



*All the varieties of transgression are buried
in the darkness of the world*

YASUNARI KAWABATA

Known as the Löwenmensch (the lion man), the figurine has slanted marks on its left arm suggesting scarring or tattoos. Whatever its sex, there is no doubt that the figure is both human and animal at the same time. This not only reinforces the great importance of felines to Palaeolithic people, but also highlights the fluid nature of their belief system, in which borders separating humans and animals were easy to cross. Could this figure be a shaman partially transformed into a lion? A mythical being, a hero or god? Or perhaps a supernatural spirit?

JEAN CLOTTES

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MIGHTY AND TERRIBLE

“I made this monstrous beast”

Man with lion's head, artist unknown (30,000–34,000 BP)