful imitation; it is enough to change the natural model, or more precisely, to specify and differentiate it. A natural difference between the child and the adult is to be found again as a difference between the statues' proportions and the classical (adult) canon.

The second idea introduces a relationship between the observer and this infantile model. It is assumed that the African sculptor produces an image that is identical to what a view of the model from above would offer. The two ideas can be brought together: Himmelheber reproduces the photo of a child seen from above. The apparent dimensions of the head are enlarged and those of the legs diminished. We make a distinction between the appearance and the reality of the model and we add an effect of perspective classically known as optical correction. One does not get off the subject of naturalism this way: optical corrections obey the natural laws of vision; historically they are a refinement of the naturalism of Greek art, and Plato condemned them as an imitation of appearance. Their application here has simply been inverted: statues, either when huge or when placed on high sections of a building, are generally viewed from below, while in this formulation of African art, a view from above is assumed.

These two elements of the thesis must be discussed separately, for they are not of equal importance. Optical corrections are a refinement of perspective, a sophistication of naturalism. They cannot be ascribed to arts that are indifferent to perspective. They imply a phenomenalist conception of representation: the model is rendered not as it is in reality, but as it shows or manifests itself (which is the meaning of the Greek verb from which the word phenomenon is derived) to an observer. To take the simplest example, in reality a cube has six identical, square sides, but it never shows more than three of them, of which only one at best can be seen as square and thus different from the others. Phenomenalism seems foreign to the totality of traditional African art.

Paedomorphism and Differential Proportions

The first element of the thesis, the infantile characteristic of the proportions of the statues, is the more interesting one, for it can be separated from naturalist presuppositions.

The notion of infantile proportions is a result of the association of two more general notions, that of differential proportions, a tool used in art history, and that of paedomorphism (taken from two Greek words meaning child and form) borrowed from the morphology of organisms by William Fagg. "Differential proportions are those . . . that take certain peculiarities of the represented subjects into account" (*Sculpture*, 1978, p. 687), among which are age and social condition. Age is a natural condition; the morphology of organisms describes forms and proportions that are different according to age: childhood, adulthood, or old age. Differences of proportion, imitated by art, will be reencountered as differential proportions of the representations, of the images. The thesis reported by Himmelheber is thus reformulated in the framework of the theory of differential proportions, which itself is a part of the naturalist theory of art.

The "peculiarities of the represented subjects" may also be provided by "social condition"; they do not stem from the morphology of organisms, then—they are not natural but cultural. This suggests that one dissociate the notion of differential proportions from the naturalist theory of art.

Two bronze groups from the royal shrines of Benin, in the Berlin Museum, are elements composed of, among others, one central figure and two lateral figures of very different proportions from those of the central one. [*see* fig. 466] Are these "different" proportions differential? And if so, in what sense? The difference is a twofold one: it involves the relationship between the height and size of the figures and also the relationship between the heights of the parts of the bodies representing respectively the head, the trunk, and the legs. These morphological observations do not permit one either to identify the represented persons, that is, to specify their identities or their differential iconographic value, nor, consequently, to know if the peculiarities of the represented subjects are natural or cultural. Yet, neither of the two morphological types here has proportions that come close to those of a natural human body; the central figure is clearly more stocky, the lateral figures clearly more slender, which suggests a cultural or social difference among the "subjects," a figurative convention whose meaning cannot be known without turning to ethnography and/or history. According to Fagg (1963, pl. 24), the central figure represents an *oba* (king) and the two lateral figures "foreign slaves"; the differential iconographic value clearly stems from the culture. Paula Ben-Amos (1983) has confirmed and developed Fagg's iconographic analysis by recognizing the individual identity of the *oba* and by pointing out the distinctive markings delineating the status of slave and foreigner.

Here then we are in the presence of differential proportions used in a non-naturalist context. A figurative convention establishes a relationship between the differences in proportions of the figures and the differences in the status or social rank of the persons represented. The conventional character of this relationship can be made more obvious, by means of the standard of variability, through two comparisons. Every case compared has a difference of proportions between the figures in common; it is their differential iconographic value that is variable.

The other Benin group [fig. 464] presents the same difference between a thickset central figure and two slender lateral figures; but if the central figure again represents an *oba*, the two lateral figures now represent neither foreigners nor slaves. Therefore, within the same cultural and artistic group there is no invariable connection between the proportions of

a figure and the social status of the person represented. The same is true when one compares works produced in different cultures. "An incontestable link can be established, for example, between the elongation of figures and their immaterial or spiritual character." (*Sculpture*, 1978, p. 411) (This heightens the confusion, characteristic of the language of naturalist criticism, between the figures and the persons they represent.) "In the twelfth century, the bodies of the elect are elongated to the degree that they come closer to the celestial Jerusalem." (*ibid.*, p. 411) In Romanesque art, as in the two Benin groups, what is represented are different ranks, different hierarchies, not actual proportions or the differences in proportion between people. But the two conventions are inverted: in Benin, the elongated proportions belong to an inferior rank, in Romanesque art to a superior rank.

Nature and Convention

The notion of differential proportions and one of its applications, the determination of proportions belonging to the child, are of naturalist origin. They are found in texts that are interesting documents, as much anatomical history and natural science as art history. It is the naturalist artists who, thus, integrate the natural sciences with the art of imitating nature. These sciences are anatomy, as above; optics and perspective; and finally the psychology of the passions and their expression. Infantile proportions are, first, those of the child and then, with works of art representing children, those of the representations. In order faithfully to represent or imitate children, one studies their morphology—this from the point of view of the creative artist. The fidelity of the representation allows the observer of the work to follow the order inversely: to go from the proportions of the representation to the differential identity of the represented person and his or her proportions. What is in question is the legitimacy of this inference. Naturalism, as we have just seen, warrants this inference through the knowledge of anatomy and the fidelity of the imitation, or, which is the same thing, the truth of the representation. But is this admissible in all cases?

Morphology scientifically elaborates a more or less vague and intuitive general knowledge of differential characteristics. On the other hand, as Konrad Lorenz has shown, the paedomorphic characteristics of a small animal function as the trigger for behavior that is specifically adult. Now, whatever the level of ability or competence, let us consider, not the organisms any longer, but the works of art representing the organisms. Let us suppose the abilities are there and that, therefore, the paedomorphic diagnostics brought to these representations are true. May one draw a conclusion from these diagnostics that pertains to the organisms or the represented persons?

There is no single answer to this question. Indeed, three possibilities may be delineated, shown in the chart below:

	A Plastic representation	(C) Representation (Relationship)	B Person represented
	Infantile/non-infantile proportions		Child or/not
(1)	+	(+)	+
(2)	+	(-)	-
(3)	-	(-)	+
(4)	-	(-)	-

The word "representation" is ambiguous: it signifies either a relationship (representing) or one of the terms of that relationship. On the model of the triad signifier-signification-signified, one might propose: Representer (A)—Representation (C)—Represented (B). The fourth line on the chart is to be excluded: it defines cases that do not correspond to the question posed. The first entry (1) is exemplified by the drawings of Jakob De Wit, that is to say, by the naturalist conception of differential proportions. Of the second and the third we shall only give African examples; but one could easily find them in many other sectors of art history, for there naturalism is not the rule.

Numerous statues or reliefs manifest infantile proportions but do not represent children, do not represent infantile proportions. That is very frequently the case with figures that are divided into three equal parts, representing respectively the head, trunk, and legs, proportions more different still from the canon regarding adults than the infantile canon in De Wit's system is. As to figures of heads, regarding a terra-cotta from Nok, an obvious paedomorphism has been noted side by side with the figuration of a beard, which means that it cannot represent a child. These cases are examples of the second possibility in the chart.

Inversely, it has been observed that when African sculptors represent children, they do not seek to render their truly infantile features or other aspects that differentiate them from adults or old people. Generally speaking, "for reasons which may have something to do with African concepts of time, African artists never seem to represent their subjects as being any particular age." (W. Fagg and M. Plass, 1964, p. 62) It has also been noted that sometimes figures of children are merely miniatures of adult figures or, more precisely, taking the preceding quote into account, figures that have no age. The dimensions are reduced but the proportions have been preserved. But since "being the miniature of" is a relative property, this figurative convention is not applicable to figures that are physically separate but normally together in the course of their ritual usage. These cases are examples of the third entry on the chart.

This discussion allows us to conclude that infantile proportions or characteristics of representation are neither a necessary condition (third entry) nor a sufficient one (second entry) to determine that a child or the proportions of a child are being represented. It also allows us to understand that the expression "infantile proportions" is doubly ambiguous. In its naturalist usage (first entry), the proportions are at one and the same time differential and representative, differential because representative. But in the two other cases, since they are not representative, can they be differential? One should not hasten to answer in the negative, for they may be differential in a way other than the one until now supposed. That is the first ambiguity and the question it raises. But the chart allows us to discover another ambiguity and impels us to come back to the initial diagnosis (A) of paedomorphism. This diagnosis is the result of a confrontation between the representative statues and the organisms. But it is *we* who make this comparison. Were the users and the producers doing so? An affirmative response, on the one hand, corresponds only to the first entry and, on the other hand, can be warranted only by ethnographic or historical information. A morphologic diagnosis must be regulated by historical or ethnographic inquiry.

Now, indeed, certain field investigations show the question to be more complex and permit us once again to pick up the preceding suggestion: paedomorphism could be differential but in another way. James Fernandez has established that the Fang not only recognize the characteristic of infantile proportions and of certain features of their statuettes, but also agree that they represent children. Thus they would

exemplify the first possibility. But the Fang also declare that they represent age, ancestors, and ancestral powers in human affairs. Consequently, Fang statuettes, as seen by the Fang, do not correspond to any of the three possibilities in the chart.

The reason for this is simple. Until now we have only posed the question in terms of literal representation. In doing so, we have not entirely removed the naturalist encumbrance. For, with the first possibility, the representation of proportions is literal. Thus we can make the preceding suggestion more precise: the differential character of the proportions is not necessarily associated with the literal character of the representation. This may be confirmed by the examination of another classical solution to the problem of proportions.

African Proportions

Fagg has proposed the concept of African proportions; the expression alone testifies to a respect for the distance from the classical canon and to a concern with avoiding ethnocentrism. The height of the head is between one-third and one-fourth of the total height of the figures, "in contrast to the 'normal' proportion, which varies between one-sixth and one-seventh. Hence the tendency to increase the volume of the head—assumed to be the principal seat of the life force—which is so common in recent African art and which has been well-established for two thousand years; and this allows us to refute the idea that the 'deformations' in present-day African sculpture are the result of the degeneration of some golden age of naturalism anterior to the arrival of the white man." (W. Fagg, 1963, p. 13)

This is a complex interpretation: 1) Polemical, it rejects a naturalist and negative interpretation (perfectly illustrating a negative misreading) and proposes an alternative solution; it is the perfect example of the road we propose to take. 2) It returns to the objects and determines their proportions (a third for the head). 3) The actual interpretation is iconographic; it acts in two ways. It connects the dimensions of the parts, the proportions of the figure, with the importance of the represented parts of the person, which are formed according to a hierarchical system. In similar cases, art historians speak of symbolic or hierarchical proportions. Thus the hierarchical principle here is the life force.

Three objections may be raised to this thesis. By extension, the morphological determination (one-third) is far from applicable to all African styles. If the proportions of the trunk and the legs were specified, this criticism would be strengthened. By comprehension, the morphological element may be given another interpretation; moreover, the nature of the relationship between the proportions and this significative term that is the life force has not been determined. On this last point, inquiry can be pointed in two directions: expression, and symbolic or figurative representation.

Expression

Himmelheber (1960a, p. 55) suggests the following explanation: "In general, the statue must be a supernatural being, an idol. Perhaps the [African] sees in these exaggerated and thickset shapes the expression of a physical force in a thickset human being." If, after having carefully looked at a large number of African statues, we "then go back to looking at passersby in the street, as nature has made them, the latter suddenly seem bland to us, without any strength, compared to these statues full of concentrated vigor—proof that the [African] artist has succeeded in loading his works with a particular force." (*ibid.*)

We find again one of the ambiguities noted above: it is we who are comparing the forms of the statues to the organisms "as nature has made them." And it is our knowledge of the expressive value of the thickset forms that is extrapolated, and doubly so: from the natural bodies to the statues, from us to the Africans, without any ethnographic monitoring. These two extrapolations are naturalist: the first one presupposes the imitation of nature, and the second, a naturalist conception of expression which we shall examine later on. (*see* p. 161) If one can retain this thesis, it is on the condition that the notion of expression be separated from this naturalist context.

Literal and Figurative Representation

In his study of the caryatids of the seats of Luba chiefs, J. D. Flam (1971) uses the analogous notions of metaphor and symbolism. The proportions of the caryatids are explained through a relationship of analogy between the respective dimensions of their parts and the values of the human body parts they represent, values hierarchically demanded within the framework of Luba culture. Since it is the head upon which the highest value is bestowed, it is represented on the largest scale. This is an interpretation of the same kind as that of Fagg's African proportions. In the specialized literature it is found quite frequently. For example, in Yoruba sculpture, according to William Bascom, "the human head is emphasized, probably because of its association with luck and destiny, with the result that the human figure is commonly portrayed as composed of three parts of approximately equal size—head, torso, and legs." (1969, p. 111) Elsy Leuzinger generalizes this interpretation. (1962, p. 45)

This particular symbolic meaning seems to be very widespread; in its simplest form, it can be found again in the metaphoric signification of "great" when applied to a man who is, literally, "small." As for figurative conventions, in art history this is termed symbolic or hierarchical proportions. As the word symbolic is used here in several senses—particularly in contrast to "literal"—it would be preferable to speak of "figurative" [Trans. note: as in a "figure of speech"] representation.

Thus the distinction between literal and figurative is transferred from the verbal to the visual realm, by generalizing the transference of a particular figure, the analogous metaphor or symbol identified by Flam in the Luba data. Would it be possible to identify were there only one other figure?

Ethnographic documentation is scarce, very probably because investigations have only rarely been directed in that exact manner. The research among the Fang by Fernandez (1971), cited earlier, is an exception. We have indicated that the infantile proportions of the Fang statuettes could not be satisfactorily interpreted in terms of literal representation. These statuettes certainly do represent children in the eyes of the users; but that only constitutes a part of their significance or representational value; these statues represent ancestors, in a nonliteral manner; moreover, the Fang recognize them to have another literal value, that of an aged human being or elder, which enlists a connection with the first literal value, the child, that the author calls the *opposition of complementarity*. The opposition between the two literal values reveals its complementarity by dissolving itself, in the last instance, into a single figurative value, the ancestor.

Now, given this structure of signification, called opposition of complementarity, we recognize in it the structure that characterizes the figure codified as *oxymoron* in rhetoric. Classical examples of this are: "learned ignorance" (N. De Cues), "obscure clarity" (Corneille), "repairing

the irreparable" (Racine). The word "oxymoron" is itself an oxymoron, as it is a compound of two Greek adjectives of contrary meaning, sharp-blunt. This figure joins two words associated with opposed or incompatible meanings; according to Henri Morier (*Dictionnaire*) it serves to express "precious values." This definition of the oxymoron is equivalent to Fernandez's interpretation. The two literal values, child-elder, are opposed but complementary, they dissolve into one valuable figurative value, ancestor.

Moreover, the author shows that this structure of signification, the opposition of complementarity, penetrates every sector of Fang culture and, in particular, serves to formulate one of the fundamental values of this culture, vitality, linked intimately not only to the ancestors, but also to the ethical and aesthetic values of the Fang. One would be tempted to characterize the Fang culture as a culture of the oxymoron. (Roman Jakobson has established the prevalence of this figure in the poetics of Fernando Pessoa.)

Organic Proportions and Technical Proportions

One single formula is undoubtedly not to be found. Research, then, ought not to take one single direction. Willett (1971, p. 161) suggests another one.

A work of art as a term may enter into two relationships, a relationship of representation with extra-artistic objects, and a relationship of production with the artist. Until now, our inquiry has privileged the first one; Willett takes the second into consideration. Field studies, he writes, "from many parts of Africa have shown that sculptors begin by dividing up the block of wood very carefully into separate parts which will *eventually* [our emphasis] be the head, body, and legs. The properties are thus deliberately established at the outset and are certainly not due to a lack of skill."

Erwin Panofsky differentiates technical proportions from organic proportions in order to account for deviations between certain works and the classical Western canon, which is precisely the goal of the present inquiry. This distinction corresponds to the one we have suggested between the proportions of representation and the proportions of the represented object. Proportions are said to be technical when they are attributable to the production technique of the plastic object that evidences them. This technique may take various forms: squaring the figures, as in ancient Egypt, is one; the initial tripartition of the block of wood is another. Let us note that the first example, in a society that had writing, proceeded in two ways: the design was squared on an independent surface, then transferred to the block; in Africa, however, where there is no writing, the partition is made directly on the block.

Proportions are said to be organic when they are those of an organism, a living body. Since this body has its properties and its proportions independent from the fact of its being represented, these organic proportions are extra-artistic; Panofsky says they are objective as well, since, when there is representation of an organism, the organic proportions become those of the object of the representation, which must not be confused with those of the representation itself—for technical and organic proportions may very well not coincide. Their coincidence, in other words, is subject to certain conditions which are not always realized. These two possibilities are in perfect accord with Willett's observation according to which the parts of the initial block may "possibly" receive a representational value later on in the work of the sculptor.

This analysis of Willett's is extremely interesting, for it suggests a new change in the position of the question of proportions. We have seen that it is not enough to pose the question in terms of literal or figurative representation, that it has to be posed in terms of production techniques; Willett suggests that it should also be posed in terms of function, or more exactly, of use. We then have to speak of technical proportions in a second sense. The functionalist theory of art classically distinguishes between techniques of production and techniques of use. The technical proportions, in Panofsky's sense, are such in the sense of techniques of the production of works of art. It so happens that the domain of art primarily studied by Panofsky, as well as his iconological orientation, led him to put the function or the use of the works between parentheses and to focus attention on their representational character.

Inversely, numerous African objects have been incorporated into private and public collections, and these objects, while representational, in their original context had a practical function. Let us agree to name such objects technico-figurative or technico-representative. They are amply illustrated in this work.

Let us call the form adapted to the practical use of an object, technical form. In itself, technical form is not representational. The form of a spoon, a drum, an automobile represents nothing. For reasons we shall examine in Chapter III, the majority of technical objects present in collections, the objects which early on caught the attention of field investigators, subsequently considered as works of art, are at the same time representational. Consequently, their shape and their proportions are not solely attributable to those of the organisms they represent, but also to the use to which they have been adapted. Thus, it is as if they were the result of a compromise between nonrepresentational forms and functional proportions (in the sense of use) and representational forms and proportions (themselves more or less naturalistic). The practical functionality of an object is a factor of disjointedness between the proportions of the representation and the representation of the proportions.

This case of technico-figurative objects should not be confused with the cases Panofsky mentioned, of coincidence between technical and organic proportions, first because in their case their proportions are technical in the sense of use and not production; then, because there is not a coinciding but a compromise. And this compromise accounts for their non-naturalist character, while in Panofsky, coincidence corresponds to naturalism.

As a guide, one can distinguish two kinds of compromise. The representational form may fuse, so to speak, with either the whole or a part of the technical form; this also applies to the proportions of the form. This distinction is implicitly present in the current labeling of African objects—whether that be, for example, the presently used labels "anthropomorphic or cephalomorphic bowl" or "stool with caryatids." One term designates the practical function, the other, the organic form represented (man, head of woman carrier); the suffix -morphic (form) renders the organic form represented specific, while no allusion whatsoever is made to the technical form—a symptom of the naturalist character of this terminology.

The anthropo- or cephalomorphic bowls show that the distinction between the whole and the part is not applicable merely to the technical form. In other words, the two dichotomic predicates technical/organic and whole/part are independent. The simplest of the combinations thus engenders four possibilities:

	Form (proportions)	
	Technical	Organic
(1)	whole	whole
(2)	whole	part
(3)	part	whole
(4)	part	part

These possibilities are not mere mental constructs. They may be used as examples by drawing from one single kind of object, palm wine bowls, produced within one single artistic group, the Kuba [figs. 735, 740, 742]. Indeed, one can recognize bowls that are (1) anthropomorphic, (2) cephalomorphic, (3) with anthropomorphic handles, (4) with handles that are cephalomorphic, or even in the shape of a hand.

This classification is minimal. In effect, quantitatively it involves one or more than one part of each of the forms, and qualitatively, some other kind of form that can come into the combinative. Therefore, the possibilities are innumerable—which corresponds very nicely to the impression of rich diversity that specific photographic documentation engenders.

The multiplication of the types of objects and of artistic styles makes exemplification even easier. It is hardly worth stating that this kind of combination of technical forms and of forms representative of organisms is far from being specific only to African sculpture.

It is obvious that the proportions of a figure will be very appreciably different if the representation pervades the entire bowl (1) or only its handle (3).

In the last three possibilities on this chart, parts of the plastic object are not all treated in the same manner—from the point of view of the relationship between organic form and technical form adapted to use. In certain cases, the difference is technical in the sense of production: certain (organic) parts are treated in relief on the rest of the figure, which is treated in-the-round. (*see* Chapter IV) Generally considered, the different treatment of the parts, Susan M. Vogel has suggested (1987a), is a characteristic of African sculpture. In the particular case mentioned here, it is, at least in certain instances, associated with the technique of the initial partition of the block. We find once again the link between production and use. Indeed, quite frequently at the beginning of the production of technico-figurative objects, the initial partition distributes the parts that will receive a figurative or technical form as the work progresses.

Representation of Space and the Space of Representation

The Question of the Representation of Space

A certain familiarity with African sculpture ought to exclude the question of the representation of space, just as it does the notion of landscape. That it is posed at all is a result of naturalist prejudices; we pose it here in order to rid ourselves of these prejudices.

A sculpture in the round does not raise this question, for it *occupies* space but does not represent it. (L. R. Rogers, 1969) This question, therefore, concerns itself only with reliefs. Now, the vast majority of African reliefs do not represent space; the exceptions sometimes mentioned are debatable ones. Thus, African reliefs are likewise indifferent to perspective, which is a technique of the representation of

space, and it would be absurd to blame them for errors in perspective. On the contrary, perspective and representation of space belong to the Western naturalist tradition of relief that has existed since the Quattrocento and, in particular, since Donatello. Therefore, it is our naturalist expectations that induce us to raise this question.

But one should not entirely evade the matter. Besides the fact that it is not without value to rid oneself of prejudice, research does not obey the law of "all or nothing." It is possible to either transform the question by changing its terms, or to substitute another question for it.

One can first change the question and wonder why African art is indifferent to the representation of space and to perspective. In order to transform the question by changing its terms, it is an absolute requisite that a certain number of distinctions be introduced. Posed first as simple hypotheses in order to clarify the statement, they will ultimately be justified by analysis.

Perspective is a species whose genus is the representation of space. One can represent space without using perspective; inversely, perspective has as its goal the representation of space. This amounts to distinguishing two uses of the word "perspective": in the broader sense, here in variance to convention and equivalent to the "representation of space"; and in a narrower sense.

Next, it is proper to distinguish between representation of space and representation of things. The plastic arts can represent things without representing the space in which these extra-artistic things exist. In everyday reality, on the contrary, we always perceive things in space. The plastic arts, then, can either represent both things and space, imitating reality—and this is the goal of perspective—or they can represent only things without representing the extra-artistic space in which they exist.

It is appropriate also to distinguish the two ways of considering the plastic object. As a simple material thing, it possesses spatial properties— length, width, depth; painting or relief, it represents a surface on which the artistic work is applied, something which existed already. While the space, represented or not, in which things exist is extra-artistic, this space or material surface may be said to be infra-artistic, for it is encompassed within the artistic work. But the plastic object, no longer as simple material thing but as an artistic object, possesses its own space; this Pierre Francastel (1951) calls plastic space, which is different from the two preceding types of space. One may call it artistic. It is to be distinguished from the two preceding types, which are real, while this one is imaginary or focal. This focal characteristic may be clarified by a very simple example. Let's say a material surface is either covered with uniform color with the exception of one spot of another color, or that it is a flat surface, uniformly smooth, with the exception of one small protrusion. When these are viewed, one can apply to these objects the conceptual pair: figure (*gestalt*)/background. The so-called gestalt (form) psychologists use this to describe one of the fundamental structures of the perceptive field: the background seems to continue *behind* the figure that is shown *in front of* the background. Thus, this spatial structure becomes tridimensional and is therefore different from the simply two-dimensional surface of the material base. (This suggests a modification might be made of Maurice Denis's famous definition of a painting: "Essentially a flat surface covered with colors assembled in a specific order.") The third dimension serves as a criterion of distinction. In all three cases—extra-artistic, infra-artistic, and artistic or plastic space—space is perceived through sight. But if, in the first two cases, touch confirms the visual perception, in the third case it weakens it. One cannot put one's hand between the figure and the background.

A plastic object can be representational or not. If it is not, it represents neither things nor space and is beyond discussion here. The plastic objects we are discussing are representational, not only of things but of the extra-artistic space in which these things exist. There is one condition: the artistic or plastic space must itself represent the extra-artistic space. It is in this sense, still following Francastel, that one can say this plastic space is representational space. Representational space is a plastic or artistic space that carries out the function of representing extra-artistic space. It is appropriate also to distinguish between this representational space, which is the space of the representation, and its function, which is the representation of space. One can also say that there is representation of space when the spatial properties of the representation, of the plastic image, represent the (spatial) properties of the extra-artistic space, that is to say, the spatial relationships things have between them in extra-artistic reality. But the artistic space of the representation may very well not be a representational space—that is, it may not represent the extra-artistic space but something else. This allows us to put forward a hierarchy of sizes.

The Hierarchy of Sizes

A single property of the space of representation, the size or height of figures, may, according to different systems of figurative conventions, be representative in one system and not in another.

What Leonardo calls linear perspective or the perspective of the diminution in sizes, is the process that allows the size of figures to represent the spatial properties of the things represented by these figures, which would be their size and the distance separating them from the observer in the shared space. Theoretic perspective formulates this relationship mathematically: $f = k \frac{T}{D}$, in which f stands for the size of the figures, T for the size of things represented, and D for the distance that separates them from the observer. During production, this formula serves to code the representation that perception will decode as it sees the represented objects spaced in depth. Thus, the representation connects the spatial properties that each of its two terms, figure and thing represented, possesses; consequently, the representation may be said to be literal.

A Dogon granary door (in the Museum Rietberg in Zürich) is composed of two panels, each of which shows four superposed rows of seven figures of ancestors, sculpted in relief. Within each row the figures are approximately the same size; but that size decreases from top to bottom, from one row to the next. "It is not by accident," writes Leuzinger, "that . . . the rows of ancestors . . . become proportionately smaller as they approach the lower part of the panel. For the first ancestors are closest to the creator and have obtained the greatest part of his mystic vital form." (1960) What exactly does the difference in the size of figures represent? Differences in distance, not between the ancestors and ourselves, but between the ancestors and their creator; so, in this answer "distance," "distancing," or "proximity" are used metaphorically, for these determinations are not spatial but genealogical or temporal (in mythic time). In the extra-artistic reality, known by the myth, these differences in distance correspond to a temporal and hierarchical genealogical order; they are classified according to the part of this value, which is the life force, that decreases with each new generation of ancestors. The same idea is found in Plato: "The elders who were more worthy than we, for they lived closer to the gods." The figures may be classified in order of size; the ancestors are classified in order of worth. The two orders are not homogeneous; consequently, the first does not literally represent the second order. The spatial properties of the representation do not

represent the spatial properties of the persons represented: these panels do not represent ancestors lined up in four rows like soldiers in the courtyard of an army base. But these spatial properties are not devoid of representational value. What is represented, in the final analysis, are values, and their representation is not literal but figurative; the figure, as with hierarchical proportions, is a symbol or an analogous metaphor.

This figurative convention is far from being specifically Dogon. One finds it not only in most African styles but also in most of the arts we know through art history, and even in the so-called naturalist styles, such as the art of ancient Egypt, classical Greece, and Rome. It seems to be the rule and linear perspective the exception. It has had various names: the principle of the hierarchy of sizes, hierarchic or symbolic gradation, symbolic perspective. The preceding comparison shows that the last designation is an abusive one: it tends to assimilate into naturalism a convention which is completely different from it.

The hierarchy of sizes and hierarchical proportions are two distinct but coherent figurative conventions. The first concerns the relationship between whole figures, the second between the parts of a figure. They come out of a similar spatial "symbolism" that is to be found at work in modes of nonverbal communication other than sculpture in relief, as well as in verbal language.

Consolidation of the Surface

Focusing the attention on the plastic object and the space belonging to it, we should try to describe this plastic space of the representation. To this end, we should change comparative material, and not use perspective alone as a detector of difference, but bring African reliefs closer to comparable works annexed with commentaries that may suggest pertinent concepts to us—such as the concepts of the consolidation of mass and surface, coined by Panofsky to describe Medieval paintings and reliefs. (1976, pp. 63, 136–37)

The figure is conceived more in terms of mass than structure; its parts may be treated differently, in nonorganic fashion. On the other hand, it becomes linked with architecture, as with the Benin plaques or the sculpted doors (Dogon, Senufo, Baoule, Igbo, Yoruba, Tsogho, etc.), or with technico-figurative objects that have a relief surface.

This surface becomes the background for the relief. The figures never give the impression of being detached, even when the treatment is in high relief. The unity of material contributes to that impression—even when, exceptionally, the sculptor's technique is neither carving, molding, nor casting, but building, and all the parts are of wood.

The solid forms of the figures in relief never extend beyond the limits of the initial block. The distance between background and foreground coincides with the thickness of the initial block. The focal depth of the sculpture in relief, the dimension of the space of the representation, tends to coincide with this thickness; one never notices that kind of indefinite, in-depth lengthening-out that perspective engenders. The surface of the background remains a screen, is focally never carved out in depth or distance. It continues to show itself as surface, either because it remains undifferentiated, uniformly treated, or because it is decorated, or because it has been hollowed out. It is from there as starting point and moving *forward*, that this plastic space should be described, and parallel to the background surface, one can distinguish planes that focally divide, so to speak, the thickness of the initial block.

If the background texture is neutral (*ne . . . uter*), neither decorative nor representational, the focal surface of the background coincides with its

material surface. If the background is decorated, it divides into two focal planes, the plane of the decorative motifs and the plane of the (decorated) background. Representational figures tend to be seen on one and the same plane, which we shall call the figural plane. The relationship foreground-background is in these planes taken two by two, and is that of the figure to the background described by gestalt psychologists; in other words, the relationship of the figural plane to the background and the relationship of the motival plane to the background are not markedly different. If the background is neutral, there are two planes, if it is decorated, three parallel planes divide the focal space of the representation.

It is as if the presentation of the figures was intended not to break this parallelism, but, on the contrary, to consolidate the surface. Now, the principle of consolidation of the surface manifests itself in various ways.

The figures represent people from the front, in profile, rarely from the back, but never, so to speak, from a three-quarter angle. Intermediary presentations, between full face and profile, are made on oblique focal planes, "vanishing" in depth and establishing a link between frontal planes, in a direction that crosses through the background toward focal distances. (It is one of the characteristics of Baroque representation which Heinrich Wölfflin called recessional presentment, or presentation in depth). In the rare cases where figures are seen from the back, the observer does not identify with them, in "empathy," looking along with them into the distance—for there is nothing to see and the eye collides against the background.

When an action that involves several persons is represented, it unfolds parallel to the background, the figures of the persons tend to be presented only on the figural plane; the hierarchy of their sizes does not space them in depth.

It is also through this principle of consolidation of the surface that multiple points of view, as they are called, must be interpreted. In a relief depicting the sacrifice of a bull (Benin), seven out of the eight figures are seen full face and frontal; but the figure of the bull is composed of two profiles and a "view" of the upper part of the head. Speaking of multiple points of view implies the naturalist reference to principles of perspective. But the artistic construction of the figure is so different from the extra-artistic manner in which a real bull is seen that it is better to notice that this figure is exhibited on one and the same focal plane that it shares with the principal figure and which lies parallel to the background. It is as if the construction of the figure were implying no point of view at all. This trait is a paradox. (Its most abstract signification would be that of a representation that has an object but no subject; here, Panofsky takes from his master, Ernst Cassirer, the idea exactly that perspective implies the modern discovery of the subject-object relationship.) We will see this trait again when we consider frontality. (*see* Chapter IV) It is the same process of construction that more generally associates the front and profile of the parts of the represented person (as with Egyptian painting and relief). It is the obverse of a figurative convention whose negative reverse is the absence of foreshortening. It puts the figure on a frontal focal plane, the foreshortening on an oblique plane receding in depth.

Partial covering of one figure by another, which engenders a masking effect, is avoided: a partially covered figure is seen as behind the other. To avoid an overlap is to preserve the immediate relationship of each figure to the background; it avoids splitting up the plane of the figures.

The tendency to avoid both the division of planes and receding oblique planes may be demonstrated by the contrast between a verbal evocation of an acrobatic dance and its representation in relief. In the course of an *isuoko* ceremony in honor of Ogun, the god of iron and war, the *oba* and

the chiefs attend a performance by the *amufi* acrobats in which these display their skills. The preceding night, ropes have been secretly arranged in a tree in such a way that the acrobats, as they twirl and spin around, seem to be flying; this acrobatic dance is described as a war against the heavens. (P. Ben-Amos, 1980) In the relief [fig. 455], the third dimension of the shared space in which the dancers are whirling is reduced, and the figures of the tree, the trunk, the branches and leaves, the ropes, and the people seen from the front are on one focal plane; there is no overlap except for the feet of the ibis and the ropes rolled around the branches.

What we must avoid describing in terms—naturalist ones—of reduction and multiple points of view can be observed not only in one single figure but in different figures representing different things. Another plaque [fig. 98] depicts a musician and his drums. The horizontal plane of the ground, in the common space, on which the two drums placed on a crowned base are resting, and the vertical torso of the player, both merge in this relief into a single focal plane which cannot really be said to represent the first two. Perspective would distinguish between these two orthogonal planes; but another configuration made up of the legs and the two drums and their base would be needed to create foreshortening. The reduction of the two orthogonal planes in the common space to a single imaginary figural plane is a vivid demonstration of the principle of consolidation of the surface.

The differences in the sizes of figures do not serve to space them out in depth: for there is no observer from whom to measure distances who would determine the point of view. The division of the block into focal planes parallel to the background basically belongs to the structure of representation, but it is independent from an observer of the extra-artistic things represented. And these focal planes, corresponding to the perceptive effect figure-background (in which the object perceived is the relief and not the extra-artistic reality) are superimposed one on the other and on the background, while perspective would space the planes in depth. This inversion of orientation has been observed by Kahnweiler in certain Cubist works, especially those by Juan Gris (1946, p. 171); Kahnweiler speaks of superimposed planes and, in order to make allowances for this inversion, suggests inverting the profile of the classical settings in order to accompany the projection of the focal planes starting from the background.

The Subordination of Place to Person

Therefore, one must not expect African reliefs to represent the extra-artistic space in which, however (but undoubtedly only for us), at least certain things that they represent exist. But if we expected it less, perhaps we would in fact encounter it. This less-than-space is the place. Thus we change expectations.

Let us agree upon a definition of place: a portion of space determined or defined by the thing or things that occupy it. In order to use this definition in the analysis of African relief, we must draw four inferences from it: 1) The place is subordinate to the thing, substance, or person that defines it and differentiates it from other places. This subordination is hierarchic among values. 2) One can present a thing without representing its place, insofar as the properties of the thing do not depend on those of the place. 3) One cannot represent a place without the thing that defines it, since without it the place would be only a void without any qualities. 4) Certain things occupied by other things are their place, such as a seat or a dwelling.

As to space, it will be defined as the universal place, that is to say, the place occupied by absolutely all things. Since one cannot perceive all things in one glance, space cannot be perceived; it can only be conceived of intellectually. Inversely, place, be it a portion of space or some thing occupied by another thing, is perceived when we perceive this thing.

The two definitions show that the relationship container-contained is fundamental. Only a universal container, space, is able to embody the totality of things, which includes, among others, represented things, the representation (painting or relief) itself, and the observer (artist) and consequently renders possible the Albertian definition of painting (and relief) as the intersection of the "visual pyramid." Traditional Medieval thought was not interested in the relationship—in space—between the thing represented and the observer, as shown by the frequently cited precept of Cennino Cennini: in order to render mountains and their natural aspect well, the painter should obtain some big, rough-surfaced stones that have not been cleaned and copy them directly from nature (Chapter 78) by applying light and shadows as Chapter 75 recommends it be done. The only thing that interests Cennini, a good Aristotelian, is the substance, the stone, and the form of the mountain, not the spatial properties—interdependent for Alberti—that are its size (whether real mountain or stone) and its distance from the observer (in nature or in the studio).

For the most part, African reliefs represent people and some objects without representing their places; all the more reason that they do not represent universal place or space. But certain African reliefs represent both people *and* their places. These alone raise the question: why place and not space?

We have found a reason—without claiming it to be the only one—for this indifference to the representation of space: that is, the attention paid to the value relationships between things at the expense of spatial relationships between things or between things and their observer. This reason may be rephrased: things, their meanings, and the hierarchic relationship between the things themselves have more value than their spatial relationships that may well leave one indifferent.

The idea that all things deserve to be represented and studied in an egalitarian, democratic manner belongs to science. That is its neutrality or objectivity; it puts values, as distinguished from facts, between parentheses. In other forms of culture—politics, war, justice, religion, and art—things are given value and hierarchically arranged; that is one of the aspects of this "super-powerful sense of reality" (*see* p. 47): the invisible, the supernatural, the suprahuman are, so to speak, overburdened with meaning. But it is impossible to represent all things with all their properties; a choice has to be made. In every culture, every region, and in every time period, art elects certain things as "subjects" and excludes others, as a function of the hierarchical position society assigns to them. Thus, there is a kind of—unwritten—entitlement to the image or the representation by which not all things benefit, at least not equally, and which we shall meet with again when discussing the question of the portrait. If, within such hierarchies, people have more value than places, they alone will have a right to the image; if certain individuals have more value than others, they alone, or first of all, will have the right to the effigy or portrait.

In order for a place—or objects serving to delineate a place—to be represented without people, one must recognize it to have a value, independent from that of the people within it, that gives it entitlement to an image. In order for the artistic landscape—absent from African art—to accede to the dignity of a "genre," the extra-artistic landscape must deserve to be represented by taking on a value independent from that of human

beings—as nature, the object of a valued and valuing sentiment: the feeling for nature. The Benin plaques representing the forest are not landscapes; the forest is shown merely as a place for the action of the characters.

The value given to things and their hierarchic position affects the manner in which they are represented—that is the meaning of the so-called hierarchical proportions and of the principle of the hierarchy of sizes. Now, if representing people with and without their place are two different ways of representing them, these too should be related to a hierarchic ordering. The absence or presence of the representation of place depends on the manner in which the person is represented. A person may be represented in a condition or in an action. Two Benin plaques exemplify this distinction. One represents two hunters and two leopards without a place (Hamburg, MfV, C 2301); the figures of the leopards are simply juxtaposed against, not coordinated with, those of the hunters. The other (Berlin, MfV) [fig. 921] represents five hunters and two leopards and their location, the forest, shown by a sort of liana that compartmentalizes the surface and the frame; the figures are coordinated together. [see p. 207] A leopard hunter is a state of being, institutionalized in Benin into a guild. But hunting leopard is an action: the second plaque represents a hunting "scene." The representation of the place is subordinate to that of the person, as is the place of the action to the action itself, and the action to the condition. The same is true for the plaque showing the *amufi* acrobatic dancers [fig. 455]. Such examples suggest that the representation of a person in action, and not just in a condition, is the motivation for representing the place of that action, maintaining the principle of subordination of place to person all the way through. But this suggestion cannot be generalized: the plaque representing the sacrifice of a bull, while it represents an action, does not show its place.

In those cases where it is represented, the place is not depicted literally but through metonymy (*pars pro toto*): a single tree or a single liana stands for the forest—or, in another plaque, the door for the palace of the *oba*. The representation of place may be allegorical; a Roman relief, for example, represents the place that is the Field of Mars in the form of a young man. We have not found ethnographic data allowing us to interpret certain figures as allegorical representations of places; it seems, however, that investigators have not raised this question.

Presence and Representation

The question of place has until now only been posed in terms of representation. But in studying the function or use of the plastic object (*see* Chapter III), we shall borrow the distinction between presentification and representation from Jean-Pierre Vernant (1983), and we shall recognize in the former another use or function: conferring a *hic et nunc* presence upon invisible entities or forces in order to use them. The plastic object, then, does not need to represent the place insofar as it is *itself* the place of residence or activity of the entity or force. We shall see that the vocabulary of presentification consists of words or expressions that signify precisely the relationship of contained to container.

However, this function of presentification seems better suited to sculpture in the round than to relief. For if, on the one hand, the entity or the force *occupies* the plastic figure and if, on the other hand, the sculpture in the round *occupies* space, while relief can only (possibly) represent it, one understands that the former is more (if not the only method) appropriate to presentification. Moreover, presentification is often carried out by objects, such as certain fetishes, that in representing nothing do not represent any place.

The Representation of the Individual

The Question of Portraits

Does traditional African art know portraiture? The answer depends on the meaning given to the word. (S. P. Blier, 1982) In a narrow sense, a portrait is a painted or sculpted representation of the physiognomy belonging to (most frequently) a human individual. Images thus defined are far from having been produced always and everywhere; those for which this definition was made belong primarily to two periods of Western art, both naturalist—Roman art and Christian art from the end of the Middle Ages. If the question uses "portrait" in this sense, it cannot avoid being ethnocentric. It is also not surprising that it is seriously raised about only a dozen or so African styles and that the answer remains uncertain: the use of the term is coupled with a series of restrictive suggestions intended to correct ethnocentrism.

In a broad sense, "portrait" designates simply the representation of an individual. Here, answering the question no longer raises a problem: in the majority of African styles, if not all of them, images exist that represent individuals, human or not. But works that are not only very different from Western physiognomic portraits but also from each other would be put in this category. If one no longer risks excluding works different from the European portrait, on the other hand one now ignores the differences between them by incorporating them all. That is falling from Charybdis into Scylla: the narrow sense is too narrow, the larger sense too large and too vague.

The broad sense defines a genus; the narrow, a species of that genus, the specific difference being the physiognomic resemblance. Thus, one can see that it is a question of two clearly demarcated concepts. (*see* Chapter I)

We propose to show that each one of the properties of the physiognomic portrait enters into an opposition and that between the two poles thus opposed intermediaries slip in. Therefore, we will have predicates of family resemblance available that permit us to sketch out a family of the portrait, or rather, a family of the individual effigy.

The Properties of the Physiognomic Portrait

The referent of the portrait is an individual. In logic, individual is the opposite of genus. So an image may represent a genus, having a generic referent, for example, a king, a saint, or a hunter in general, and not this king, that saint, that hunter. One speaks then in terms of representation, of a generalized image or effigy. But degrees of generalization exist: between the individual Socrates and a man in general are situated the Athenian and the Hellenic Greek. Thus, one distinguishes genus, species, subspecies, type, in decreasing order of generality. This logical and differential determination of the referent allows us to construct a series of intermediaries between the effigy with a general referent and the portrait with an individual referent.

Therefore, within the framework of a naturalist art, the effigy can, little by little, come closer to the portrait—so close, even, that it becomes difficult, if not impossible, to decide by looking at the sculpture alone whether it is a portrait or not in the strict sense. Leon Underwood (1949, pp. 27–28) distinguishes three "racial types"—in the sense of physical anthropology—among Ife heads, which he calls "Moorish," "more Egyptian," and Negroid. But within each of these types, differences between facial characteristics are perceptible. Do they correspond to actual, different models? The author notes, by comparison with a living person, that "the resemblance to the Oni's daughter is closer than just

racial resemblance"–thus suggesting an individual resemblance. But Willett (1967, p. 28) allows the hypothesis of a resemblance between individuals belonging to the same family; and so a familial type slips in between Underwood's racial types and individuals. The differences between sculpted heads may be the result of different artists' hands (F. Willett, 1967, p. 29) or of the fact that the same artist representing the same individual may not produce two perfectly identical works.

This last point must be emphasized. Contrary to what is often thought, even mass-produced products are not perfectly identical; a careful examination with appropriate means allows differences to be detected, which are tolerated as long as they do not interfere with functioning or use. (G. Simondon, 1969) This is all the more likely to be so when the production is a manual one; in this regard artistic production must be compared to natural production: two oak trees or two leaves of the same oak tree are very appreciably different. Without that, how can a well-done fake be distinguished from the authentic original? In other words, the product is a unique individual and if that product is a representation, a distinction must be made between the individuality of the representation and the individuality of the referent. Furthermore, the plastic object is individual even when it is not representational.

A second property of the portrait is physiognomic resemblance. The portrait represents in its individuality the physiognomy, the corporeal aspect, and, most specifically, the face of an individual. But resemblance is not identity; to act as if it were, is one of the illusions of coarse naturalism that engenders another: the statuary of cathedrals, observes Henri Focillon, "offers us more than one example of those human effigies that exude authenticity and whose physiognomic expression is so definite that they impose a feeling, illusory and despotic, of resemblance on us." (1947, p. 230) Physiognomic or individual resemblance is not an intrinsic property of the effigy, recognizable at the mere sight of that effigy— because resemblance admits of degrees. Also, Underwood, himself a sculptor, takes pains to compare a sculpted head and a face before deciding upon the degree of resemblance.

To the degree of logical generality of the referent correspond, in naturalist styles, degrees of resemblance, in such a way that it would be desirable to be specific by distinguishing resemblances of genus, species, type, etc. But if the diagnosis can only be comparative, it is all the more difficult and hazardous in the present case where the comparative, historical, and ethnographic data is more rare.

The other properties of the portrait are the outcome of the two preceding ones. The portrait is real; in order to render physiognomy, it must be observed and one can only observe a real individual, present in the flesh. Thus, the portrait is drawn from nature or life. Yet, an artist who has mastered the craft or art of portraiture is able to render and individualize the physiognomy of a referent who has never existed. Then the portrait is imaginary. It comes out of illusionism and furnishes one of the reasons behind Focillon's remark.

Now, between the imaginary portrait and the real portrait drawn from life, one can mention, gradually distancing oneself from the direct relationship between portraitist and model, the portrait made from a death mask or from a portrait drawn from life; from a more or less elaborate sketch; or from a replica of a portrait drawn from life from which one may draw yet another replica. The primary resemblance will probably be weakened.

The artist can also visualize verbal, written, or oral information. Certain societies greatly value information that comes from sources other than perception, such as dreams, visions, or apparitions. Our empirico-rational

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notions of observation then, of reality and realism, are no longer completely pertinent. According to certain traditions, fidelity or resemblance is insured by ways other than the imitation of the observed model. This is the case with acheiropoietic images produced by direct contact between a face and the medium. In the Christian tradition, certain acheiropoietic images are seen as physiognomic portraits originating in a legendary or historical series of replicas of replicas. The referent of the effigy can also participate in its production by him or herself indicating, either through a dream or through the mediation of a diviner, the manner in which he or she wishes to be represented. Among the Baoule, according to Vogel (1980), certain spirits ask to be represented with traits opposite to those they possess. Finally, even that which seems to us to be an observation of the model may be used in a way other than what we expect, the observation of one individual serving to create the image of another. (S. P. Blier, 1982, p. 81)

Therefore, there are many ways of crossing the boundary one is tempted to draw between the real portrait and the imaginary portrait. The position of the boundary depends on the manner in which a social group conceives of reality.

Two other properties of the portrait, its realism, as opposed to idealization, and its literal or allegorical character, will be examined a little later on.

Individuality and Identity

An individual is unique; two individuals cannot be identical and indistinguishable. When one wants to classify individuals, one abstracts their differences in order to enter them as members into sets, classes, genera, species, and so on, to which they are said to belong. It is possible to define sets of only a single member thus determined or marked as an individual. Defined this way, individuality is a formal and logical property.

Let us agree to call identity the content corresponding to this form, that is to say, the properties that an individual, I, possesses, since it is by mentioning them that one will answer the question: who is that individual I?—a question aimed at finding that individual's identity. It is clear that identity is complex.

The notion of the portrait leads to distinguishing between, provisionally, physical or physiognomic identity and social identity, including other elements of identity. Indeed, it is the painted or sculpted portrait that suggests this distinction, for physiognomic identity is directly representable by the painting or the sculpture, while the elements of social identity are only indirectly so; inversely, the verbal or literary portrait does not have to treat corporeal and social identity differently.

The properties that constitute corporeal identity are physiognomic traits; those that constitute social identity are indirectly represented by things associated with them in a given social group; for example, a crown is associated with the property of being monarch, an element of the social identity of a given individual. In iconography, these objects—as well as their representation—associated in a conventional fashion with social properties are called attributes.

Nevertheless, this distinction between physiognomic properties and attributes must be refined; physiognomy and corporeal identity are not exactly the same thing. The etymology of the word physiognomy implies the idea of nature; strictly speaking, physiognomy would be the *natural* corporeal identity. Now, it is not certain that this, in its pure state, is observable; can one, for example, observe what a head of hair would be in its pure state, never having been groomed? The body is not left in its

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natural state and development; it is modified by traditional techniques that vary from culture to culture. (D. Paulme and J. Brosse, 1956) These practices are known: mutilation of certain body parts such as the teeth; molding of the baby's skull (lengthening it among the Mangbetu) [figs. 653, 654, 656]; lowering and stretching of young women's breasts; dilating the lips or the earlobes by inserting objects of increasing diameter [fig. 339]; incising the skin in such a way as to control the shape of the scar tissue on various parts of the body [fig. 179]; and tattooing and body painting. Now, these modifications of the body, whether permanent, long-lasting, or ephemeral, very frequently are bodily inscriptions of certain elements of social identity. Scarifications, for example, indicate that one belongs to a tribe or a lineage. Among the Luba, the female hairdo, which is very elaborate and which may be kept for several weeks due to its structure and the use of a neck-rest during sleep, is a sign of high social rank [figs. 703, 711]. This list is by no means exhaustive.

These cultural modifications of the natural body must figure as intermediaries between physiognomic traits in the strict sense (such as the racial types Underwood uses) and attributes (clothing, jewelry, weaponry, utensils, etc.). Just as with physiognomic properties, they are directly representable; as with attributes, they come out of social identity. The three kinds of properties may be common among several individuals, or belong to only one, that is to say, are themselves individual.

Individuation of the Referent

Comprehensively, one defines a set by stating a property that each individual must possess in order to be a member of this set or to belong to it. The range of the set is the number of individuals who, by possessing this property, belong to it. The property is therefore generally true for or common to all its members. An individual possesses n (number of) properties and can belong to n sets. Let there be a property $p1$, defining the set $E1$, with a range of $e1$ ... and a property pn, defining En, of the range en. The conjunction of the properties $p1$, $p2$ ... pn defines the set I of the individuals possessing these n properties. So, this set I is the intersection of the sets $E1$, $E2$ ... En. When the number of properties grows, the range of the intersection I decreases. Then one can join properties p until the set I no longer has but a single member, i, who is then logically determined as an individual. Since each one of the properties p is a general or common one, one can see that common properties, joined in sufficient numbers, allow us logically to determine and refer to an individual. This procedure is a general and formal one; it is specified by giving the details of the content or nature of the various properties p used in conjunction ($p1$ and $p2$ and ... pN). The effigy and the portrait use physiognomic (natural) properties, culturalized corporeal properties, and/or attributes. These three kinds of properties are numerous enough to suffice for the individuation of the referent.

In order to be able to represent these corporeal, natural, or culturalized traits and these attributes, they need a foundation or a substratum, if only a very simple schema of the *figura humana*. But lacking such a schema and by conjoining attributes, one can produce an image that refers to an individual. This is the case with the individual coat of arms that shows that the individuality of the referent of an image might not suffice to define the portrait (in the larger sense) without leading to an abusive use of the word.

If the representation of general properties allows the individuation of the referent, the result is not the exclusion of individual traits. The use of these may complete the process of individuation (as in the case of the royal

effigies of the Kuba, analyzed below), or may be redundant. Edmund R. Leach (1971, p. 243) emphasizes that in ritual sequences executed in their entirety, redundancies are numerous. On the other hand, according to the cultural context in which they work, and especially according to a demand by the users or commission from a patron, artists may stop this process of individuation before its end. They then produce a generic effigy which the specialized literature often calls the generalized image or representation. Of course, that is the case when the entity to be represented, an ancestor, spirit, or divinity, is itself not individualized (as with choirs of angels, or groups of cupids).

The best example—thanks to available documentation—of this individuation process is furnished by the royal statues (*ndop*) of the Kuba. These statues may be classified into several types according to the differences in what we have called the substratum. But in every case one can distinguish two kinds of attributes: constant, common attributes and one variable, individual attribute. The former, which are found with every sample, jointly have a referent identical to the expression "Kuba king." They consist of the following representations: 1) the cross-legged sitting position, an indication of superior rank; 2) a royal dais on which the figure sits; 3) the royal headdress with visor (*shody*); 4) a shoulder ornament (*paang angup*); 5) a bracelet around the upper arm (*shop*) and around the forearm (*ntshyaang*); 6) a cross-belt (*yeemy*) decorated with cowrie shells and running across the abdomen; 7) a covering for the buttocks (*mbyo*); 8) a royal sword held in the right hand. One sees the redundance of the determination "Kuba king" of the referent. A variable and individual attribute completes the individuation of the referent: the individual emblem (*ibol*) of each king. (J. Cornet, 1982) It is placed conspicuously in front of the anterior side of the royal dais. The corporeal aspects represented are not individual, with the exception of a slight indication of layers of fat in the neck in addition to the normal obesity, an ideal of Kuba kings. (J. Vansina, 1984, p. 111)

One can see how the representation of individuality and the individuality of representation are distinguished and deployed. The iconographic elements we have just reviewed and whose logical composition we have described are so many ways of representing a given Kuba king in his individuality. Let us now compare the various statuettes, their common iconographic elements, such as their belts or their headdresses: there are not two that are perfectly identical; they differ in the way they have been sculpted. It is those differences that individualize each one of the statuettes and also confer upon each one its different aesthetic value.

The individuation of the referent of generic effigies can operate through other means.

DENOMINATION First, there is the denomination, the verbal individuation of the referent. It may be written or oral, depending on whether the social group does or does not have written language. Aristotle observed that the "early painters" who had not yet mastered the art of imitation made up for that lack by inscribing the name, thus allowing for identification of what they were representing. (*Topics*, VI, 2) Verbal denomination is transmitted by tradition. Colonization introduced writing into Africa. Ulli Beier published (1960, pl. 9) a brass plaque, offered to the king (*oba*) by the traditional guild of smelters of the city of Benin to commemorate Queen Elizabeth's visit. There are four inscriptions in relief on a united background: "Royal Tour Visit. 9.2.56," which is the commemorative inscription proper; "Queen Elizabeth"; "Oba Akenzua II and Sir John Raki [. . . ?] Governor"; "Chief Awolowo Prime Minister."

Each inscription has two elements: one element of social identity, the political function, in redundancy with each effigy, and a proper name, which achieves individuation for the purpose Aristotle indicated.

In a manner that is both more traditional and more subtle, verbal individuation may take the form of a rebus which, "by means of pictured objects or arrangements, expresses the sounds of a word or an entire sentence." (*Littré*) The rebus requires oral denomination, the actual pronunciation of the proper noun, which circumvents the inscription. For example, a Fon image (J. Laude, 1966, p. 317) represents a butcher's meat hook, called *hu*, and a razor, called *ha*, the pronunciation of which contains the proper name *Huha*. In the city of Abomey, Cyprian Togudagba is a painter who adapts Western means to traditional intentions. Edna G. Bay has published (1975, p. 26) two paintings, one of which represents a lion and the other a ram, respectively matched with the inscriptions "Glélé" and "Guézo," two *noms de règne* of two Fon kings; here the inscription glosses a traditional allegory.

INDIVIDUATION AND USE   Then, too, the individuation of a referent may be the fact of its use. Who does not remember having a doll or a stuffed bear which was considered to be the most irreplaceable of creatures; we wept over its disappearance and refused any replacement. Thus, some of our games individualize generic objects, sometimes giving them proper names.

We have a tendency to forget this manner of individuation, to exactly the same degree that we observe effigies isolated from their context of use; we then expect them to individualize their referent solely by representational means, while their use is a customary or ritual activity. By analogy with linguistics, the first kind of individuation comes from semantics and syntax, individuation through use from pragmatics.

Users may behave toward an effigy as they would toward the individual it represents in ritual or customary fashion codified by society. When the effigy's referent is not individualized by attributes, but when it is use that implies its individuality, one can assume it is the behavior of the user that achieves the individuation of the referent. Among the Yoruba, the images of twins (*ere ibeji*) [figs. 430–35] are not physiognomic portraits; they represent very young children without representing their childlike aspect. Yet, the mother of a deceased twin behaves, under certain defined circumstances, toward the image as she behaves toward the surviving twin and, thus, as she would behave toward the dead twin were he or she still alive: she dresses it, feeds it, and carries it on her back. (R. F. Thompson, 1971, Chapter XIII)

PRESENTIFICATION AND INDIVIDUALITY   Restoring the effigy to its context of use leads to considering a relationship between the effigy and an extra-artistic individual, different from individuation through the behavior of the user or from representation: this is presentification. The invisible individual, present in the effigy, gives it its own individuality. Then the plastic object *is* an individual, and, in a totally coherent fashion, the user behaves toward it as toward an individual.

Presentification and representation may be joined or disjoint.

The finest example of presentification without representation is undoubtedly the golden stool of the Asante. According to a creation legend (H. Cole and D. H. Ross, 1977, p. 6) it descended from heaven one Friday: "this stool . . . contained the spirit of the whole Ashanti nation; it is called *Sika Dwa Kofi*, the golden stool born on Friday . . . ." (p. 137)

In a recent study of the Bamana *boli*, Jean Bazin shows how the production of the object and the individuation presentified therein

constitute one and the same process; a *boli* "has its own history . . . a completely unique history . . . that may be evoked by narratives" and, finally, "the principle that presides over its production is individuation, not representation" (pp. 260–64).

Two factors tend to make us forget these last two modes of individuation of the referent of the effigy: first, the isolation of the object, separated from its context of use; then, the naturalist interpretation that privileges representation.
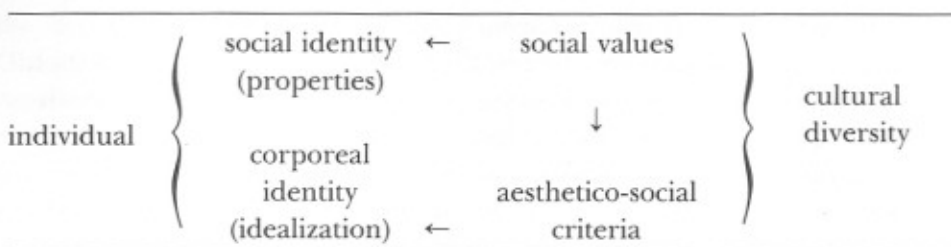
Idealizations

An effigy is realistic to the extent that it represents its model exactly or faithfully without any intentional modification. But one can state that no real individual is devoid of flaws or imperfections and that the representation can and must eliminate or correct these. In order to eliminate flaws, one must first detect them and in order to detect them, one must have criteria of values available. Flaws are properties of the actual, individual model and vary from one individual to the next, while the values that serve to detect them are, in principle, applicable to all actual individuals; the result is that idealization tends to coincide with a certain generalization and leads one to speak in terms of an ideal type. Another result is also that idealization admits of degrees, individual flaws being more or less numerous and, consequently, the gap lesser or greater between individuals as they are and as they ought to be.

Since flaws or imperfections are corporeal traits, idealization affects corporeal identity. On the other hand, as a first approximation, one may consider the criteria applied to real individuals to be aesthetic: to idealize, then, is to embellish. But the aesthetic significance of these criteria must be specified. (*see* Chapter IV) In the societies studied here, values and criteria are not purely aesthetic but are associated with values that are, to us, utilitarian or functional: political, religious, magical, martial—in short, social values.

If aesthetic values are intimately linked to social values, since the latter vary from one society to the next, the aesthetic values and criteria intervening in the idealization will also vary. In fact, it is not only African aesthetics, but also the idealized forms among themselves that differ, and each one of these differs from Western aesthetics and idealization— assuming that Western idealization and aesthetics are singular. In fact, too, only Ife art presents a form of idealization that is comparable to Classical idealization.

Idealization affects corporeal identity by subordinating its representation to the elements of the individual's social identity. The mediation between corporeal identity and social identity is enacted through "aesthetic" values. On the one hand, these values (such as the "beautiful and good") are held as properties by the represented individual and, on the other, intervene as aesthetico-religious, political, and other criteria in the process of idealization.

individual	social identity (properties) ← social values		cultural diversity
	↓		
	corporeal identity (idealization) ←	aesthetico-social criteria	

The interpretation of idealized form thus will have to determine, on the basis of ethnographic or historical data, the criteria of idealization by integrating them with different aesthetics, and possibly ones different from naturalist aesthetics. The present observations do nothing other than make room for further inquiry. (*see* Chapter IV) The Greek model associates idealization and naturalism. Therefore, forms of idealization must also be admitted that are associated with moderate naturalisms, and even dissociated from naturalism. Thus one understands how idealization, motivated by values important to a given social group, may take away any interest in representing an actual individual with his or her flaws and imperfections.

As "mixed," aesthetico-social, values vary culturally, so the misreading of these variations can engender misunderstandings or misinterpretations.

For example, let us consider the relationship between aesthetic properties and erotic values. Our society—and it is not the only one—assigns two ends or two functions to eros. First there is a biological function, the reproduction of the species, the condition for the survival of the social group; the value is a collective one. Then there is a hedonistic end; the value, which is pleasure, is an individual one. One may mention here the Freudian distinction between what is genital and what is sexual. In certain African societies, or more exactly in their ideologies, in the ways in which they represent their values (which ought not to be confused with daily practices), hedonist sexuality not only is not dissociated from reproduction, it is associated with other social behavior with which it shares the value of fertility. The fertility of women and the fertility of the earth, sexual behavior and agriculture, are thus united. Hence, the good health of the divine king, for example, jointly guarantees the abundance of births and harvests.

It is, then, proper to pluralize idealization, by reason of the plurality of ideal values that call forth idealized forms, and in order to be able by degrees to recognize idealization elsewhere than in naturalist styles. We are thinking, for example, of those effigies to which Fagg applies the terms *gravitas* (1964, p. 140) or *majestas* (1981a) and which, like some Dogon statues, one would be hard put to call naturalist. [fig. 276]

That idealization involves values that are not purely aesthetic results in its being selective in several senses. First, as we have seen, it selects the traits represented by eliminating flaws or imperfections. Signs of aging or illness are thus avoided; the same holds for aspects typical of childhood, insofar as the child is seen as an imperfect adult.

In the second place, the criteria of idealization not being aesthetically pure, elements of social identity—carriers of values—have a tendency to be favored over corporeal traits. Now, it is only to these latter that we attribute purely aesthetic properties. We shall come back to this point when we examine African aesthetics. (*see* Chapter IV)

Idealization is selective in another sense; no longer is it a question of selecting the traits of an individual that will be represented, but the individuals themselves. Social values put the individuals within a group into a hierarchy. The social inequality of the individuals takes the form of an inequality before the representation. The social hierarchy results in an *entitlement to the image* that is restrictive (*see* Chapter III) and whose truly judicial model is the Roman *jus imaginum*. (P. Bruneau, 1980)

Idealized representation may be reserved for individuals, human or not, who eminently possess the social values it involves, while those individuals who do not possess them or do to a lesser degree, will be pictured otherwise. In such cases two styles, one idealized and reserved for the depiction of an aristocracy, the other nonidealized, realistic, and reserved for the ordinary people, coexist not only within an artistic ensemble, but

possibly within the same sculptural group. In Ife art, and especially in that from Benin, effigies of the aristocracy are idealized, but slaves, foreigners, and victims of sacrifice come out of different figurative conventions. This selective characteristic of idealization, engendering such a duality of style, furnishes a new objection to the rigid formula "one tribe, one style." (*see* Chapter I)

Duplicity of the Referent

The individual is unique; by assigning an individual referent to effigies or portraits, we have assumed this referent to be unique. But, once more, one should not infer from the extra-artistic reality its representation. In fact, the existence of allegorical effigies and portraits forces us to abandon that assumption.

According to its etymology, "allegory" signifies something that speaks of something other than that which it speaks of directly. The allegorical effigy or portrait refers to an individual other than the one to which it (literally) refers; in other words the referent is a double one. Two formulas are generally in use: "effigy or portrait of *x* under the aspect of, with the traits of, or in the guise of *y*" and "effigy or portrait of *y* as *x*," in which *x* and *y* stand for individuals.

This genre is very widespread: through ancient Egypt and Greece, Rome, Western Christianity, etc. In France, for example, from the fourteenth century on, Saint Louis was traditionally represented with the features of the reigning king of France. (L. Réau, 1958, p. 817) Romanticism substitutes the symbol for the allegory, but the genre survived Romanticism in what we call academicism or official art. Viollet-le-Duc, when restoring Notre-Dame in Paris, had himself represented there as Saint Thomas, and Napoleon III gave his features to the Gallic chieftain Vercingétorix. Even today, Marianne, the personification of the French Republic (*see* M. Agulhon), has been successively represented with the features of media stars—Brigitte Bardot, Mireille Mathieu (1978), and Catherine Deneuve (1985).

In certain African works one can recognize individual allegorical effigies. Some Benin sculptures represent the divine king, the *oba*, by substituting fish for his legs. Fagg (1970, p. 10) comments upon a piece such as this in the Mankind Museum in London:

"This figure may represent a god in a semihuman aspect as an Oba of Benin, or an Oba in divine aspect, or an Oba of normal aspect but with somewhat fanciful reference to a pathological condition. The third explanation, preferred in Benin today, is the least likely and is probably a modern rationalization: namely, that the fourteenth-century Oba Ohen suffered paralysis of both legs during his reign, and gave out that he had 'become Olokun' (the sea god), his legs turning into mudfish, Olokun's symbol. It is perhaps safest to assume that it is a 'heraldic' representation of an Oba—perhaps any Oba—in divine aspect."

Fagg circles around the formula of the allegory. Two interpretations compete, and we do not know which one to settle on since we are not historians of Benin. Their alternative, however, raises a question of method. It is either an *allegorical* effigy of Olokun (*x*) under the aspect of the *oba* Ohen (*y*), or it is a *literal* representation of the metamorphosis of Ohen into Olokun. Let us generalize: how to distinguish the literal representation of a "real" metamorphosis of *y* to *x* from the allegorical representation of *y* to *x* (or of *y* under the aspect of *y*)? How, in the presence of the image alone, restore to the "real" what belongs to the real and to art what belongs to art.

Observing the object in isolation does not permit us to answer. In other

words, to be allegorical or to be literal is not an intrinsic property of an image that one would grasp from that image alone. It is an extrinsic or contextual property. The answer depends on the way in which, in a historic context or a social variable, one conceives of "reality" and in which one distinguishes it from fiction; is the supernatural, for example, included in reality or is it seen as fictional? Our conception of reality is an empirico-rationalist one: are only those things or events real that can be observed by everyone? In this way, we grant reality to the metamorphoses of insects, but not to that of Jupiter or of the legs of the *oba* Ohen into catfish. That is the reason Fagg describes one of the explanations he reports as a modern rationalization. If one believes in the reality of the metamorphosis of the *oba* into Olokun, the plaque is a literal representation; if not, this supposed metamorphosis is a political lie concealing an inadmissible illness. If one believes that the *oba* is truly divine, the representation is an allegorical one and visualizes this belief. Then the allegory is motivated by the belief in the reality of a specific connection between the *oba* and the god it renders visible.

In Benin, the elephant is linked to the power of the chief and the leopard to royalty. The *iyase* was one of the two supreme military leaders. The *iyase ne ode*, in particular, revolted against the *oba*; the base of his power was situated in the village of Oregbeni, homeland of the guild of elephant hunters; according to some legends, the *iyase ne ode* had the power to change himself into an elephant in order to conquer his enemies. Finally, the *oba* Akenzua I was the conqueror of this *iyase* and stabilized the rules for royal succession. (P. Ben-Amos, 1979, pp. 33–34) Now, the end of a scepter (Metropolitan Museum, New York) represents an *oba* standing on an elephant whose trunk is represented in the form of a hand. Let us suppose that the depiction of this *oba* on this elephant is an allegory of the victory of good over evil (as in the figures of Saint Michael slaying the dragon or of the Virtues triumphing over the Vices)—of the legitimate king over the usurper. The elephant depicted is either an allegory of the *iyase ne ode*, or the literal representation of his metamorphosis into an elephant in order to fight the *oba*. The figure of the elephant individualizes the referent, the *iyase ne ode*, by means of an individual attribute: his power to change himself into an elephant; integrated into the sculpted grouping, it individualizes the effigy of *this oba* Akenzua I onto *this iyase*. In short, on the one hand the group is allegorical, on the other, the individualization of the referent "*oba*" includes the taking into consideration of an historical event. As for this last point, a more recent study by Paula Ben-Amos shows how another *oba* effigy is individualized in reference to another historical event. (1983, p. 161) One could easily find other examples in Benin, and even outside of the art of the royal court. On the shrines of Olokun worship, clay figures represent this god under the aspect of an *oba* (W. Bascom, 1973, p. 95) with all his royal, ceremonial attributes, his entourage, and his wives.

Two allegorical effigies (J. Delange, 1967, p. 72) originating in the court of Abomey (Musée de l'Homme, Paris) represent, in one instance, the king Glélé as a lion, in the other, the king Behanzin as a shark [fig. 413]. Another allegorical effigy of a Fon king has been published by Claude Savary. (1978, pl. 17) An appliquéd fabric in the Musée de l'Homme depicts "Meviaso, God of Thunder, slaying the Nafe." (G. Balandier and J. Maquet, 1968, p. 159) According to Margaret Trowell (1960, pl. XXV): ". . . the king is given an animal form symbolizing strength"; these two interpretations are complementary to one another: this is an instance of an allegorical effigy of the king as Meviaso, a divinity who gives him the strength to slay his enemies.

Laude (1966, p. 188) mentions two Dogon statuettes representing the

mythic character Arou, under the aspect of a *hogon*, the Dogon priest. According to Pascal J. Imperato (1978, p. 76, no. 62), a doorlock represents "a *hogon*, i.e., a Dogan priest-chief, and, on a deeper plane of understanding, Lébé, the first *hogon* and first priest-chief of the Dogon people." This note suggests that, depending on the degree of the initiation of the exegete, the statuette is understood either simply as a literal representation or as an allegorical representation of Lébé with the features of a *hogon*; whereby we once again encounter the contextual character of the allegorical value of an image.

These few examples are enough to distinguish several kinds of allegorical effigies and portraits, depending on whether only one or both referents are individualized. A simple combinatory engenders four possibilities:

	Referent	
	literal	allegorical
(1)	+	+
(2)	+	−
(3)	−	+
(4)	−	−

In this chart, the individualized referent is marked +. The fourth entry would take us out of our realm of inquiry. These possibilities are exemplified by (1) the *oba* as Olokun; (2) Behanzin as shark, Glélé as lion, and the *iyase ne ode* as elephant; (3) a Fon king as Meviaso, and a *hogon* as Arou or Lébé.

The extrinsic or contextual character of allegorical signification, along with the vitality of allegorical thinking, may be illustrated by a phenomenon of acculturation: the Yoruba use of photographs instead of their traditional twin statuettes. The author of this study, Stephen F. Sprague (1978), distinguishes several cases of depiction. "The process becomes more complex when one of the twins dies before having been photographed. If the twins were of the same sex, the surviving one is photographed alone and the photographer makes two prints of the single negative, so that the twins appear side by side on the final photograph." In this kind of depiction, one of the prints is a literal portrait of the surviving twin and the other, by contextual effect, the allegorical portrait of the dead twin (not photographed) with the features of the survivor. Another kind of depiction: "If the twins were of opposite sex, the survivor is photographed once dressed as a boy and once dressed as a girl" (p. 57); one of the images is a literal portrait, the other an allegorical portrait of the dead twin with the features of his or her twin of opposite sex, but dressed as his or her own sex requires. The integration of a portrait into a context of socially codified usage thus changes a literal portrait into an allegorical portrait and introduces the new (allegorical) referent. Such a doubling of the image can be found in a reliquary ordered by Charles the Bold from the goldsmith Gérard Loyet. Side by side, following the traditional iconographic theme of the presentation by the saint, are Charles the Bold and Saint George; but the two faces are as identical as is possible, so that one is the literal portrait of Charles the Bold and the other the allegorical portrait of Saint George with the features of this duke of Burgundy who, in the chivalrous tradition in which he claimed membership, proclaimed himself "the new Saint George." As to the photographs of twins, they are, of course, not strictly traditional; but, according to Sprague, the Yoruba photograph "is an authentic expression

of the culture and shows how certain cultural values obtain a visual form" (p. 56). These new practices testify to the vitality of traditional allegorical thought, capable of integrating a foreign technology and of animating what might be called the iconographic or photographic imagination of the Yoruba.

Expression and the Representation of Expression

Expression and Expressionism

Are African artists, Himmelheber asks (1960b, p. 52), "capable of representing a specific expression and do they want to do so?" The response risks a misunderstanding between the informant or user and the European researcher: "It sometimes seems to us that they have tried to give a certain expression to the masks. When I questioned the artists on this subject, it turned out that generally this was a question of mere chance. First they have to think for a moment about what they should say—what expression is being discussed here. Then the [African] artist often sees a totally different expression than the one I notice. For example, he interprets as laughter what to us seems to be a mouth opened above menacing teeth or a plaintive mouth, for in both cases the teeth show." The author concludes: "The expression, in general, has no greater importance for the [African] artist than the body movement of those statues."

Inversely, other authors emphasize the expressive character of African sculpture and some of them describe certain works or certain groups of works as expressionist, taking recourse at times to the opposing historico-aesthetic categories of "classicism" and "expressionism."

The two attitudes are not contradictory, for "expression" and "expressionism" are not used in the same sense. Here again, before posing and in order to pose the question, we must agree on its terms. We propose to show that, at the very least, we must distinguish between expression, and more specifically psychological expression, as the object of imitation or representation (whereby one remains within the framework of naturalism), and one or more forms of expression no longer attributable to the model but to the artist or the work, and for which alone the label "expressionism" is suitable. Already it may be observed, in this regard, that Himmelheber poses the question in terms of representation.

Expression and Imitation

In *Memorabilia* (III, x), Xenophon reports a discussion between Socrates and the painter Parrhasios during the course of which Socrates, drawing him out, makes the painter aware of what he does without being conscious of it. Painting imitates what is visible; but the states or emotions of the soul are invisible; do they, then, evade imitation in painting or sculpture? Socrates then helps the painter recognize that these invisible, psychic states, since they manifest themselves through quite visible modifications of aspects of the face and body, can be imitated, and that some painters very effectively imitate the feelings of the soul. In *Platon et l'Art de Son Temps* [*Plato and the Art of His Time*], P. M. Schuhl established that Socrates was here interpreting certain innovations of the painting and sculpture of his era; but he speaks of expressionism (p. 86). Not one word in the Greek text is directly translatable as "expression" (derived from the Latin). In fact, this is a matter of imitation, the representation of psychological

expressions. Socrates does not leave the traditional framework of the imitative conception of art; he only widens the imitable domain by including the visible manifestations of the invisible soul. Expression is psychological and must be ascribed to the model; artists imitate—nothing suggests that they are expressing themselves. To speak of expressionism is a misconception. In order to be able to speak of an expressionist conception of art, we will have to wait several centuries, for Plotinus. (*see* A. Grabar)

The innovations evoked by this text are at the origin of an artistic Western tradition; the text itself is the origin of a theoretical tradition concerning the artistic representation of emotions and passions, one illustrated by Alberti, Leonardo, and Le Brun; in parallel fashion, certain parts of Aristotle's *Rhetoric* and *Ethics* are at the origin of a tradition we find again in treatises after Descartes's *Treatise on the Passions*. All conditions are therefore united so that with the word "expression" will be associated the idea of representing psychological expression and thus this idea can serve us as an anticipation. Thus, in a recent anthology, whose stated scientific goals are frequently fulfilled, we still find the following definition of expression: "The totality of the external manifestations, attitudes, gestures, facial movements that translate emotions, sentiments, intentions, or character" (*Sculpture*, 1978, p. 697)—as if art dealt only with that sort of expression, and as if art theory had made no steps forward since Socrates. This definition reduces the realm of artistic expression by attaching it to the naturalist or imitative conception of art. It engenders what philosopher Gilbert Ryle calls "categorial contempt": the works evoked by Socrates are placed under the category of artistic expression, while they should be put under that of imitation.

Just as a work can represent things without representing their extra-artistic space, all the while possessing its own plastic space, so can it represent people without representing their corporeal or physiognomic individuality, all the while possessing its own artistic individuality, and so it can represent people without representing their psychological expressions, all the while possessing an expressivity or its own expressive value. But in order to research and recognize this, one must have available a more general notion of expression than that of psychological expression, which will permit disjoining artistic expression from psychology.

The Naturalist Conception of Expression

It is all the more difficult to rid oneself of these traditional expectations because to the naturalist conception of *art*, a naturalist conception of extra-artistic expression is frequently associated, and because this association makes interpretation easy, even if the price for this ease is misunderstanding. Psychological expression—psychism through the body—can be regarded as a natural phenomenon and, as such, as spontaneous and universal. "Expressions are spontaneous but their depiction is most often artificial." (*Sculpture*, p. 697)

If the extra-artistic expression and its representation are both natural and therefore universal, my experience with psychological expression should allow me to immediately understand all expressions represented by every art in the world. Referring to contextual, historical, or ethnographic data would be needless. It is, then, as if observers were substituting a living double for the work of art, whose expression they would decipher as if on their neighbor's face.

Before looking for what exactly the represented expression is, it is necessary to ask whether the work represents an expression or not. The mere examination of the work does not permit a response. Two difficulties

make it clear that it is necessary to refer to contextual information. These two difficulties are raised by certain extra-artistic expressions, the delicate or subtle psychological expressions of certain weak or moderated emotional states, or of affective states that are intense but whose expression has been carefully held back, mastered, or even inhibited. In our daily life are we always able to distinguish between apathy, the zero degree of affective intensity, and lasting serenity, the willed mastery of intense emotion? How do we distinguish between the expression of an absence of emotion and the absence of an expression of emotion? This difficulty is doubled if the observer and the observed do not belong to the same culture. Thus, I have heard the French wife of a British academician say that, after many years, she still did not know whether her husband had mastered his emotions or did not feel any.

The second difficulty is a reinforcement of the first, since it no longer concerns interpreting a living face but a representation. How to distinguish between the representation of an inexpressive face and the absence of representation of an expressive face, between the absence of representation of expression and the representation of a very delicate, very slight expression? How to ascribe to reality what reverts to reality and to art what reverts to art?

These difficulties are not contrived. They have been raised by what Thompson (1973a) called "the aesthetic of the Cool." Often enough in Africa, and notably among the Yoruba of Nigeria and the Gola of Liberia (W. L. D'Azevedo, cited by F. Willett, 1971, p. 215), just as with the Ancients, an ethical value is attributed to moderation, self-mastery, to reserve or good manners. But how does one interpret the faces of the sculptures? For the means of faithfully and differentially representing these delicate and slight expressions belong to very complicated forms of naturalism. So, again according to Thompson (1973b), would one of the most important criteria of Yoruba aesthetics be "relative mimesis," the exact center between abstraction and an excessive naturalism?

Thus, indifference to the representation of very pronounced expressions, because they demonstrate very intense emotions that are condemned by certain ethics, might be considered a form of idealization. Among the Gola, the peak of success is the ability to remain nonchalant at the proper moment, to reveal no emotion whatsoever in situations where excitement or sentimentality would be acceptable, "to act, in other words, as if one's spirit were in another world." (W. L. D'Azevedo, loc. cit.) This last suggestion makes us think of "people as they ought to be." (Aristotle) "The academic standard face, which corresponds to the canon of Greek art, is experienced as beautiful . . . precisely because it lacks expression." (E. H. Gombrich, 1961, p. 351)

If the extra-artistic expression is subservient to conventions, as artistic representation is, only comparisons with contextual data allow us to answer these questions.

The Effects of Context

Let us consider the case in which the face of a mask, considered in isolation, represents no expression at all. One might believe that to attribute an expression to this face can only be illegitimate and ethnocentric. Not so, for reality does not let itself be locked into the dichotomy (once again seminegative) between a representation or lack of representation of expression.

The mask may be observed in isolation or in the context of its use. If, as a hypothesis, the mask represents no expression, it is only when it is in a museum that attributing an expression to it is illegitimate. E. H. Gombrich

(1985) refers back to the psychological concept of projection and shows with what ease we project an expressive and psychological value onto very simple, even rudimentary figures and recalls, inversely, that, according to Alberti, a painter feels the greatest of difficulties in differentiating a smiling face from a weeping one. The concept of projection inserts itself in the theory of expectations. When we "project," we abusively identify what we encounter with what we were expecting, and thus we believe we discover what we were expecting in what we encounter—while, in the case under consideration, it is not there. If the object and the observer belong to the same culture, the projection is intracultural and subjective. If they belong to different cultures, the inter- or transcultural projection is not only subjective but ethnocentric. It may call forth altogether fantastic remarks, as poetic as they might be—such as the captions by the sculptor Arman in the catalogue for the exhibit *Fragments du Sublime* [*Fragments of the Sublime*].

Paul Gebauer (1979, p. 156) comments on a mask that "itself has an expression somewhere between tears and laughter," its sculptor probably not even looking to overcome the difficulty Alberti takes so seriously. But "in order to appreciate the laugh the mask evokes, one must visualize it as worn by the dancer, dressed in a fashion to match that of a German director visiting the plantation." Himmelheber already suggested (1960a, p. 109) the same interpretation in a more general form: "When we see a masked person performing, we understand that some of the expressions of the mask's face are totally out of place. The mask, when in action, takes on different roles, each one of which gives it a different expression. The *ngedi* mask of the Dan, which imitates all sorts of actions of the people of the village, but also of the birds that pilfer the rice and of mischievous donkeys, changes its supposed expression every minute. It is a completely strange experience to see the mask in action and to have the impression that you are observing all the different expressions belonging to its diverse actions. The mask shows curiosity, has pity on someone, threatens the spectators. This being so, the artist gives the mask a neutral expression and leaves the interpretation to the imagination of the spectator." Are we thus reverting to the projection indicated by Gombrich?

That would be neglecting the effect of the context, which is not subjective. Now, gestalt psychology furnishes another solution. In this psychology of perception, the context of use becomes the perceptive field, the object a part of the field, and the effect of the context an effect of the field. Gestalt psychology establishes that a part of the perceptual field changes in aspect and significance depending on whether it is perceived in isolation or integrated into the totality, into the structure of the field. This is the way Maurice Merleau-Ponty (1948, pp. 281–82) interpreted Koulechov's famous experiment with the film scene reported by Jean Mitry:

"Taking a close-up of the actor Ivan Mosjoukine, whose rather vague look was purposely inexpressive, from an old film of Geo Bauer, he had three prints made of it. Then he successively spliced the first one to a shot showing a soup plate placed on the corner of a table; the second to a shot showing the corpse of a man lying face down; the third to a shot of a half-naked woman, stretched out on a sofa in a flattering and lascivious pose. Then, putting these three 'object-subject' bits together end to end, he showed the whole thing to viewers who had not been forewarned. Now, they all unanimously admired the talent of Mosjoukine, who 'so marvelously expressed the successive feelings of hunger, anguish, and desire.'"

It is obvious that the situation of the mask in the museum, canceling the effect of the context or field, makes room for subjective projection.

But the mask is not always an indeterminate substratum, receiving from its context of use one or various expressive values. It may share some expressive properties with other artistic elements of that context, the music and the dance (or the dancer, or better yet, the dancer dancing). Among the Baoule, four *goli* masks, coming out in pairs, represent male and female characters, younger and older, following a hierarchic order, at the summit of which the senior female mask appears. "Its movements and the accompanying music are a marvel of grace and harmony." (P. Nooter, 1985, p. 43) So, the face of this senior female mask is itself a borrowing from grace and harmony. Grace and harmony are expressive properties that do not have their own psychological value: they may be linked to very different psychic states, to objects without psychism, such as a tree, and they may belong to aesthetic objects coming from different arts. In the performed art that this masked dance is, these expressive properties are thus common to all three artistic elements—mask, dance, music—to the degree that the mask isolated from its context of use can preserve them. Thus, it is distinguished from the cases mentioned by Himmelheber and Gebauer, in that its expressive properties 1) do not represent those of its model; 2) are not expressive of psychological states; 3) are not "received," through the effect of the context or field, so that it can maintain them once extracted from this context. The first two differences show how the preceding interpretation remains linked to the idea of a representation of psychological expression.

There is an idea from which we must detach ourselves, as Laude has already advised (1968, p. 33): "The undeniable expressivity of African sculptors must be grasped, not on the level of depiction, of representation, imitation, or description, but on the level of an original arrangement of forms. . . . The expressive character does not come from feelings which the artist wanted to show demonstrably."

M. C. Dupré (1968) has shown that the *tsaye* (Teke) mask, round and flat, which presents an almost perfect symmetry, not only with respect to the vertical axis, as do the majority of masks, but also horizontally, is directly inspired by the dance for which it was produced. While dancing, the wearer of the mask turns cartwheels. This circular motion around a horizontal axis, abolishes the usual emphasis on verticality. Indeed, Jan Vansina mentions this case (1984, p. 127) in a passage expounding on the notion of performed arts.

One may wonder whether the tops of the *tyi wara* hairdos, worn by the Bamana dancers, do not share certain expressive properties with the dance, such as lightness, grace, a supple tension—in short, "grace and strength" (J. T. Brink, 1981, p. 25)—nonpsychological expressive properties that the antelope, which these sculptures represent, possesses, as does the dancer who wears them, imitating the leaps of the antelope. (This imitation is limited by the differences in corporeal configurations of human and animal, but the expressive properties related to the movement may be shared.) The notions of the performed arts and of expressive properties (L. R. Rogers, 1969) thus allow us, naturalism having been abandoned, to redirect our investigation.