In cases such as the latter the main purpose of making the object may be its symbolic value rather than its physical ability.

"Meanings" projected into figurative language

Language is rich in words the force of whose meaning is derived from the symbolic meaning associated with the object they connote. Certain objects may have provided language with a treasury of images, used in tales, proverbs, colloquial speech, etc.

Aesthetic Value

Many objects have "aesthetic value" by which we mean that they are valued as giving pleasure to those who experience them. But the aesthetic component is very hard to identify since it is closely bound up with various symbolic values placed on the object, and when it is much valued it is sought after and thus takes on a high economic value. However it is possible to establish the aesthetic rating given to a variety of objects of the same kind within a community, and thus to generalise certain aesthetic standards for specific types of objects.

Processual Aspects

In moving from the study of particular and unique objects to that of norms, that is, ideal reconstructions possessing characteristic features of a category of objects, we discover that these norms vary from place to place and from time to time. These temporal and spatial variations should be studied together since the change in any object witnessed in one particular place is (in the West Indies) most often due to the arrival of people or models from another place where a different norm prevails.

Our first concern is with changes in the form and substances of the material object. The Means of Making the object may have changed. These are: 1. The raw materials and tools. Certain substances may no longer be available, and substitutes with different physical properties may have taken their place; more convenient tools may have become available. 2. The technique and skill. There may have been a failure in the transmission or passing on of the skill from the older to the younger generation, or it may have been modified by becoming institutionalised as a subject of instruction at school. On the other hand, while the means may still be available, the Ends or purpose of making and using may have changed, and thus changed the object. This may happen (1) at the technological level, for example, the object may now be used to perform new mechanical tasks in the structural system to which it belongs. The supporting joints of a roof may now have to carry the heavier weight of galvanised iron sheets instead of light timite-palm thatch, and the pirogue may have to be built to withstand the new strain of being outboard-motor driven. This may happen (2) at the socio-economic level; that is to say, its function in the system of socio-economic relations may change. It may now be made for sale and not for use, and be subject to simplification in the interests of economy. Finally, (3) the symbolic value attributed to the object may have changed. It may have acquired value as the symbol of the self assertion of an ethnic minority; it may have lost its sacred value and gained as a source of aesthetic satisfaction; or its value as a symbol of prestige ranking may have been displaced by the higher prestige of imported goods.