or more items shown, no real justice is done to the full range of what such cultures produce.

This wide range of objects in the catalogue represents a more even spread over the continent than is usually found in surveys of African art. In my opening description of the catalogue I indicated how both eastern and southern Africa received far more representation than they are usually accorded. In the present catalogue, over 22 % of the objects shown were made by peoples from eastern and southern Africa. Objects from such cultures rarely figure in sales and auctions. Comparisons with some basic texts surveying African art dramatically point out how radically the present catalogue has departed from the usual approach. For example, Fagg's (1965) survey devotes less than 10 % of his space to eastern and southern Africa; Delange's (1974) survey also devotes less than 10 % to these areas, while Leuzinger (1960) provides less than 5 %, a proportion unchanged even in her revised and expanded survey (1972). Brain (1980) devotes less than 5 % and that mostly to ancient south African rock paintings and artefacts from Zimbabwe. Laude (1971), in a truly ethnocentric and error-riddled survey, devotes 4 % to eastern and southern Africa, mainly prehistoric Zimbabwe and rock paintings. Bodrogi (1968), Willett (1971), and Paulme (1962) totally ignore southern and eastern Africa, deeming only western and central Africa worth considering at all. Gillon (1984) devotes a section of his survey to ancient rock art and another to ancient Nubia; eastern and southern Africa merit 10 %, mostly devoted to Ethiopia, Swahili, and ancient Zimbabwe. Bascom devotes 3 % of his survey to eastern and southern Africa and omits illustrations of any such works (1973). Only Vansina's (1984) idiosyncratic volume considers objects from all of Africa including ancient Egypt and the Muslim Maghrib; yet the few items discussed from southern and eastern Africa mainly involve ancient Zimbabwe, Christian Ethiopia, and Muslim Swahili. In the largest and most lavish survey of African art that I know (Kerchache et al. 1993) with 1069 illustrations, 56 % are devoted to west Africa, 37 % to central Africa, 4 % to east and south Africa including Madagascar, and 0.3 % to predynastic Egypt. These survey volumes compare closely to the prevailing trends in collecting as well. For example, consider two famous American private collections: the Tishman collection in which only 3 of the 150 items shown in New York City came from eastern or southern Africa (Vogel 1981), and only 5 of the 169 shown in Los Angeles (Sieber and Rubin 1968); the de Havenon collection in which all of the 243 objects shown in Washington were from west or central Africa (Museum of African Art 1971). A catalogue of 200 African objects in the great Barbier-Mueller collection in Geneva shows 96 % from west and central Africa, 4 % from eastern Africa and none from the south (Schmalenbach 1988). In contrast to all these, Duerden's (1968) small picture book volume exhibits a refreshingly imaginative mixture of geographical types in all media, from architecture and body decoration to wood carving, metalwork, and oil painting. He is the only author whose survey includes contemporary African art mixed in with the traditional; it is unfortunate that he did not write a broader survey since his treatment is so eclectic and original. Even the brief article in *Art & Auction* promoting the American show at the Guggenheim perpetuates this geographical bias. Nine of its ten illustrations are of west African pieces and the other is from central Africa (Vincent 1996).

In regard both to the ethnic groups and geographical regions emphasized, the frequency with which such kinds of objects are shown perpetuates and solidifies stereotypes about which peoples and areas merit scholarly and aesthetic (and monetary) promotion. Every instance of coverage generates further converage in a snowball effect. In this sense, the present catalogue does turn scholarly and popular attention toward other, newer directions outside the usual frames of western and central Africa. This can only be good for improving our understanding of Africa. It may also relate to a growing surge in the value and sale of eastern and southern African objects now that sources of western and central African art provide less and less new material. Eastern and southern African traditional art has been undergoing steady upgrading in attention over the past decades as may be seen by increased exhibitions in commercial galleries and in more frequent appearances in *African Arts* and other such journals which earlier rarely considered such material.

The single most striking impression I draw from the Royal Academy catalogue is of a welter of diversity. This is heightened by the fact that explanations attached to various items are written by such a wide range of different experts, semiexperts and apprentice experts, who are so widely varied in perspectives and competency, that the difference in styles and character in this commentary compounds the sense of diversity. Few if any individual African cultures or societies are portrayed in any fully meaningful manner through the objects or accompanying commentaries in the catalogue. In-