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The Yoruba Ibeji Statue

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Introduction

The study of African art is based upon the fact that objects devoted to certain spirits or used in different societies produced by specific tribes or subtribes have their characteristic stylistic features and we are able by visual means to recognize them and differentiate one from another. If we narrow our selection and consider the works of the Yoruba, we have no difficulty in recognizing an object used in the Ifa or Shango cults or in the Galede or Ogboni society, and within the same order we recognize an Ibeji statue, used in the cult of the Ibeji *orisha*.

This identification follows two paths: one is the morphological evidence in terms of style, or configuration of forms which follow the same traditional rule;

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and the second is to place these accumulated observations in the framework of acquired knowledge as to their origin and use. But if we have information about origin and use and this is not borne out by a consistency of style referring to this information, the very data becomes irrelevant from the point of view of artistic classification and merit. (This will be a guiding principle in this study.)

Our aesthetic interest in the art of Africa is based upon the fact that we see them as high-quality works of art, independent of use and origin. This purely artistic consideration is rather recent, as a number of writers whose works we use in this study had a different approach to the works. We shall give two examples: JOHNSON, himself a Yoruba, writing in 1879, gives only four lines under "carving" (23, p. 122) in his 670-page-long study on the Yoruba. He states that they are "executed in a rather primitive way ... it is a matter of surprise that such artistic achievements can be displayed by an illiterate and with tools to simple and primitive." This attitude is confirmed later (1926) by TALBOT (47, III, 928–929), who in his four volumes under "carving" speaks mostly of furniture (stools). When it comes to "human and animal heads and figures" he simply states that they are "as a rule ugly and crude".

African sculptures, heretofore considered as ethnological objects, began to be considered from the artistic point of view in Paris around 1905 (by the Fauves artists), followed by the Cubists. One of the basic premises of this approach was and is that it was not the subject matter of the work nor our knowledge about its origin or the artist's intention which was important, but whether the work manifested a successful configuration *(Gestalt)* or not. Picasso rightly said that "when the form is realized, it is there to live its own life". In other words, the validity and artistic quality of a work of art is based upon our capacity and ability to experience what was in our field of vision, with complete suspension of all presuppositions. This is the phenomenological principle, presently the most prevalent approach to reality (43). The essential philosophical world-view (or orientation) underlying this attitude is the concept that reality is reflected within the individual, hence to apprehend in its primariness what we can see (Husserl's motto was "to the things themselves"), we need an empathetic feeling oneself into the work and the suspension of presuppositions, meaning the discarding of all information "about" the work – except for the classificatory or art-history point of view.

Hence from the artistic point of view, considering our general knowledge of African art, we can state that the Yoruba carver was one of the most prolific "artists" and that a large number of their work reflects a highly sophisticated talent. To understand why this observation can be made, we have first the large body of works to be studied from the *Gestalt* point of view, but if we are looking for "reasons" why such a large number was produced, we have to go back to "information" we have about the ethnic background of the Yoruba.

Our documentation indicates that the great productivity of the Yoruba carver was due to the fact that they had a large number of cults centered around various *osrishas* and a variety of secret societies in all of which different implements had to be used in order to carry out their religious rituals. For the African, masks, statues, bowls, trays, staffs in wood, ivory or brass were objects which he literally could not live without, as for him religion – in which the objects were essential focal points – was not a matter of option but a *way of life*. (It is interesting that LEONARD (26, p. 67) mentions that among the Niger Delta people there is no word for religion in their language.)

The *way of life* within the framework of an integrated ideology is a personal and spontaneous outpouring and uplift of the emotions from the individual to a spiritual level, but it is also manifest in all behavior patterns and in the *way*

of doing things. In the case of the African, his religio-magico-social concepts and the way of doing things is reflected in his socio-ritual behavior, and last but not least in the way of doing his carvings. Again, on an overall level the so-called animistic culture produced an overall unity in African art in general (architectonic, mainly using forms as idiom) differentiating it from the Oceanic or pre-Columbian art, his socio-ritual behavior is manifest in the various cults (in which the Ibeji cult is one), and each cult produced a different apparently recognizable style. But the way of life is ultimately a way of *Being as an individual,* and one of the most remarkable things is his way of doing the Ibeji statue, which reflects individuality in spite of the strong cult-tradition.

What we can study in the cult of Ibeji is the various uses in which the carved Ibeji figures finds its place and also the great number of variants within the overall stylistic unity. The question we shall raise is this: Can we relate what is evident in terms of differences in style to the differences we know about their use or origin?

For this reason we start first with the background, as this will give us the basis to see the differences in use. Only after we have such information can we study the styles in detail. This study of forms and their coordination will aim not only at classification of the Ibeji statues but will have broader implications. It is known that our power of observation is very limited, and often we discover details in a work of art which we have previously missed. One of the purposes of rigorous phenomenological observation and description is that it calls the attention of the reader to details – the parts that make up the whole – which help him to apprehend more of what is "given", in the hope that this will enlarge his own scope of experiencing the very same artwork and perhaps appreciate more the high artistic accomplishments of the unknown African carvers.

Background of the Ibeji Statues

About the Yoruba

When we speak of tribal art, we refer to an ethnic group of people. If, for instance, we take the extremely rich tribal art forms of the Dogon, the Bambara (both of Mali) and the Senufo (or Ivory Coast), we speak of about three million people. In the Dem. Rep. of the Congo, with its several hundred tribes, we known of about fifty tribal traditions, in each case speaking of a number less than 100,000 souls. When it comes to the art of the Yoruba, we speak of a large number of people. According to the 1963 census they numbered thirteen million, and as a comparison we may mention that the 1921 census showed two million and the 1931 census showed three million people. This early census already shows that if we take Ibeji statues of about fifty years old they were the products of the need of ritual objects in the Ibeji cult of about two million people.

But we have to consider also the subtribal divisions. Although they all speak the same language, each considers himself as belonging to a so-called subtribe, being an Egba, Oyo, Ijebu, etc.

In view of our interest in artistic stylistic differences we may bear in mind also the distribution of subtribes, and we use here TALBOT (47, IV, 14), who, working with the 1921 census, established the following (and we cite only those subtribes that are above the 10 percent):

Oyo, or the proper Yoruba	49%
Ekiti	16%
Egba and the related tribe	13%
Ijebu	11%

TALBOT actually lists nine major tribes and about 25 clans. FORDE (15) adds as additional important tribes the Ife-Elesha and Ondo, divides the Egba group into ten subtribes and the Yoruba proper (including the northern provinces) into eight subtribes. JOHNSON (23, p. XXII) limits his classification to the Egbados (Otto, Lagos, Jebu, Egbas) and the Yoruba proper (Ife, Ijesha, Ijamo, Efon, Idoko, Ibgomina, Ado).

The Yoruba, especially in the western state, is the most homogeneous area of the country, with few minorities. TALBOT (47, IV, 14) states that the Yoruba cannot be classified according to physical characteristics, only by the use of language, or by the evidence of similarities in customs arriving in clan distinction observing exogamy, or a traditional belief in common ancestry. It is also believed that the pride in each subtribal identity is such (and presently constitutes the basis for political action) that probably the subtribe is in reality a *tribal identity* within the large group of Yoruba having the same ideological concepts about certain aspects of life. FORDE (15) also states that the Yoruba is united more by language than by culture, although, as we shall see, the Ibeji cult, for one, is being accepted by most of them.

It is known that the Yoruba is fiercely individualistic, which accounts partly for the great variety in the styles of Ibeji statues. But JOHNSON (23, p. XXII) is more specific as he makes distinctions between the behavior patterns of the various subtribes (or tribes). He states that the Ijebus are dogged in perseverance and determination; the Egbas love ease and they adapt to new ideas rather quickly; the Ijesas and Ekitis have great physical strength, simplicity of manner and love for home; the Oyos are shrewd, intelligent, very diplomatic, cautious and with conservative tendencies.

We should retain the following data for our future considerations:

1. That the large number of Ibeji statues are due to the large number of Yorubas.

2. That despite subtribal differences there is a homogeneity in the Yoruba concept attached to the Ibeji cult – which will be studied in detail later.

3. There is a strong subtribal tendency toward identification manifest in different behavioristic patterns.

From a stylistic point of view, we can translate these findings in the following: The uniformity of ideology is manifest in the uniformity of the Ibeji statues in terms of general configuration (see the section "General Characteristics"). We shall see whether the subtribal identity can be related to observable differences in styles or is due to individual creativity.

We have to pay special attention to the fact that every work of art is a document of a different "handwriting", as this will have a bearing on our findings. This difference is what we call "talent", and as much as this concept cannot be defined, this is the ultimate key to the difference between a high-quality and low-quality work of art.

When JOHNSON speaks of the temperamental differences of the various subtribes, he is touching on an important aspect for the study of artworks. This is a particular mental characteristic of an individual that manifests itself in all human action, especially in artistic creativity, where its expression is spontaneous without any deliberation. Hence temperament distinguishes an individual as a person, without any national or religious identity. This is actually what we see when we study a work of art from the phenomenological point of view. It is interesting to quote Cézanne, who said that "art is nature seen by a temperament". If we wished to apply temperamental differences to three masters of modern art, we would classify the works of Picasso as dynamic, aggressive; the work of Braque as soft, harmonious, introspective; and those of Léger as cool, deliberate. We could also extend our differentiation as to information *about* subtribal behavioristic differences to these three artists, by noting that Picasso has a Spanish heritage, Braque comes from the Ile de France and Léger from the Normandy region.

The Yoruba Orisha

As indicated earlier, large parts of the Yoruba carved sculpture serves various *orishas*. The *orisha* is actually a deified spirit, a legendary hero, often a titular or guardian spirit. This spirit-worship is the basis for all African religio-magical beliefs and practices, and the spirit is considered the cause of events. But on a deeper level, the idea of a spirit acquires its importance because, based upon the process of faith, it is believed to be an immutable, absolute fact in its concreteness, and is experienced as such, in contrast to the transitoriness of actual everyday reality. The carved object becomes the embodiment of the spirit, its abode, but serves further to make reality more "real", concretizing it into something which can be seen and touched –

"handled" through the method of offerings and sacrifices. It is man's helplessness and fear of the unknown turned into rituals of positive action aiming not only at overcoming fear but to utilize this spirit (feared at first) to the benefit of the petitioner.

This very basic process to cope with life and its manifestations has many variations, as in the case of the Yoruba *orisha.* The worshiper of any *orisha* feels that he is "the child of *orisha*", which again fits into the general African concept that in the child's birth a "soul" of a deceased member of the family has returned. As much as this has a connection with the ancestor, the rite differs from the cult of the immediate family.

The adoption of an *orisha,* as BASCOM points out (1, p. 49), is by "inheritance", or "calling". This means that an individual adopts an *orisha* of his parents, or adopts one after consultation with the diviner. Basically, the *orisha* (to which sacrifices are made and great festivities installed once a year) is a supernatural protector that insures good health, long life and economic prosperity. Its worships aims at definite results, and if they are not forthcoming, often the *orisha* is abandoned. If, for instance, the diviner advises a woman that she may bear a child by adopting a certain *orisha* (and there are numerous *orishas* to overcome barrenness) and a child is born, he becomes the "child" and worshiper of this *orisha;* but if she remains childless, she abandons the *orisha.*

This does not mean that the faith in the absolute power of the spirit was abandoned. It means only that by misinterpretation of the diviner's "verse" (his statements are made in ambiguous form) the wrong *orisha* was chosen, and another is adopted. This is similar to the Bakongo habit; *e.g.,* that if a "fetish" does not work, they flog it, or destroy it, and adopt another. Faith in the spirit's power is unshakable.

To have a protective power for daily occurrences, where there is always an element of chance or danger, is rather universal, hence the use of amulets – even today in our own civilization. A comparison can be made with the role of about two thousand Christian saints, who are considered to be patrons (9). As the Ibeji is connected with childbirth, we may cite St. Catherine of Sweden for miscarriage; St. Erasmus for pain in childbirth; also St. Concordia for nursing-mother. In both cases, the *orisha* and the saint can be invoked and its help sought after on specific occasions. Those occasions do represent hazard and are filled with fear, and prayers and offerings in Africa are addressed to them in the hope that help will be forthcoming, or that the chance elements will be turned into benevolent certainty. In both cases the channel of faith is at work, and an autosuggestive belief can be achieved.

As to the origin of the word *"orisha",* DENNETT (6, p. 81) proposes different meanings. It may be composed of the words *"ori"* (summit or head) and *"sha"* (to select, choose). The next interpretation takes the

verb *"ri"* (to see) and *"isha"* (choice). The third version is the word *"ore"* (departed spirit) and *"isha"* (one who is chosen, elected, and by extension it means beautified departed one).

There are over four hundred *orishas* in the Yoruba mythology, which has one high god, Olorun. Compared with the Judeo-Christian anthropomorphic attributes attached to the one-God concept, this Olorun has more cosmological connotations and is more of an abstract "first cause" concept. For this reason, no cult and no statuary is dedicated to him.

The human race starts with a male principle *(obatala* or *orishala)* whose wife (the female principle) became *odudua,* and according to JOHNSON (23, p. 143), she (also spelled *oduduwa*) is to be considered as the ancestor of the Yorubas. Aganju, their son, married their daughter, Yemaja, who had a son, Orugan, who is known as the first king of the Yoruba. Another legend indicates that Orugan married his own mother, Yemaja, and from this marriage the main *orishas* were born (40).

ELLIS' nomenclature on *orishas* (8, pp. 35–84) is a follows: Olorun (sky god), Obatala (chief god), Odudua (chief goddess); from the marriage of Aganju and Yemaja came the *orishas:* Dada (vegetables), Shango (lightning), Ogun (war and iron), Olokun (sea), Olosa (lagoons), Oya (of the Niger River), Oshun (of the Oshun River), Oba (of the Oba River), Oko (agriculture), Oshosi (hunters), Oka (maintainer), Aje Shaluga (of wealth), Shankpanna (smallpox – there is also a Christian saint, Matthias, against smallpox), Orun (sun) and Oshu (moon). Among the chief gods the following must be added: Ifa (divination), Elegba or Eshu (spirit of mischief or chance). Among the minor gods: Shigidi (nightmare), Olarosa (of houses), Osanhin (medicine), Aroni (forest), Aja (wind), Oshumare (rainbow) and Ibeji (twins). It is interesting that many of the so-called basic documents of the Yoruba (6, 13, 23, 47) do not include Ibeji (8, 13, 27). JOHNSON (23, pp. 26–29) lists thirteen *orishas* without mentioning Ibeji. BASCOM (1), who lists about 25 *orishas,* not only fails to mention Ibeji but in his treatise on Joruba cult groups, the Ibeji cult is not mentioned, perhaps due to his investigations having been limited to two rather small communities.

Objects Used in the Orisha Cult

The art of Africa is intimately connected with the ideological-social background of its people. No tribe (or rather, nation) has such a rich variety of cult-objects as the Yoruba. It is because of the complexity of their religio-social system. If we take only the *orisha* cults, we know that at least in about a dozen *orisha* cults carved implements are used.

If we take as an example only the *orisha* cult of Shango, we see that in this cult (40) the following objects were used: neolotic celts, carved wood dance-wands of extremely large variety *(oshe* or *ose),* many of them topped by a double-ax symbol; gourd rattles *(shere* or *sere);* headgear worn by the priests *(ibauri),* decorated leather bags *(laba),* cylindrical stands, sacred urns *(oko),* amulets of white and red beads *(kele),* metal bells, etc. In the Ifa cult, a very large variety of decorated bowls *(agere* or *adjele)* are used with free-standing figures supporting the bowl; divination boards (*agbon* or *okoua*) with complex relief carvings on the board; clappers in ivory (also wood) heads *(ikin* or *abuntun,* also called *odousa)* placed next to the divination board, representing Eshu.

We have enumerated the different ritual objects in these two *orisha* cults to contrast more forcefully the fact that in the cult serving the Ibeji *orisha* only one implement was used: a small standing statuette of about 10 inches tall, basically of uniform style. What is interesting in this cult is that it is not the diversity of objects that is subject to study and eventual classification, but a single type of carving, and because of that the individual inventiveness of the creative person can be more effectively observed; to repeat, within a traditionally shared belief, an established protype for Ibeji statues. There will be another unusual occurrence in our study of the Ibeji – and again to show to what degree the personal style remains a "fingerprint" of an individual despite his being part of the community; namely, the *pairs of Ibeji,* created in identical style by the same carver – a rather rare case in our study of African art, where nearly all objects differ from each other[1].

The Twin Cult in Africa, a Survey

In order to acquire a perspective upon the Yoruba twin cult, we must place it in a larger frame of reference – namely, the African's attitude toward the birth and death of twins, and only secondarily the use of statuary in connection with the cult. Among the 200 million Africans (the so-called African Negro) there are numerous concepts which all of them share. We should recall that the spirit is considered the cause of an event and that the statue becomes the embodiment of this spirit. This becomes important, as the result is a homogeneity of their approach to life situations in general and reflects also in their attitude concerning the birth and death of twins.

In this respect, the work of LAGERKRANTZ (24) becomes of great

[1] The emergence of personal style within a given tribal style tradition was of great interest to the author and he published a number of papers on this subject (Nos. 37, 38, 39, 41, etc.).

help, for he studied several hundred African tribes with reference to their attitudes toward twin-birth. The birth of the twins was considered unnatural, inexplicable, hence mysterious, and such an advent was feared. As we said earlier, this unnatural event was attributed to a spirit – in the case of the Yoruba to the *orisha* Ibeji. Hence a statue was made to localize the "cause" of the event in order to cope with it.

Concerning the general attitude toward twins, two actions were adopted by the African: one, to eliminate the twins and often their mothers (this was adopted by more than sixty tribes); the other was to welcome such an event (and this was adopted by over 200 tribes) in order to overcome the residual fear of the mysterious and to make a joyful event of the fearful one. We shall see that some tribes adopted also an in-between attitude.

Unwelcomed Twins

Among the African tribes that do *not* welcome twins, two basic attitudes prevail:

1. The twin-birth is caused by the unfaithfulness of the mother, hence they have two fathers (44, p. 500).

2. The twins are caused to be born by malevolent spirits, and for this reason they represent danger to the family and relatives (24).

To alleviate this misfortune, usually both twins are killed, sometimes only one, and the mother chased into the bush – in one tribe her breasts are cut off. (The death of twins will be discussed separately.)

Unwelcomed Twins in Yorubaland and the Neighboring Tribes

It is of interest to know what happened before the twins were considered to be of good fortune and especially the attitude of the neighboring tribes. JOHNSON (23, p. 25) states that the custom of killing the twins prevailed all over the Yorubaland in early times, which is also confirmed by TALBOT (47, III, p. 722), who adds that they killed the twins because such a birth was considered unnatural and it was believed that they were the embodiment of malevolent spirits. In some regions only the youngest was kept alive and the other was killed. Because the spirit of the killed twin was supposed to torment the living one, a "wooden statue was made". It is interesting that as much attention as TALBOT pays to the twin-birth – and we shall make reference to it sev-

eral times – this is the only time he mentions a statue without identifying it with Ibeji. In 1856 (reports Consul Campbell), in Lagos, not only the twins but their mother and father were killed. At Ondo, twins were placed in a pot and thrown into the bush. At Ekiti the twins were killed but the mother was considered innocent.

Among the Jekri, the mother was washed and purified and sacrifices were made until she bore another child. TALBOT quotes Niendael (who was in Nigeria in 1701) that at Akebo, on the Benin River, mother and twins were sacrificed to a certain devil of the bush, but if the father was a prominent person, a female slave was killed instead of the mother. Among the Sobo, one of the twins is kept alive and the mother was purified. The Ijaw uses the same purification method for the mother, but here both twins were killed. Among the Ibo (Agbor Ika), mother and twins were allowed to remain, but a he-goat (with a very elaborate ritual) was sacrificed and the mother purified – the same he-goat sacrifice having been practiced among the Ibo of Dagema. In Onitsha, twins were thrown into the bush. There were in-between uses, as if by tolerance. Among the Ibo of Owerry division, the twins' mother (with her twins) went to her family, sacrifices were made, her house was torn down and a new one was built when she returned. At Ogwashi-Oku mother and twins had to shave their hair and remain confined in a small house for 24 days. The same occurred among the Ibibio, who in the older days killed the twins, but later allowed them to live in little settlements in the bush.

It is noteworthy to which degree within one tribe or within a single territorial unity the attitude to the twin-birth is changing. LEONARD (26, pp. 258, 463) confirms that most of the people of the Niger Delta area (the Ibo, Ijo, Ibibio) considered the birth of twins due to malignant spirits and killed the twins and drove the mother, as unclean, out of the territory. In contrast, the Western Ibo and the Igara (26, p. 462) welcomed the birth of twins with joy. Among the Ibo at Ebu and Alla (47, III, 725), the twins were welcomed, and of one died the mother had to make a sacrifice to it, since "two are really one" – meaning the soul is manifested in two bodies. Among the Bini the twins were welcomed, and TALBOT also writes that the present Oba (1926) had four wives, all having had twins – also, triplets were fairly common. Nyendael also reported that among the Bini, twins were considered a good omen and the king was informed. The father engaged a wetnurse to suckle the second child. But the Binis living near Ekiti killed the twins.

The same ambivalence is noted in Northern Nigeria. MEEK states (29, II, 255) that the Ngizim (about 100 miles from Kano) regard the birth of twins extremely lucky, in contrast to the Bura and Pabir (about 100 miles further east), the twins are considered the reincarnation of bad spirits.

Welcomed Twins in Africa, – Applied to the Yoruba

Among the many African tribes studied (24), there are various reasons why twins were welcomed and uniform socio-religious concepts and rituals attached to them.

1. One of the basic psychological reasons to welcome them lies in the ambivalent feeling connected with their birth and death. They were feared and in order to escape from this fear it was transformed into joy.

2. They were considered as being of heavenly origin, having supernatural power, and they were often connected with fertility, good harvest, good luck or success.

3. In order to personalize this force connected with the twins, a god was assigned as their guardian.

4. It was believed that the twins had *one soul,* formed one unity, and if this coherence was interrupted by the death of one of them, through various rituals it must be reestablished, otherwise the surviving twin could not live with only half his soul. This, among many other concepts, was also one of the principles of the Yoruba Ibeji cult.

In our study of African customs and rituals we have often found that universally prevailing occurrences, observed empirically, are treated by the African so as to solve a particular problem. One of them is the universally observed fact (many studies in psychology are dedicated to it) that twins experience a compulsive sense of belonging (to the highest degree between identical twins) and intense feeling of interdependence. As a result, when one of the twins died, the other was extremely sad. The African explained it by a rationalization – namely, that twins, having one soul, had to experience just that. The creation of the statue served to resolve the sorrow.

5. The survey of African tribes indicated that at least 75 tribes give *fixed names* to the twins. This is also the case among the Yoruba, and we shall speak of it in another section. "Fixed names" means to attribute a "known" quality to something that otherwise would remain unknown and is comparable to "labeling" events in order to recognize categories.

But the fixed name is also practiced in the Yorubaland when a single child's birth occurs. JOHNSON (23, p. 79) indicates that the naming of a child is an important affair and is attended with ceremonies. When a child is born under particular circumstances, it is believed that he was born with a name *(amutoruwa),* and the very same name is given to all children born under similar circumstances. JOHNSON enumerates about thirty such circumstances – among them the twin-birth, when a child is born late, born on a holy day, or born after the father died.

6. The tribes who welcome twins handle them in exactly the same manner, and this is adopted by the Yoruba. There is a smaller number

of tribes which also observes the custom that the twins have to be married at the same time.

7. Among the 200 tribes who welcome twins there are about thirty (15 percent) that make twin statues – although few are known.

Reports on the Yoruba Twin Cult

One of the earliest documents (from 1836) that mentioned the twin statue is from LANDERS (25, II, 200), which states that when a Yoruba child dies (not only in the case of twins) the mother wears suspended from her neck a carved figurine as a token of mourning and carries this statuette for six, eight or twelve months after the death of the child and talks to it and cares for it as if it were alive. He also added that no one would be induced to part with these "little memorials".

ELLIS reports (8, p. 80) – and this is confirmed by TALBOT (47, III, Tab. 22) – of the existence of twin figurines and the fact that they fixed names. MEEK (29, II, p. 78) also states that the twin (not the mother) received a carved figure so that he should not feel lonely or disturbed by the soul of the deceased. FROBENIUS (18, p. 26) writes about the general feeling of joy at twin-birth and also studies various customs connected with the Ibeji statue.

Many Yoruba share the belief (15, p. 59) that twins are like a certain black monkey, named Edun Dudu or Edun Orikun (meaning "black twin" or "seaside twin"), living in the mangrove bushes or at the seaside. ELLIS (8, p. 80) connects the name of the twins with this monkey and writes that one of the twins is accordingly named Edon or Edun – which is not confirmed by any other documentation. Although these monkeys are not considered as *orishas,* nevertheless fruit-sacrifices are made to them. DENNETT (6, p. 35) also states that not only twins and their parents, but all other worshippers of the twin-god Ibeji cannot kill this type of monkey or eat its flesh. In Porto Novo (47, III, Tab. 22), it is the mother who offers sacrifices to the monkey until the twin are grown up. (In Porto Novo there are twin statues with double [Janus] heads.)

JEFFREYS (22) starts out by finding certain similarities with old Egyptian customs, such as the coronation ceremony, the sun cult, the ram-headed god, mummies, mutilation of male and female genitalia among the Yoruba, Jukon, Ibo and Baganda, and states that the ancient Egyptian attitude toward twins was as ambivalent as among the Africans. He cites that Horus produced the twins Osiris and Ra, who were venerated but were also held responsible for disaster. Egyptian twins also received stereotyped names, as the fixed-name custom among the Yoruba. The only exception is that in Egypt the destruction of one or both did not occur.

LUCAS (27, p. 160) also mentions, in addition to Osiris and Ra, the twin gods representing the souls of Shu and Tefnut and indicates that the very concept of "one soul in two bodies" is similar to the ancient Egyptian concept. JOHNSON (23, p. 6) states that the "only safe deduction" we can make is that "they sprang from Upper Egypt or Nubia". In a study on the Shango sculptures (40), we have been able to trace the origin of Shango to a Meoritic legend according to which the founder of Nubia was Shango or Oba-Kush, and PALMER (33, p. 252), commenting on the Jebba figure, identified the vulture on the helmet of this figure as a Meoritic vulture. TALBOT (47, I, Chap. 1) speaks in general terms of the striking resemblance between the Nigerian Egyptian cults and believes that the ancient Egyptian concept actually formed the substratum of their beliefs.

Studying the various stylistic features of African sculpture, it was long evident that many Egyptian influences can be detected (36, p. 68), not speaking of the general principle, the statue being venerable because of the indwelling spirit being the basic concept of the Egyptian statuary. In our study on the Ashanti Akua'ba (41) we have been able to link this influence also to the Egyptian "soul" concept, and to the Ankh sign.

The Ibeji Orisha

We have already written that the Ibeji is one of the minor *orishas*. This *orisha* is a tutelary, hence guardian and protective god of the twins. According to ELLIS (8, p. 80), the name "Ibeji" derives from the word "bi" (to beget – FARROW, 13, p. 58, indicates *"ibi"*, meaning birth) and *"eji"*, meaning two. (ELLIS also states that Ibeji is similar to the Hoho of the Ewe tribes.)

One legend relates (50, p. 253) that the Ibeji cult can be traced back to a King Oluasho, who was supposed to have lived 320 years and had 1,460 children. What is noteworthy in this legend is that three times nine of his wives bore twins on the same day. Another legend (17, p. 25) speaks of a twelfth-century king *(alafin)*, Ajaka, who had a wife who bore twins. Not wanting to destroy them according to the prevailing custom, he sent the mother and children with a retinue to a remote part of the land, the present Ode Ondo, and hence established the precedent of saving the twins, perhaps promulgating a new law. (We shall see in our section on the genesis of the Ibeji cult that this might have been one of the reasons for the protection of the twins.)

We have no knowledge of an image of the Ibeji *orisha* itself, although LUCAS indicates (27, p. 157) that in a certain part of the Yorubaland there exists an image of this god. But – and this is remarkable – the Ibeji statue is not the image of the demi-god, or the

spirit of the orisha, which is subject to reverence, but the soul of the departed twin residing in the carved figure. This is probably due to the fact that the twins during their lifetime were considered (and depending on the location within the Yorubaland) the representatives of the god and as such were subject to worship. This is confirmed by a report that in Ibadan the twins are not only respected but are actually subject to worship during their lifetime. At Erupo, between Lagos and Badagry, there is a temple dedicated to the *orisha* Ibeji to which twins and their parents are supposed to make at least one pilgrimage during their lifetime.

To show the nature of the Ibeji cult, we have to contrast it with the cult of Eshu or Shango *orishas* that have sculptural representations. The Ibeji cult has a strong family nature and is connected not only with the birth and death of twins but also the well-being of the whole family. The very twin-interdependence is again a "personal" concern of two individuals. Against this the Shango is connected with lightning, Eshu is connected with an abstract concept of chance – hence carvings were made so as to be able to approach them, most frequently to appease them.

The offerings made to Ibeji are also partly to appease the spirit, showing again the ambivalent nature of the Ibeji cult. The difference in the nature of the spirit cult is also reflected in the carvings serving these cults. The Shango or Ifa cult is many-faceted, they have many symbols connected with them, hence we have a great variety of "implements", as indicated earlier. The Ibeji cult is a one-focus cult, connected with a day-to-day family, hence human happenings, and for this reason we have a one-aspect carving: a 10-inch standing figure.

The Twinning Incident and its Relation to the Ibeji Statue

FROBENIUS wrote (18, p. 64), "I don't know whether in the Yorubaland there are more twin-births than in other parts of the earth, or one only has this impression because here one attaches such an importance to twins." FROBENIUS' impression was confirmed on statistical grounds by a paper published in 1961 by A. SCHEINFELD (35). This has demonstrated that the Yoruba have a twinning incidence (1960) of 4.5%, the American Negro (1956–58) of 1.4%, the Johannesburg Negro 2.7%, the American white 0.9%, and the American in general 1.15%. The lower rate of the American Negro is explicable by the fact that their racial genes were diluted from 25 to 30 percent with white genes[2].

[2] Dr. P. P. S. Nylander of the Dept. of Obstestrics and Gynecology of the University College Hospital of Ibadan, Nigeria, confirms that in 1969 the twinning incidence among the Yoruba in Western Nigeria is 45 per thousand maternities.

In addition to the above general data, there are other statistical considerations explaining the above information. The chances of having twins are four times greater for mothers aged 35 to 39 years, and if they had several children previously, their chance again increases. The fact that in the present Western white population early and limited child-birth is preferred reduces the chance of twinning.

The factors that cause the occasional twinning in humans, mammals, and birds are still obscure. For this reason we have no explanation for the fact that the Yoruba has the highest twinning incident in the world (5). But we can establish the following facts:

1. That actually we have a statistical basis for the large number of twins in Yorubaland, in fact the largest in the world.

2. The prenatal and infantile mortality in case of twins in the Western countries is about five times that of a single birth (31), and this may be multiplied due to African village sanitary conditions. It is further reported (47, p. 335) that among the Yoruba the infantile mortality rate of singles reaches an extremely high degree during the child's first three to four years; it is also reported that only 50 percent of the Yoruba children of single birth survive. The death rate can be multiplied when we add the complex situation of twin-birth and consider that half of the twins are born prematurely and are thus likely to be injured at birth and have short lives. The fact is that very few twins reach adulthood in the Yorubaland.

3. Not only do many twins die but both twins die, often at the same time or shortly after each other, which may be why we have a number of Ibeji-pairs, the parents going to the same carver to order a pair. This subject, however, will be further studied.

4. It is believed among the Yoruba that the second twin is the stronger, and this customary belief seems to be supported by the fact that there exists a physiological ascendancy among the twins. This may also give a clue as to why such a deep interdependence exists among twins.

5. Another consideration is that on a universal level the racial difference in *identical* twinning (monozygotic twins) is relatively small, but the great racial difference occurs in fraternal twins (dizygotic twins). (The identical twins are formed from the same fertilized ovum and are always of the same sex, the fraternal twins originate in two different fertilized ova and may or may not be of the same sex.) The African Negro has twelve to seventeen times greater dizygotic twins than the Japanese, for instance, where such an incidence is two twins per thousand.

The high percentage of twin-birth and death has to be placed now in a group of people, the Yoruba, numbering over ten million. As to the African women's fecundity statistical study (52) indicates that the

rate of pregnancy per woman is from 3 to 8 children, although this does not include the Yoruba woman. We can nevertheless assume that multiple births for the Yoruba woman are in line with the general African tendency. If we take now 4.5 percent index for twin birth and apply it to one generation of twenty-five years, we have a very large number of twin-births. Considering further the high mortality rate, it is permitted to state that the Yoruba has not only the highest rate of twin-birth but also the highest rate of twin-death, probably the highest universally. This information only supports our contention that the Yoruba had a real problem on their hands because of the high percentage of twin-birth and death, and that consequently the need to establish a solution was a necessity. Further, it is evident that the Yoruba had a constant need for Ibeji carvings, and this – to repeat – accounts for the large number of existing Ibeji statues.

The very fact that this situation created a great tradition of carving one type of statue has many implications. One is that the form of the statue was prescribed, handed down from generation to generation, and the young carver started his career by copying existing prototypes. The act of carving became the carvers' second nature, to use Boas' term; it became a "motor action". This means that little attention was paid to the very traditional forms – they were handed down as "samples" and were hence taken for granted. As the creative act has the nature that the "artist" becomes engulfed in his concentration upon his tools and acts, a degree of ego-forgetfulness can occur in which the very essence of man, manifest in his temperamental differences may, so to speak, "slip" into the work, and hence find a concretization in it. This is similar to the violin virtuoso who because of his complete mastery of his instrument is able to center all his attention on "how" to render the true essence of the composition.

This becomes more interesting if we consider the difference between the Western and African social conditions. The fact that in our civilization the uniquely personal is the key to artistic creation means that there is a cultural trend to be unique and actually men strive for this uniqueness. This is the basis for the phenomenological question to equate one's authentic self with authentic existence. In Africa, and especially among the Yoruba, the cultural climate was the contrary: it is a tradition-dictated, religiously regulated existence in which the individual submits to the communal order, loses his unique personal world-view, against which he gains in security. In this perspective, the remarkable fact is that in spite of the conformity and the traditional forms and the communally shared beliefs the personality of the carver manifests itself without being conscious of the fact, which indicates that if a carver is a truly creative person, his individuality is stronger than the traditional conditioning.

The Genesis of the Ibeji Cult, a Hypothesis

We have no evidence of why and when the Ibeji cult started. We can, however, consider the following data:

1. The two legendary traditions, already cited, when the killing of the twins by the high authority of a king was abolished might have been the starting point establishing a new tradition, and this tradition was orally transmitted from one generation to another. (Whether the kings really lived is unimportant.)

2. The Egyptian influence has a high degree of probability.

3. The high percentage of twin-birth and death are definite facts and they created a social situation with which the people had to cope.

4. This situation was received with ambivalent feelings, and it was shared by all the African tribes as indicated. The twin-birth being considered unnatural, it was first feared and the twins killed. Partly to overcome this fear, the birth was acclaimed as a blessing. (More will be said on this subject.) To make more "binding" and "confirmed" a whole cult was invented, fitting well into the already existing system of *orisha* cults, and celebrated with elaborate rituals. As a social phenomenon it was an important change, and a long-established tradition of killing the twins was changed despite the neighboring tribes, who still eliminated their twins. These social regulations have to be placed in a condition according to which the Yoruba had to face for a long period of time the large number of twin-birth and death. As usual within an ordered society, new conventions are the results of trials and errors, adopting those that actually work the best. The rules and regulations aim before all to leave little to chance and to live best within a given situation. The Ibeji cult was the result of solving the twin-birth and death situation by means of religio-social regulations. They also must have realized that if they would have followed the old rules they would have inflicted great pain on a large number of their group.

These assumptions might find a confirmation if we look at the development of religious attitudes at the beginning of human history because of the great similarities on basic premises. If we read SMITH (45) we can see that the religious needs of man *(homo religioso)* have been the same all over the world; first to become conscious of a situation, second to cope with it through unpremeditated action (ritual). The cause, or the ideological reason, for the specific *condition* for which the ritual was invented was often ignored or offered in a highly rationalized (often mythological) manner.

SMITH writes that "the mysterious perplexity which appears strongly to the imagination, exciting sentiments of awe and reverence" although considering them a "manifestation of the divine or demoniac" (p. 111). Here we have the mystery of the unnatural twin-birth and the fear and

reverence, but also the trend to "transform the terror into friendly(ness)" resulting in the adaption of joyfulness for the birth of twins. It is also stated that "nothing appears so strongly as religion to the conservative instinct", and that religion exists "for the preservation and welfare of society" (p. 29). The Ibeji cult aimed at preserving the well-being of the twins and their mothers, especially because the twinning incident was so extremely high. It also served to preserve the social order. SMITH speaks also of a "stated and permanent alliance" with the forces causing the particular phenomenon, adhering to "regulative rules and conduct" (p. 29). The ritualistic codified use of the Ibeji statue – as we shall enumerate them – served exactly this purpose.

We can see that the Ibeji cult was not a unique religious institution but that it followed the general and universal patterns of religious practices and rituals. The irregularity of twin-birth and death was "regulated" according to universal practice, fitting also into a general Yoruba religious pattern connected with birth-irregularities. JOHNSON, for instance, (23, p. 26), points out that albinos, dwarfs, the lame, the hunchbacks, the deformed in one way or another, were regarded as sacred to Orisala, who was believed to have been the "assistant" to the high god Olorum in forming man.

One of the most important roles of religion was to "regulate" life conditions. The bewildering array of mysterious, often frightening occurrences in life and man's inability to find explanations for them forced him to rely upon such credos, which, through the channel of faith, were accepted as solutions for a problem. The believer looks at his existence from a religious frame of reference, which is entirely different from a scientific one. In each case religion endeavored to "regulate" a social condition, to bring order into what appeared to be chance, and this was one of the most important activities of the Yoruba in constituting the Ifa divination. In the case of twin-birth and death again a "solution" was offered by placing the responsibility upon the *orisha* Ibeji and by "forcing" the residing spirit of the statue, by means of offerings, to serve human beings. The empirical observation of the twins' interdependence was explained with great psychological insight in terms of one-soul-for-one-pair-of-twins, and for this purpose was invented the Ibeji statue.

The fact that the Yoruba was able to "transform the terror into friendly(ness)" was not a unique but a universal religious scheme. But such a change is only possible because it is based on a universal modality of thought-process according to which man is able, in his observation of external and internal reality, to change his *frame of reference*. Looking at the same phenomenon from different points of view, his interpretation will be different. What appeared and was interpreted as tragic becomes joyful. This change of attitude also has a conditioning

effect, so that the newly adopted point of view becomes natural, demanding no effort, which the first change needed.

Ritualistic Use of the Ibeji Statues

There are a great number of uses connected with the Ibeji cult. This may be due to the fact that our information (see Bibliography) came from different periods of time, from different observational points of view and the fact that we deal with several millions of people extended over a large territory. [BASCOM (1), for instance, in 1937–38, covering Ifa (27,000 inhabitants), and Igana (8,000), did not report on the Ibeji cult.]

Birth of Twins

1. TALBOT states (47, II, 357) that at every birth, the Yoruba makes a special prayer to the mother's *orisha* for help. Third day after birth the Ifa priest gives the name of the particular deity who will protect the child during its life and must be worshipped by him.

2. When twins are born, this condition (23, p. 80) is "invested with an air of great importance or has a halo of deep mystery" because twins are "credited with extra-human powers". The rituals performed at any birth acquire a special meaning in view of the danger (including their possible early death). Usually an elderly woman is called first, one who has already given birth to twins, to bring offerings to the twins. The *babalawo* (Ifa priest and diviner) assigns immediately the *orisha* Ibeji to protect the twins.

3. Although the general statement is that the birth of twins is considered among the Yoruba as joyful, THOMAS (48) states that in Lagos the birth of two males is considered as unlucky, two females as lucky, and male and female birth is neutral in regard to luck. He also said that if triplets are born the third child's name is always Idowu.

4. A remnant of the older Yoruba belief – namely, that the birth of twins is a misfortune, is reflected in two data. One is that the making of the Ibeji statue is partly aimed at preventing the mother against such a misfortune happening again. The second (23, p. 80) says that it is important that a mother who had twins should have another child whose fixed name is Idowu, the same as the third child's name in case of triplet-birth. It is said that if the twin's mother does not bear an Idowu in due course, she may go mad, and for this reason all mothers of twins are never at ease until in due course an Idowu is born.

5. At any occasion the naming of the Yoruba child is important. For the twins it is of greater importance because of the sacred nature of

their birth, and it is the eighth day after their birth that this ceremony takes place. The Yoruba has various names (three or four) according to family tradition. The first is the name one is "born with" *(amutorunwa)*. For the twins the firstborn is always called Taiwo (composed of the wording of *to-eiye-wo,* meaning "he who has the first taste of the word", and this name is applicable to both sexes. (JOHNSON also indicates that the name of Taiwo may also be Ebo (23, p. 80).) The second child's name is always Kainde or Kehinde, meaning "he who lags behind". The younger twin is considered to be the older (firstborn is younger), as it is believed that the firstborn was weaker and was sent by the stronger to announce his forthcoming birth.

Death of Twins

6. The death of one or both of the twins is considered a great misfortune, and at the burial a number of ceremonies have to be performed, the purpose of which is that the soul of the dead should not get attached to the living.

7. The infant or infants (one or both twins) are generally not buried in the house (23. p. 137), as are adults, but their dead bodies are thrown into the nearest bush. The dead infant is called *Abiku* (born to die) and is supposed to be in the company of young demons. Here again the ambivalence about the twins is manifest – at one hand their birth is a blessing, on the other hand their death is connected with malevolent spirits.

8. JAMES HICKS, who lived two years in Lagos and had a twin in his household, was able to collect the following information (21). In the big cities the twins are buried in a special part of the cemetery. In smaller cities the dead twin is buried next to the house where the living twin is. According to this informant, a pair of twin statues are made at the birth of the twins. When one of them dies, he is buried together with an Ibeji statue representing the living twin. The mother of the surviving twin carries the Ibeji representing the dead twin. In case the second twin dies, he is buried next to the first, but the Ibeji statue will be kept by the mother. Although this information was given by a Yoruba twin, no confirmation is yet available.

Customs Connected with Ibeji Statues

9. The same *babalawo* who named the twins after their birth is consulted when one or both of the twins die and he prescribes the carving of an Ibeji statue (13, p. 27). (See also our section "Pairs of Ibeji".)

10. We shall repeat the fact that the fundamental concept under-

lying the cult of twins and the statue is that twins have one soul and if one of them dies, the survivor is left with half his soul and hence would not survive. Through the use of Ibeji, both souls are reunited (22, p. 80; 23, p. 65; 24, p. 58, etc.).

11. Further evidence for the existing ambivalence in connection with the birth of twins is indicated by the fact that the Ibeji cult has special offerings (fowl, beans, yam, oil, and Kola – (6, p. 187) – aiming to *appease* their spirit, to control the forces that are responsible for the birth and death of twins. If offerings were neglected, the Ibeji statue would not function in terms of protecting the surviving twin, or fulfilling any other role. This sacrificial act is in line with a general concept among African tribes – namely, that the neglect of a spirit (often ancestral) brings about the wrath of this spirit. (The sacrifice, one of the most universal customs of early mankind, basically means to give away something of value, hence constituting an act of expiation for the underlying – unconscious or rationalized – sense of guilt.)

12. In certain parts of Yorubaland an Ibeji statue is made not only when one of the twins dies, but also when a single-birth child dies.

13. The carrying of the Ibeji statue by the mother (until the surviving twin takes over) serves also to protect the mother. If she fails to perform the act prescribed by the Ibeji cult, she can never again bear children (15, p. 140). Furthermore, by carrying the Ibeji statue, the mother also finds consolation for the loss of her child or children (in her belief the Ibeji is alive).

14. The statue is carved in the same sex as the deceased and is also named after it.

15. When the carver finishes the statue, the mother fetches it among drumming, singing, dancing and feasting (19). The figure is tied on her back in the same manner as a live child is carried – in case of both twins' death, the mother ties one in front and the other behind her wrapper. FROBENIUS (18, p. 27) relates that he met a woman carrying two Ibejis and that when she met people in the street they offered her small gifts (kola nuts, cowries or small change). To meet a twin-mother was considered good luck; also, out of fear of eventual harm, the twins' spirit was appeased.

16. The Ibeji statues must be handled like a living child. They are washed and rubbed, for this reason the facial features of many statues are worn off (Figs. 29, 30, 32, 33, 34, 35, 50, 51). Because the statues were often carried on the body of the mother, many statues bear the sign of heavy use (Figs. 50 and 51), which in turn contribute to their patina. The statues must also be fed (as the living child) and it is reported that when a mother breast-fed the surviving twin, she equally fed the Ibeji statues. They are also oiled, rubbed and provided with clothing, but we shall speak about this in other sections of this study.

If the statue is not properly handled, it may endanger the life of the surviving twin.

17. Rows of beads are also found on many Ibeji statues, but here again more detail will be given in the appropriate section.

18. The Ibejis are *put to rest* not on the ground, but on a raised platform or on a mat. The great care for the installation of the Ibeji in the hut aims to protect not only the surviving but the life of the parents. They are often put to bed with the mother.

19. Dr. DAVID MORLEY (London), who spent many years in Nigeria, gave the following information: a. The Ibeji cult is one of the strongest among the Yoruba, practiced both by pagans and Christians. Usually one of the oldest women in the family is responsible for it. b. The statue is carved after the death of one or both of the twins. c. There is a celebration several times a year for the twins in which beans play an important role. Dr. MORLEY adds that as "the twins are particularly likely to be undernourished, this seems a very sensible custom". d. In Imesi, which has a population of about 6,000, there are two Ibeji carvers, and they carve their statues only when a twin dies.

20. In case of the death of one of the pair, the surviving twin, as soon as he grows up, takes over the care of the statue from the mother. The attachment to the figure lasts as long as the surviving twin lives. It is reported that a Yoruba woman carried her Ibeji, representing her dead sister, for fifty years.

21. The additional role of the Ibeji in certain parts of Yorubaland is that they are considered protectors of the surviving twins against sickness and other misfortunes. They also have power for fertility.

22. Before an Ibeji could be sold, a new one had to be made and a special ritual performed so as to enable the spirit of the deceased to be transferred into the new statue (13, p. 27). The old one became desanctified, or "soulless".

23. Dr. IMPERATO of Bamako gave the following information: An old Bambara blacksmith who lives in the Farako district in the Circle of Segou told him that about thirty years ago, before the Muslim influence was not as widespread as it is today, the making of twin figures in the usual Bambara "abstracted" style was usual, as the twinning there was rather common. There are similarities with the Yoruba customs: after one of the twins died, the mother ordered a figurine in the sex of the deceased twin; it was clothed, fed and washed like the surviving twin and was given to the living one, who kept it until adulthood. A difference from the Yoruba custom is the fact that the traditional name for these carvings was *lassana* (boy) and *foune* (girl); also, that when both twins died at a later date, no figurine was made, and if the surviving twin died at a later date, the original carving was thrown away.

Dr. IMPERATO further indicates that in the cercle of Bougouni, instead of statue, the *Bambara* people use a rod with a round knob at the top end. This rod represents the dead twin. The surviving twin carries the rod around with him all the time and keeps it even after marriage. There is a similar twin cult among the Malinke of Kayes.

Concerning the Bambara we have an additional information (51) according to which the twins are believed to have a mysterious power. Prayers are addressed to them to protect the family and "fetishes" are made immediately after their birth, either in wood or pottery – but no description is offered as to the form and shape of these protective objects. A rather unusual information is contained in the same paper, namely that when a pair of twins is composed of a girl and a boy, before the girl gets married the brother has relations with her. If the twins are boys their wives are shared.

We may cite two more instances as to the statues used in the twin cult:

Dr. HOLAS (54) indicates that the *Senufo* of the Ivory Coast use small statues in their twin cult, executed in the typical Senufo style. It is not possible, however, to determine by stylistic evidence which statue was used in such a cult. It was the diviner who assigned the role of such a small statue to the protection of the twins.

Mr. TRIANDE (55) reproduces in his catalogue for the Algiers 1969 exhibition two figures used by the Nounouma sub-tribe of the *Gurunsi* of Upper Volta, in a style clearly distinguished from other Upper Volta statuary. They are of a rather rough execution and their height is about ten inches, similar to the Ibeji size. Mr. TRIANDE, in a verbal communication, indicated that these statues were used exactly as the Ibeji statues, namely they were carved after one of the twins died so as to protect the surviving twin.

Pair of Ibejis

All documentations (see Bibl) agree that an Ibeji statue is made when one of the twins dies. There are, however, a few reports on exceptions, especially because they are connected with the "pair" of twins. Under "pair" we understand not merely statues of the same style but that without any doubt we can see from the evidence of "handwriting" that they were made by the same carver. From a stylistic point of view we do not consider a "pair" when a female and male statue is "paired", although their stylistic features would class them in the same category. We may also add that compared with the large number of single figures in different styles, the pairs are less in number, and here again there are more of a different sex (Fig. 51).

Dr. IMPERATO (20) indicates that although most of the Lagos in-

formants did agree that the statues are made after the death of one of the twins, he was able to speak in Abeokuta to an Ibeji carver who said that Ibejis are ordered when the twins are born. This was later confirmed by another informant (21). This means that they fit into the category of "pairs", as they would be carved by the same man. The Ibeji carver further indicated that it is the mother or a member of the family who orders the statues after the twin's birth, and it is she who indicates what hairdo the statue should have. The statues are kept in the home and various charms (mostly beads) are attached to them for the purpose of protecting the twins from harm. If one of the twins dies the mother begins to carry the statue with her and feeds and cares for it as for a living person. The other Ibeji is kept home, this statue representing the living twin, and it receives sacrifices again for the protection of the surviving twin.

The next exception is reported by Mrs. MEYEROWITZ (28), who states that the Ibeji statues are carved "invariably in pairs" but indicates at the same time that the statue is ordered by the mother, who "has lost one or both . . . in order to give the spirit of the deceased a home". She also agrees that the Ibeji's most important role is to become the abode of the deceased twin's soul, and further, she states that if one of the twins dies the mother keeps the "Ibeji of the surviving twin in a calabash" and only the Ibeji of the deceased twin undergoes various rituals.

If we consider that in all important studies of the Yoruba no mention is made that two Ibejis are made at the same time, especially when they are born, no confirmation is found for these exceptions. The above study stating that the mother "only orders the statue when she (has) lost one of the twins" indicates an inconsistency with the other part of the report. There are various reasons we may find for the occurrence of a pair of twins.

From the various inquiries as to when the Ibeji statues were made we quote MARGARET WOODLAND (53): "The doll is only carved when one of the twins dies and not when both twins die. Everything is done for the live twin must be done for the dead twin's Ibeji – including gifts, clothes, decorations, hairdos, etc. so that the dead twin does not get jealous and annoyed. This they say is the only explanation for the cornwood, beads, colouring, etc."

But apart from the above statement the following reasoning is presented:

1. Our documentations indicate that because of the large number of Yoruba, because of subtribal identity, because of the large territory, there are many variants of customs. Hence the information concerning *when* the Ibeji statues were ordered are in all probability true, depending upon where the information was collected.

2. Because of the extremely high mortality rate at birth, and the high mortality rate shortly after birth, there is a need for pairs of Ibejis. This is also confirmed by BASCOM (2), who, describing a pair of Ibejis, indicates that one of the statues was made when one of the twins died and adds that "the pair indicates that neither twin survived childhood".

3. Although a pair of Ibejis was undoubtedly made by the same carver, this does not mean that they were carved for the same mother at the same time, or that they were made for the same mother at different times.

4. As in each village and city, there were carvers active for a lifetime, and there must have been many statues of the "handwriting" carved at *many* occasions for *different* mothers. It can be assumed that the same person who collected the Ibejis now in our possession has easily found two Ibejis of the same carver and hence a "pair" of them.

Although the primary need to give abode to the soul of the deceased twin may not be present in ordering a pair of twin statues, there are varied reasons for their acquisition. One is that the Ibejis were made to appease their supernatural power. Others are: The mother had to protect herself by making one or two Ibejis to be able to bear another child; and the spirit of the twins could also harm the family and by extension all relatives.

One of the characteristics of the Pair Statues is not only that they are made by the same hand but that both, female and male, in all details (except the indication of the sex) are executed in the same manner. As an example we shall take Fig. 48, in which a slight difference can be seen between the female breast and the chest of the man. Both have perpendicular scarification marks; there is a slight difference between the scarification marks on the abdomen (the female's is slightly lower); both have the same type of ears, with pierced earlobes (one has an earring, the other is lost), not to speak of the same hairdo and facial markings.

An interesting example is Fig. 53, which is not actually a pair, because the female is one inch taller than the male, as usually the pairs are exactly the same height. But there are similarities: same crested hairdo, the formation of the eyes, nose, mouth. The scarification marks are both of the Imabu type, but the male has about ten very finely grooved lines (Fig. 38) against which the same design is repeated on the female with four widely separated vertical and three perpendicular lines. A more striking difference is that the male's abdomen is incised with a large number of vertical and horizontal lines (Fig. 16) against which the female's breast has a zigzag-pattern type of cicatrix marks, a rather unusual feature among the several hundred Ibejis observed. The hands are also carved in the same style – namely, the thumbs are

turned front. In the male statue (Fig. 16), this gives an interesting interplay with the form of the genital. We can assume that both statues were carved by the same man, although they do not strictly fit what we call "pair" of Ibejis.

To be able to locate two carvings evidently created by the same hand is rather rare in our study of African art. In my forty-five years of experience with African works, having seen and handled many thousands, I can state that no carvings from any tribal origin were *exactly* the same, although the tribal tradition could easily be detected. One of our theses is that it is the personal talent "written all over" that gives to the work its artistic quality.

The pair of Ibejis prove precisely the point to which degree one can recognize a personal style, to which degree the carver cannot escape from his "temperament", his individual "handwriting", and to which degree, in spite of the accepted tradition, his own individuality comes forth. It is so strong that it is repeated unalteringly in the same style. The pair of Ibejis also proves that the differences in artistic style all over Africa are not due to hazard, to change of traditions, but are due to that quality in man that makes him a human being: a person who has his own *way of being* and his own, very personal and unique way of *doing things* – carving statues.

Classification

Morphological Approach

In accordance with the phenomenological method of close and rigorous observation (43) of what is in the visual field, we have studied a large number of Ibeji statues. We shall now endeavor to describe what we have observed, aiming to discover recurrent patterns and eventually arrive at a certain category of objects having the same major characteristics. Our search will be to find *prototypes* and not unique isolated objects, although some exceptions will be mentioned. Under "prototype" we mean a class of objects of the same type and style occurring most frequently, and we assume that the original model (Ibeji statue) was invented in remote times and was copied through generations in a basically unaltered form.

Geographical Attributions

Before we study the morphological aspects of the Ibeji statues we should note the various attempts which were made to identify them

according to village origin. Mr. FAGG, in a paper (10), shows two statues (Fig. 27), both from the village of Illa, but we find from our observational point of view two figures of entirely different style. One has no base (space between the two feet), has a braided hairdo, and the other – from the same village – has a round base, a pectoral and waist cord and a high conic coiffure. The same observation can be made in another attribution (11), this time to the village of Ila-Orangun, when one illustration (Fig. 126) shows bulging eyes, backward-tilted complex hairdo, against the next (Fig. 128), having a rather smooth face and a coiffure of exaggerated height.

We may cite a third example (12) when, under Fig. 79, one Ibeji is being attributed to the same Ila-Orangun village but is entirely different from the previous one, also attributed to the same village. This one has a pectoral carved in low relief, the pubic regions marked with a geometric-pattern design, has a double-cone hairdo, and it is also stated that it is by an unnamed but "highly individual" carver.

The same inconsistency can be noted in another study, by NICOL, on the Ibeji statue (32), when two Ibejis are attributed to a "small town in Oyo-Ibadan Province". One (the male) has a coatlike garment and conic hairdo, against which the second (female) does not have any clothing and her hairdo is the crown-type style.

The conclusion we can draw is that if we have information as to the origin of a carving and this cannot be related or identified with a specific and describeable, recurrent stylistic feature, that such information is not applicable to our study. This means that we cannot make a subtribal classification that can be ascribed to a known origin, as there is no observable consistency in the styles. The fact is that we recognize any African statue as to its tribal style, or for that matter we classify a carving as Ibeji from the vast realm of African carvings, we do not work with *a priori* information but take what is morphologically manifest and fit this information together in a category we already established by having observed a number of works with recurrent stylistic features from the same tribe. Accurate observation and the subsequent description is important because it can present facts upon which all attentive observers can agree, not subject to personal opinion or *a priori* knowledge. This approach is applicable to the whole realm of art, starting with the paleolithic cave paintings where "the analysis... based upon the treatment of outlines" (Gideon) is the only criteria.

We may illustrate this contention with an analogy. If we state the place (Paris), the time (1927), the material (oil on canvas), the size of a painting and add information that it is by Picasso, this still cannot situate *stylistically* the artwork, because within the same year Picasso had about three different styles. If we go further and add that one painting is in the bone-structure style and the other is rather naturalis-

tic (both from 1927) we only prove that it is the *style* of the artwork (and not other data) which can help us to *classify the object,* meaning only what can be observed as self-evident. (And here the quality of the work is not in question, a major consideration also in the case of the work by Picasso.)

After having made our negative conclusions as to what we cannot do, our positive approach will be to concentrate on what is *observable* and to see what are the recurrent patterns without considering where the work comes from. In addition we can observe whether the co-ordination of forms creating a coherent whole is successful, depending upon the talent of the carver. Of course, this observation will depend upon the trained sensibility of the observer and the depth of his experience when facing the work.

General Characteristics

The diversity of stylistic features of the Ibeji statues is so great that we will have to study the various details in separate sections. We can, however, distinguish certain general characteristics which are applicable to most of the Ibeji carvings under study.

Size. Their height is between 8 and 12 inches, although the largest number measure 10 to 11 inches.

Style 1. All Ibejis statues are standing figures, are *nude,* with the female and male sex clearly indicated. There are, however, some exceptions: Fig. 11 shows a figure with an "apronlike" garment. When actually used, it is made of cloth with a bead decoration. Another exception is an Ibeji with "shorts" (Fig. 12), with a well-worn patina. This is similar to the pair presently in the British Museum since 1854 (10, Fig. 116), which has a rather new appearance. (The "shorts" are probably due to European influence.) The definite date mentioned is rather interesting and only confirms again how little the knowledge *about* an object bears upon its appearance and involves also the whole subject of "age" of African carvings. If the physical evidence (including coordination of forms and surface-patina) indicates an inferior object, the age of the object has no relevance to its artistic merit. This fact was also confirmed by the author's visit to the Lisbon Museum, where objects looked as if newly made although taken out of Africa hundreds of years ago, probably right after the carver made them.

2. To continue with exceptions we may mention two other cases. One is an unusual figure illustrated in an article by BEIER (3) in which a girl holds a carving with a head with a highly elaborate three-prong hairdo, similar to Fig. 30, but instead of a body, a square handle with

ornamental incisions is attached to the head. The caption reads "Image of a Lost Twin" without identifying it as Ibeji, and it is added that "women carry calabashed filled with these little figures and they are kept for several generations".

3. Figs. 1 and 2 illustrate a general type without any special distinction. Although Fig. 3 can be differentiated from the previous two (and we shall do it) it is also among those which are most frequent in collections. The general type is within the Yoruba tradition – namely, that the face is rather naturalistic, with an emphasis on Negroid features, in constrast to most of the African carvings, which tend toward geometric forms. The overall volumes of the body and face are round, bulbous. It is seldom we meet with angular forms. The majority of Ibeji statues are carved with great refinement, with care for details, manifested especially in the coiffure, of which more will be said.

4. There is a highly sophisticated coordination between the form of the *neck* and the overall style of the statue. When a slender neck can be observed (Figs. 3, 20, 31, 39, 42, 44, 46, 47) we find a highly elaborate coiffure, many in conic shape and also a refinement in the execution of the body. When the neck forms a massive cylindrical form (Figs. 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 28, 50, 52) we find the body structure also massive and carved in a less refined way.

5. To maintain architectonic closed columnar form (and to avoid a sense of fragility), which is characteristic for most African statuary, the arms are mostly heavy, hands are attached to the body, either to the thighs or legs, leaving space between the body and limbs. If it appears as if the arms would be part of the body (Fig. 52), or as if there would be no space between the legs (Fig. 18), this is actually due to the incrustation of camwood powder that fills those spaces.

6. Usually the head is larger in proportion to the body.

7. In most cases the female breasts are well-developed but not prominent, except in Fig. 10.

8. The male genitals are clearly carved but in most cases unobtrusive, although we have a few interesting examples, such as Figs. 15 and 17. The female genital zone is in most cases accentuated in terms of fine incised motifs (Figs. 18, 19), which, adding to often well-developed breasts, symbolically represents female fertility. Here we must recall that the Ibeji cult (multiple birth) was also associated with fertility. This emphasis on the genital triangle can be found in most of the fertility goddesses of the prehistoric time from Mesopotamia to the Aegean islands, such as Cyprus and Crete.

We could sum up our general observations according to the overall stylistic feature of the body in the following groups:

1. The most usual and recurrent types (Figs. 1 and 2), as described previously.

2. A large number of existing Ibeji figures would fit into this rather typical style (Fig. 3, details Fig. 30) with arms akimbo, three-prong hairdo. This statue is often attributed to Oyo. Mrs. MEYEROWITZ (28), in her paper, has an illustration with nine Ibejis in a row exactly of this type, and she attributes them to Iseyn in Northern Yoruba.

3. This type of Ibeji is characterized by heavy, round arms, short, heavy, round legs and conic hairdo, as Figs. 4 5, 16 and 53 illustrate.

4. This type (Figs. 6, 7 and 53) also has short legs but long arms, but first they are both rather flat and not round, secondly they have a special feature: the crested hairdo (for details see Figs. 38, 39).

5. This type (Figs. 8, 9 and 52) of Ibeji is rather *roughly* carved with heavy legs and arms, massive neck, and they completely lack the refinement so typical of others.

6. This type (Fig. 10) is not unique, as we have seen several of them. It is a very distinct style with extremely heavy breasts, protruding eyes, cheeks, heavy lips, one single heavy chignon. What is particularly interesting is that it has scarification marks on the back (see Fig. 21), on the arms and also partly on the breast.

It would be extremely interesting if we could relate these morphological characteristics to the "temperamental" differences as JOHNSON has characterized the different subtribes. But if we accept, for instance, that the Ijebus are determined in their character structure, it would be necessary to have Ibejis, which by their recurrent stylistic features could be ascribed to the Ijebus, and find whether these two, the style and behavior pattern, correspond to each other. Unfortunately, we do not have these elements at our disposal.

Surface

All the statues are stained, and very often the head is a different color than the body. The reason for this is that the body is rubbed with the powder of red camwood mixed with oil. On many statues this constant rubbing gives the body a highly polished reddish-brown patina, and only the traces of the red powder can be found between the limbs. There are, however, statues on which the red material is used so abundantly that the space between the body and the limbs is filled in, often causing an encrusted surface (Figs. 2, 15, 17, 18, 21 and 52).

Rubbing powder on the human body is an old Yoruba custom (47, III, 868) done nearly at all important occasions, such as puberty rituals, death, secret-society ceremonies, etc. For the Yoruba the red symbolizes "blood" and its vivifying influence, and the great popularity of agate and red coral beads probably can be traced back to the same associations. It should be noted that many of the prehistoric fertility

figures have also a superimposition of red, based upon a similar concept: to give power to the object with a life-giving substance.

The facial features of the head are often worn off from rubbing it with oil, food, or other substances, and this can be noticed most markedly on Figs. 29, 30, 32, 33, 34, 35, 38, and 45. Often the body itself shows heavy use, first because of the rubbing with camwood, second because of having been carried on the body (Figs. 17, 18, 19, 50 and 51).

We will speak of the hairdo in a special section, but we can mention at this time that the coiffure is often rubbed in with indigo (by both the male and female), which can sometimes only in traces of color. (Perhaps it is of some interest that when BURTON (4, I, 258) visited the court of King Gelele he noticed that some of the wives had their hair stained blue with indigo.)

Ornaments

We must distinguish between two types of ornaments: one is carved on the statue in low relief and the other consists of some material added to the carving. Some statues, mostly female, have a triangular-shaped pectoral in front and back (Fig. 20) carved in low relief. Others have a waistband carved in imitation of beads. (Fig. 21 illustrates that although such waistband is carved, there is still an additional row of disks attached to the body.) There are male statues in which one or two lines are carved again in low relief as a wristband (Fig. 22). As to the additional material added to the statues, we start with the beads.

Rows of beads are placed around the *neck* (Figs. 3, 35, 39, 42); around the waist (Figs. 2, 6, 25); around the *arms* (Fig. 5) or around the ankles (Fig. 15). Most frequently the rows are placed on several of these locations (Figs. 7, 8, 17, 21, 50), and often they are in multiple rows.

The beads are either very small, made of glass, or are red stone Ilorin beads, blue in combination with other colors, sometimes in cylindrical form (Figs. 12, 21, 44) or a row (or several) made of very small disks (probably out of ostrich egg-shells – Figs. 2, 12, 15, 17, 21, 25), or made of cowrie-shells (Fig. 18). The beads are often similar to those given to the new-born baby. Often they signify, as in the case of white and red stone beads combined, that the mother is a Shango worshipper.

Metal rings are used around the arms (Fig. 1), resting where the arms reach the hips, and because of rubbing this part is often worn off. If the ring is missing, its placement can still be detected.

The Ibeji statues must be clothed, although most in our collection are not. Fig. 14 is clothed, which looks like a regalia about five to six

times wider than the body of the statue itself, and only the head can be seen. The clothing is made of cloth trimmed with leather, and beads form triangular and quadrangular shapes of yellow, black, blue and green-white colors, and on the back are red and blue-white glass beads. A similar very wide regalia is also shown in the Lagos Museum (Nigeria) with the difference that the design is composed in the middle of two triangular shapes in dark blue, but on both sides (on a pastel blue background) two interlacing designs are made, one in pink and the other in red. The same wide clothing, but made of cowry-shell, appears on one in the collection of Gov. Rockefeller. Two interesting attires are shown by BASCOM (2) on the cover of his catalogue, where the clothing is narrow; also with the interplay of triangular and rectangular shapes in various colors, but with the additional fact that both Ibejis have a conic cap, embroidered with glass beads in various colors, and this cap is very similar to the one on our Fig. 47.

Details of the Face

The face of the Ibeji statue is oval in shape (Figs. 8, 9 and 52) with few exceptions, especially within the category of the roughly carved figures. As indicated, the face of many of them is worn off.

Eyes. The eyeballs are prominent (Figs. 7, 10, 38, 39, 42, 44). The pupils usually have a hole (Figs. 1, 2, 3, 5, 9, 12, 14, 27, 31, 33, 34, 36, 37, 41, 42) because of the missing of a short nail-like lead-plug, which is usually used as pupil. The eyebrows are often extended into a design pattern below the eyes, actually framing the eyes. They are carved in raised, curvular lines (Figs. 9, 10, 11, 12, 28, 34, 38, 42, 43, 49, 51, 53); they are with notched marks (Figs. 1, 2, 3, 6, 27, 40, 41), or the combination of both elements – namely, the upper eyebrow notched and the lower without such marks (Figs. 29, 36, 44, 46, 48, 51).

Forehead. Usually tending toward convex form, some having three perpendicular short cicatrix marks.

Nose. Usually broad, which, together with the swelling lips, contributes to the naturalistic Negroid facial expression of the statues.

Ears. In contrast they are not naturalistic. They are set at the back of the head, near the neck, and are larger in proportion to the size of the head. Mostly they are semicircular in form, hollowed out (Figs. 8, 10, 12, 20, 28, 31, 32, 33, 34, 38, 39, 41, 45, 46), some with pierced earlobes (Figs. 27, 34, 43). When the earlobes were pierced they were used for "earrings", sometimes having a cowry-shell hanging, but most frequently using a cotton or wood thread. On our Fig. 37, this cotton thread has two knots to keep it in place. (Many of the Bambara statues and antelopes have the same ornamentation.)

Position of the Arms

As indicated previously, arms are heavy and longer than the natural proportion would demand. We already quoted NICOL (32), who endeavored to identify statues with extended arms and hands placed flat against the thighs as those originating from Ibadan and Oyo. Those having the arms held akimbo, as in Figs. 3 and 26, are attributed to Egbaland. These attributions, however, cannot be applied to Ibejis having similar arm and hand positions while differing in other stylistic features.

Hands. Hands are usually stylized, joining the thighs (Figs. 1, 2, 4, 17, etc.) or attached to the legs (Figs. 5, 6, 12, 13, 22, 23, 25, etc.), with one exception (Fig. 51), when the hands are clasped in front of the body. Here we may recall Fig. 16, where the thumbs are turned front.

Legs. The legs are usually foreshortened (Figs. 4, 5, 6, 7, 9, 22, 25, 50, 52, 53), sometimes forming a heavy columnar shape (Figs. 4, 5, 9, 15, 18, 53). In one example the legs form an interesting angularity (Fig. 13) extended into the buttocks, especially when observed from the side.

There is a stylistic difference on most of the Ibejis between the head and the body. The head is naturalistic (scarification marks, hairdo corresponding to existing usages), in contrast to which we can observe extremely heavy, long arms and short, sometimes columnar legs. Hence there are two different "ways of doing" things, which must correspond to two ways of conceiving them. Our contention is that the very execution is done on a traditional basis, without the carver being conscious of this difference, and the reason must be sought in the realm of unconscious motivation. This observation becomes meaningful if we consider what ERICH NEUMANN in *The Great Mother* (30) had to say about the "paradoxical formal contrast between the above and the below" – meaning the head and the lower part of the so-called fertility figures he was studying – "stressing by purely stylistic means the contrast between the static and dynamic" (pp. 103–105). "The coexistence of naturalistic elements and of abstraction, imaginative elements in the same work of art" (p. 107), appears in most of the primeval art.

We know of the intimate family nature of the cult, and this may be expressed in the naturalistic head. This corresponds to what NEUMANN calls the "corporeal" aspect of it, which stands for material reality. On the other hand is the supernatural element of the Ibeji cult, hence the incorporeal, the spiritual, which finds expression in the "abstracted" forms of the arms and legs. This dual trend to make real the visual and to make concrete that which is formless (conceptual) has maintained its significance through the ages. To quote NEUMANN (p. 107) again: "The intercourse with spirits . . . stands at the center of man's cult and

rituals . . . if properly approached in religion, art and festivals . . . (and aims) to promote and to intensify life."

The very nature of the Ibeji statue aims at just this intercourse.

Scarification Marks

Many African carvings show scarification marks. They fit into two main categories: one for tribal identification and the other for beautification purposes. (Among the Bakuba the scarification of the pubic region serves erotic purposes.) As to the Yoruba habit of scarification, we have abundant documentation, first concerning the manner of how it is done (TALBOT), second as to the design patterns it takes (JOHNSON).

TALBOT (47, III, 391) gives the following details: Cicatrization is commonly performed by a skilled person and was originally aimed at showing the tribe or clan – but at the time of his writing (1926) this already had degenerated into purely ornamental scars so that "it is usually impossible to distinguish to which country a man belongs by this means." The process is as follows: First the skin on which cuts are intended to be made is covered with white chalk and the design is traced with charcoal. The cut is not allowed to heal naturally but is irritated by different means, such as insertion of a piece of palm leaf, etc. On the top of the scar, ash or charcoal is rubbed so as to leave raised keloid scars. We may note that the African has a marked tendency to form keloid scar tissue without any special irritant, and it is possible that this gave rise to the habit of cicatrization.

TALBOT also describes when cicatrization takes place – upon circumcision (eight days after birth) – but at another occasion he states it is at the age of puberty, and for women before marriage. For man it is done mostly on the face, although the chest (Figs. 4, 16, 51) and arms are also used (Figs. 39 and 51). (As to the other parts of body, we shall study that later.) Usually the child receives the father's "marks", unless the mother's family is very powerful. For the women it is sometimes on the face, but chiefly on the body, beginning between the breasts and spreading all over the body, with a circle design surrounding the naval (Figs. 3 and 26). (No tattooing is practiced.) He refers to JOHNSON's classification but notes that the most common is called *keke,* used among the Oyos, which consists of eight cuts several inches long meeting in four parallel right angles and spreading over the greater part of the cheeks. The *pele* mark is composed of three perpendicular cuts about 1 inch in length over the cheekbones.

JOHNSON (23, pp. 105–06) makes an interesting classification of the facial cicatrization marks, which we shall use in the following, but he neglects to classify the bodily marks (except in one instance: on the arms and legs). This classification was done around 1880 to 1890 when

scarification was still used to such an extent that some of the Muslims still adopted them because otherwise they would feel "naked".

We shall start with the scarification marks on both cheeks. JOHNSON classified the cheek scarification marks according to Yoruba families within the subtribes.

1. Among the Oyo, the main Yoruba tribe, the best known are the set of three or four parallel and horizontal cuts about $^1/_2$ to 1 inch long, and their name is *abaja*. The three single lines we find in Fig. 9, but this also has three short perpendicular lines on the forehead. We find three double lines on Figs. 27 and 52, but here again the stylistic features of both examples are very different from each other.

2. Adding three perpendicular lines to the above three or four parallel, horizontal lines, we arrive at the sign known as *keke* or *gombo,* and this is used among the Ibolos and Epos, still part of the main Oyo Yoruba group. This sign we find on our Fig. 4 (details Fig. 27), but this one also has elaborate scarification marks all over the abdomen. Fig. 10 has the *keke* marks, but here again the style of the statue is extremely different from others having the same mark.

We can see on Fig. 31 another variant of the same marking, which is known as *jebu*. Fig. 36 shows the same cicatrization, but has three perpendicular lines on the forehead.

3. The next mark is called *ibamu,* which consists of four to five perpendicular and horizontal lines placed angularly on each cheek, plus three small perpendiculars. This mark is common not only on statues that are attributed to the Oyos but also to the Egbados. Fig. 6 has this mark, but this statue also has a crested hairdo and its base has triangular incised patterns. Fig. 37 has the same marks (full figure is No. 48) but this has a different hairdo (crownlike); it also has scarification marks on the chest and abdomen, and its base has no markings. Fig. 38 has the same facial marks and a crescent hairdo as No. 6 (full figure No. 53), but the overall style of this statue is again different from all the statues having the same *ibamu* mark.

4. The next facial mark is made only of perpendicular lines. One consists of three, each 1 inch long, and is called *pele;* the other has four longer and three shorter cuts, altogether seven perpendicular lines, and this is called *ture*. Figs. 8, 11 have the *pele* marks, but if we observe carefully we find that each of them is different from the stylistic point of view. These are only a few applications of about twenty scarification marks that JOHNSON lists, but we wish to limit our examples only to that which we can apply to our illustrative material. JOHNSON also indicates that the finer and more closely the lines are drawn (Fig. 38), the more elegant they are considered.

In addition to these cheek cicatrizations, our material shows a wide range of scarifications on the various parts of the body; on the chin,

Fig. 9; on the forehead, Figs. 2, 5, 11, 36, 40, 48, 49; on the temple, Fig. 39; on the abdomen, Figs. 4 and 39; on the breasts, Figs. 49, 53; on the pubic region, Figs. 49, 53; on the back, Fig. 21; on the arms, Figs. 10, 29, 51. On the subject of scarification marks on the arms, we have JOHNSON's statement: "broad ribbon marks along the whole length of the arms and legs are distinctive of the Royal family of Oyo." Fig. 51 shows scarification marks on the front, side or arms, and Fig. 10 (details on Fig. 21) shows marks on the upper arms, part of the breast, abdomen pubic region and back of the neck. Fig. 39 shows triangular patterns on the arms, but the same marks are also on the back, in three vertical rows, the middle of which reaches over the neck, one row on the chest reaching the naval, although our illustration does not show these additional markings. (We have no example concerning the scarification marks on the legs, as JOHNSON mentioned.)

Although TALBOT already indicated that by means of scarification it is possible to distinguish to which country a man belongs, we hoped at the beginning of our study that the clear classification of cheek marks by JOHNSON may provide some means of subtribal identification of the Ibeji statues. By comparing, however, this evidence with the rest of the stylistic features of each Ibeji statue, we came to the conclusion that similar to village attributions, the scar marks and the rest of the stylistic features are not consistent, hence they do not lend themselves to the purpose of classifying the Ibeji statues.

Hairdo

One of the most apparent stylistic differences among the Ibeji statues is the great variety of coiffure. FROBENIUS (18) was attracted by this diversity, and he actually made a page of drawings of eleven different hairdos, of which he classified four as male and seven as female. This documentation is very limited, as in our study, after selection, we have nearly twenty-five different styles of coiffure. We have also found that the division between male and female hairdo cannot be sustained, as they occur in both sexes. This is most evident on the pairs of Ibeji (Figs. 48 to 52).

We have the following information concerning male and female coiffures:

Male. JOHNSON states that a "man's hair is clipped short to a length of about a quarter of an inch." Fig. 11 illustrates this type of short hairdo. But he does not make any further distinction.

Female. We have various information on this subject. JOHNSON (23, p. 101) gives a rather detailed account. He states that the females have their "hair done up in all sort of ways dictated by their usual vanity . . . The unmarried ones are distinguished by their hair being plaited into

small strips (from eight to fourteen) from the right to the left ear, the smaller and more numerous the plaiting strip the more admired." He adds these details: "Married women adopt another form of plaiting; usually they commence on both sides and finish up in the middle in a sort of network running from the forehead to the occiput; ornamental forms are adopted by some such as stuffing the hair in the middle of the head after being gathered from all sides; and the others, again as the Ijebus, finish up theirs in the shape of a pair of horn." This is noticeable in Figs. 32 and 33, but this information becomes less significant from the stylistic point of view if we consider that 32 is a male Ibeji and 33 a female. He adds that the Yoruba women (23, p. 125) often contrive to bring out styles, but a marked distinction must be made between married and unmarried women.

This distinction is brought out in further detail by TALBOT (47, III, 942) when he states that women spend much time constructing elaborate coiffures and there is a professional woman among the Yoruba who attends to these needs. There are conventional hairdos that reflect the various status of a person: age, position, married or unmarried, widowed, one who has just had a child, one who expects another, one who is in mourning, etc. The unmarried usually use small plaits; the married divide into a series of small squares from front to back, or gather all together in the middle. FORDE (15) states that women's hair is cut to a length of about 3 inches and braided tightly in a variety of patterns. Social status may be indicated by a special form of hairdressing, such as those worn by chiefs' wives, the messengers of the chiefs and the worshippers of certain *orishas*.

One wonders why when one of the twins dies at childbirth or at an early age the Ibejis wear an elaborate hairdo. We have information (20) that the parents indicate to the carver the type of coiffure they want the Ibeji statue to have; another assumption is that this is due to the fact that a hairdo represents status, hence they want to give the dead child the same status that the parents have.

Our assumption was that anything as distinctive as the hairdo would enable us to establish some classification. Unfortunately, again because of a lack of consistency, such a classification is not possible. If we look at photos of Benin and Ibi women (47, Figs. 115 and 116) and see to which degree their coiffure correponds to many of the hairdos found on Ibeji statues, we only find another confirmation that on this basis we are unable to establish the identity of the different Ibeji statues.

Classification of Hairdos

As we are unable to use the coiffure for subtribal identification, we shall return to our morphological method and use that which can be observed.

1. Close-cropped male hair, Fig. 11.

2. Simple cone; the hair is bound together in a single strand and tied on. Figs. 1 and 2 show the simple cone shape, and Fig. 10 shows where the knot is. This is also evident on Fig. 33. Another variant is Fig. 29, where the hair is arranged in four main braids with four smaller braids ultimately giving a conic shape.

3. The cone is divided into two parts, as shown on Fig. 32 (male) and 33 (female).

4. The elaborate hairdo is built up into a crest running from front to back. Fig. 38 (male) is a simpler version compared with Fig. 39 (male), where the crest is higher.

5. A hairdo that looks like a *crown* made of multiple braids (the grooving indicates braiding). Fig. 36 (the same as Fig. 49) has eight braids. Fig. 37 (same as Fig. 48), where the "crown" is achieved by four heavy braids. As Figs. 48 and 49 indicate, this hairdo was used for both sexes. Fig. 30 (same as Fig. 3) belongs in this category, where the four heavy braids are formed into a crownlike coiffure (the fourth is not shown in the photo), having on top four smaller braids holding the four wider ones. (As indicated earlier, this type of statue was attributed to Oyo, having also a base with circular horizontal rings (Fig. 26). But another writer attributed the very same type of statue (without the rings on the base) to Ibeju-Igbo and another document (28) to Iseyn. Fig. 31 shows how one of the braids is arranged in a backswept manner, and the same – although in a different manner – can be noticed on Fig. 45. Fig. 40 has five braids separately formed, creating a crownlike hairdo. The Berlin Museum has a similar one, but here the five braids form definite cones and are completely separated from each other and look like protrusions on the head.

6. Extremely "elegant" are the high-conic coiffures. Figs. 20 and 34 are females statues and show the slender neck these statues have. Fig. 35 also has a high cone, but as Fig. 50 indicates, the same style was used on both female and male statues. Fig. 46 shows another variant of the same style.

7. The next class can be distinguished from the others by the fact that the hairdo has a pierced (or transparent) effect between the braids. Figs. 42 and 44 would fit into the high-cone classification (both are female) but for the open spaces between the braids. On Fig. 42 this can be noted on the top of the coiffure. Fig. 44 is a male statue and its hairdo is made of two heavy braids with an open-space effect. Fig. 43, probably of more recent origin, also shows open spaces between the braids.

Headgears

Because the Yoruba woman uses a great variety of turbanlike headgears, and the men a number of caps, it is possible that some of the coiffures we have showing in our illustrations are actually renditions of headgears (Figs. 4, 12 and 27).

Headgears are made of bright-colored cloth 2 yards long which can be tied in turban fashion, according to the mood of the woman or the occasion. JOHNSON (23, p. 112) adds that this band is 6 to 10 inches wide and 5 feet long and is wound trice around the head and the end tucked at one side.

The Yoruba man covers his head with a cap, except when he is with his family or very close friends. This cap has various styles, the best known of which is the *ikori,* which is like a chef's hat but without starch; there is the *abetioaja* (dog's-ear type), which is like the old-fashioned pilot's helmet, the flaps of which can be turned up in hot weather or folded down when the dusty harmattan wind blows (Fig. 47). There is also a cap made of velvet with gold embroidery worn for festive occasions. JOHNSON speaks of another type called *filla,* which is about 10 inches long and is bent upon itself on the top.

Base

As mentioned earlier, the base of the Ibeji statues is circular, with few exceptions, such as when the slightly rectangular base is rounded at the corner (Fig. 12). There are few pieces which do not have a base (Fig. 52), sometimes with the feet carved in a heavy manner, sometimes as if they have sandals on both feet. Some of the bases are in weathered condition, due to having stood on humid ground.

From the material studied, we have found that only about 10 percent of the Ibeji statues have patterns incised on their base.

Figs. 4, 13 and 22 have vertical lines around the base. Fig. 23 shows lines obliquely, Fig. 24 with zigzag patterns, Fig. 25 with triangular designs; and there is a variant of this style having small lozange-shapes incised in the same manner as the triangular shapes. Fig. 26 has horizontal rings around the base and, as indicated previously, this was supposed to indicate Oyo origin.

These incisions on the base are probably traditional conventions and might have symbolic meaning. The available material, however, does not show consistency as to the other stylistic characteristics of the statue (best proof is that we have in our collection a "pair", one having lozange-shaped patterns, the other oblique lines on the base), does not permit us to utilize this information for subtribal identification.

Conclusions on the Section: Classification

We have classified whatever was observable from the overall style to the various details. We have tried to coordinate this formal evidence with information about possible origin of pieces, usage or known customs, and we have come to the conclusion that none of the information could be applied with consistency to the stylistic evidence.

The only possible conclusion we can draw is that within a very small domain of a single cult (Ibeji) with just one type of carving (a 10-inch standing figure), the Yoruba shows an amazing richness of inventiveness. It is not the large variety of overall forms (like the Ifa bowls or the Ose Shango), but by concentration on this single statue that the depth of creativity is revealed. The carver is a conformist member of his society, he follows the established traditions, but in the intensity of the creative act his unique personality, his way of being, finds expression. Not only is there a great variety of styles within the narrow limit of the Ibeji prototype, all due to this very particular uniqueness of man, but each of his creations shows an astonishing sense of style and sophistication manifested in the overall unity and coherence of the work. This means that there is an internal consistency within each statue. If there is high refinement in the details, the overall effect is highly elaborate. If the arms and legs are of massive boldness in style, other parts of the figure are created in the same manner.

For the African the concept of beauty (as we understand it) does not exist. As pointed out earlier, "art" is a non-African concept (42). For the African it has a practical purpose, it has to function, fulfill a role, and this made the sculpture-man relationship exceptionally strong and emotionally binding, not similar with any artwork-man relationship in Western civilization. It is this intensity we capture when we face a high-quality African work. What was important was to make the carving *work well,* and for this purpose he had to *make it well.* Here is where the coherent unity originates. And here all the tradition – and this includes social heredity, as usually the son continued the father's profession of carver – found its fullest expression. To repeat, the Ibeji was made well to work well. The carver, in his concentration, imbued the statue not with the soul of a twin but with his own soul-personality.

This study only confirms my old conviction – namely, that the African carver, at his best, was a great instinctual artist who achieved masterpieces of art.

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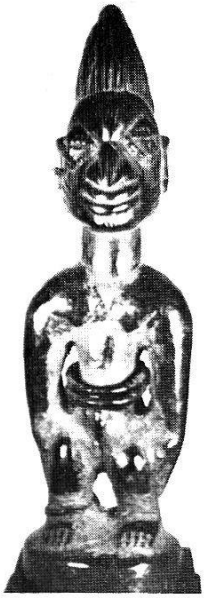

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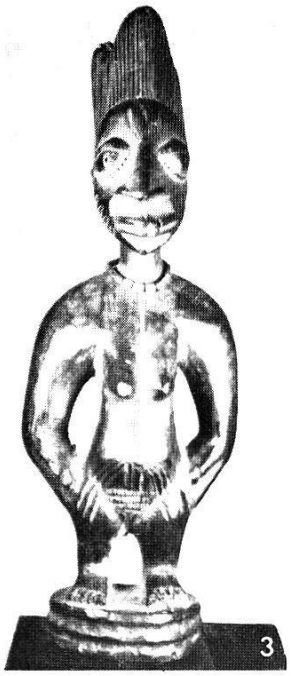

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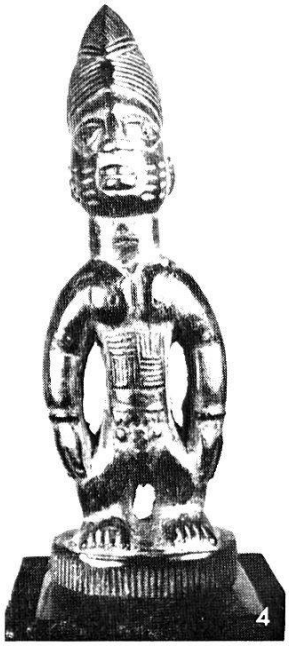

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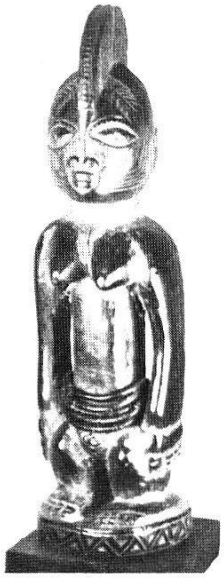

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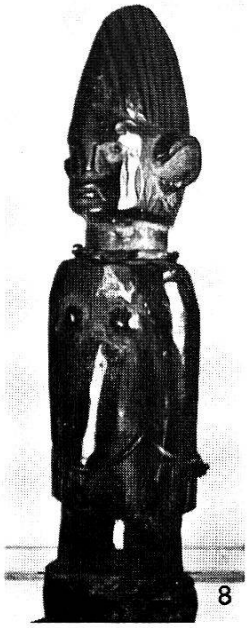

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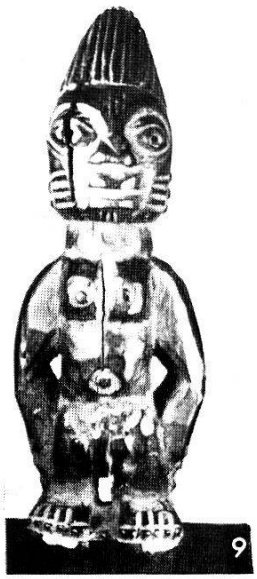

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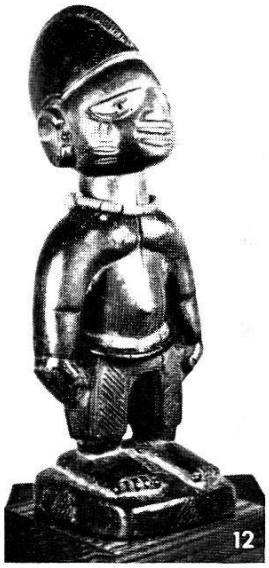

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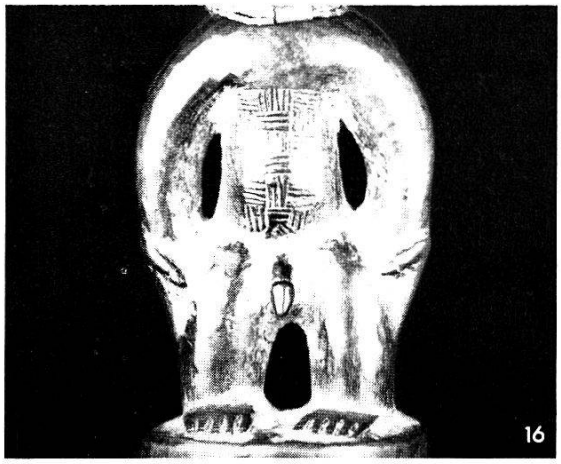

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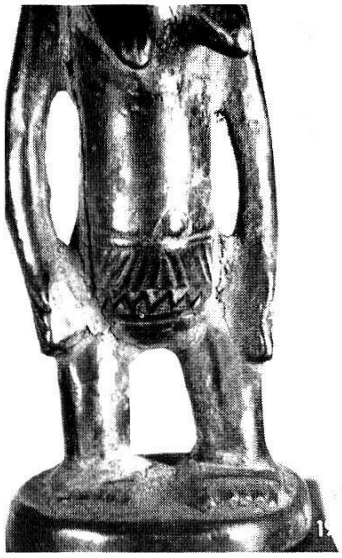

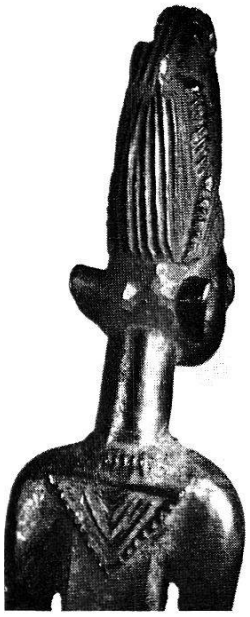

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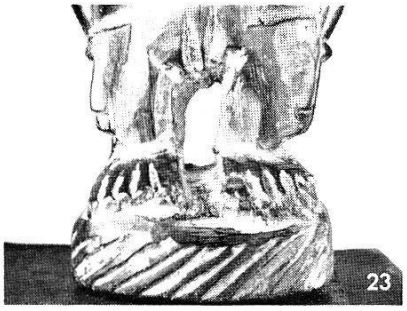

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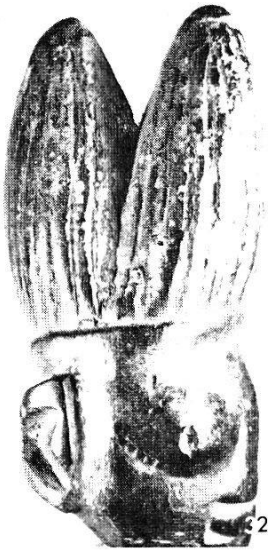
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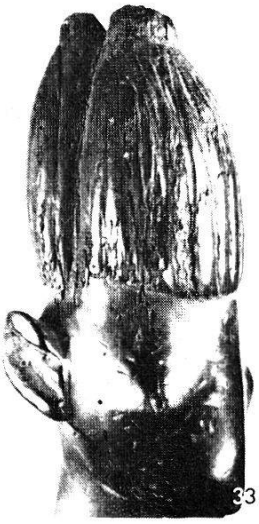
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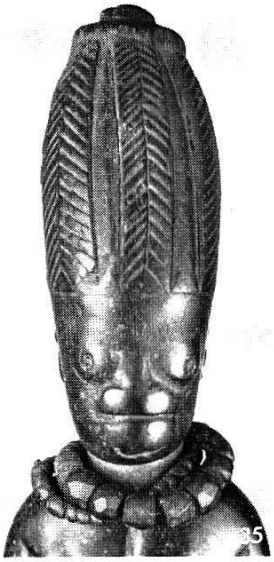
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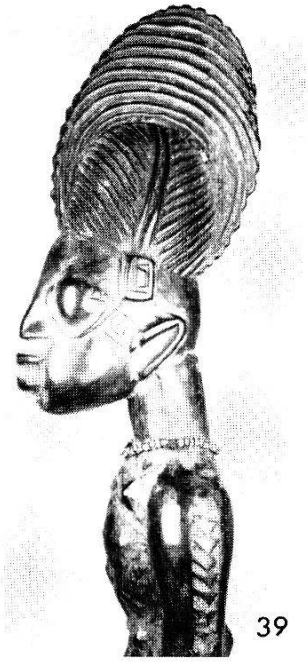

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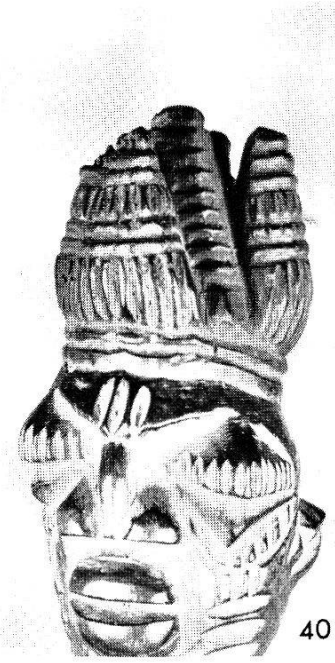

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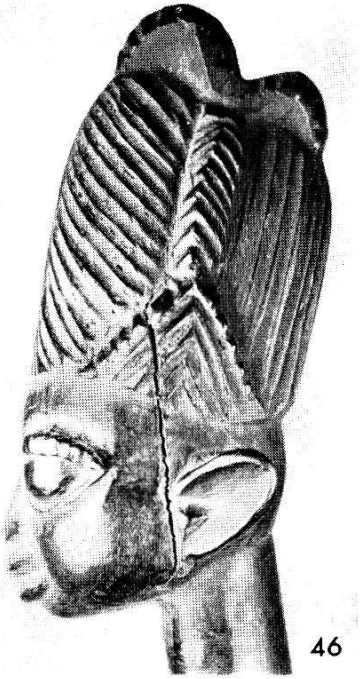

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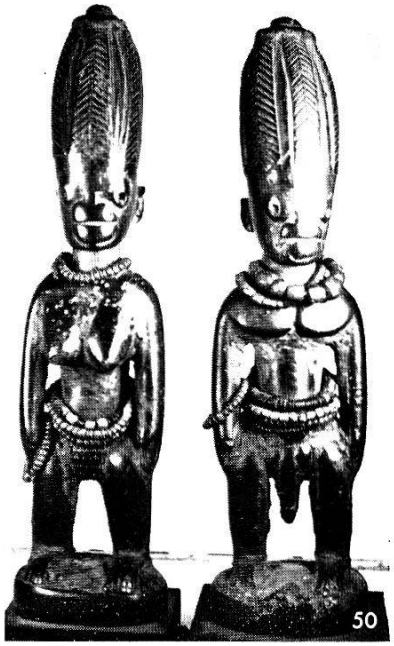
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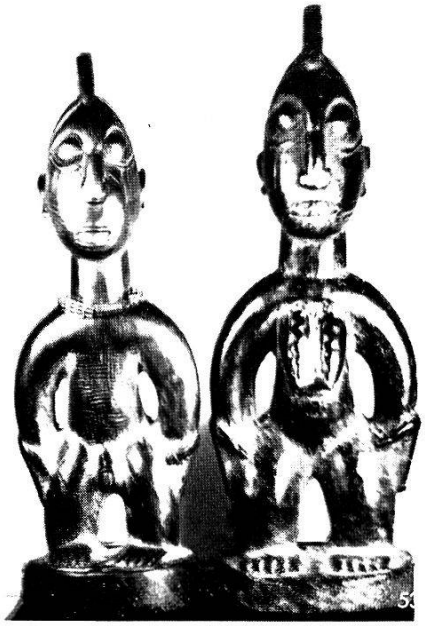

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Zusammenfassung

Eine bestimmte Schnitzereiform, die Ibeji-Statuen der Yoruba, wird untersucht. Im Vordergrund steht die kunstgeschichtliche Betrachtung der Plastiken, wobei aber die Funktion derselben und ihre Bedeutung in der gesamten Yoruba-Kultur durchaus nicht vernachlässigt worden ist. In diesem Rahmen spielt besonders die Bedeutung der Zwillinge in Afrika eine große Rolle. Der Ibeji-Kult hat zum Ziel, das Wohl der Zwillinge und ihrer Mütter zu schützen. Dem Autor ist es ein besonderes Anliegen, zu zeigen, wie in der afrikanischen Kunst bei aller Anlehnung an traditionelle Formen die individuelle schöpferische Gestaltungskraft des einzelnen Schnitzers sehr schön zum Ausdruck kommt. Dem Problem der beiden Pole der bildenden Kunst, gesellschaftlicher Zwang einerseits, Künstlerpersönlichkeit anderseits, wird in detaillierter Form nachgegangen.

Résumé

L'auteur a étudié une forme particulière de sculptures, les statues Ibeji des Yoruba. L'historique de cet art est mis en évidence sans pour autant que soit négligé sa signification dans le cadre de la culture Yoruba. Les jumeaux jouent un rôle important en Afrique : aussi le culte des Ibeji a-t-il pour objet de protéger les jumeaux et leur mère.

L'auteur insiste particulièrement sur le fait, fréquent en Afrique, que chaque sculpteur s'exprime par une création artistique personnelle, souvent de grande beauté, même s'il est lié par l'obligation de reproduire des formes traditionnelles. Ces deux pôles de l'activité artistique, l'obligation sociale d'une part, la personalité de l'artiste d'autre part, est envisagée de manière détaillée.