

define themselves socially as the bearers of that identity, and who express it through their bodily manifestations in music, song and attire. The performance embodies the identity and renders it communicable in an appropriate format, even to an outside world where, before the creation of Kazanga in its present form, that identity did not mean anything of positive value. The stress on uniformity of the performers and their actions paradoxically creates both

- *an illusion of being identical* – which dissimulates actual class differences (for each dance troupe again represents the entire Nkoya nation as a whole), and
- *a sense of distinction* – for very visibly, the urban elite’s troupe is ‘more equal’ (cf. Orwell, *Animal Farm*, 1949) than the other performers, and than the spectators.

J. THE NKOYA KAZANGA FESTIVAL: CULTURAL DISPLAY IMPLIES VIRTUALISATION. In this incorporative context one also borrows from a repertoire which has certainly not been commoditified even if it is performative: dressed in leopard skins, around the temples a royal ornament made of the *Conus* shell from the Indian Ocean, and brandishing an antique executioner’s axe,¹⁸² an aged royal chief, with virtuoso accompaniment from a hereditary honorary drummer of the same age (he has always been far above performing with the state-subsidised royal orchestra in the routine court contexts), performs the old Royal Dance which since the end of the nineteenth century CE was hardly seen any more in this region; at the climax the king (for that is what he shows himself to be) kneels down and drinks directly from a hole in the ground where beer has been poured out for his royal ancestors – the patrons of at least his part of the Nkoya nation, implied to share in the deeply emotional cheers from the audience. And young women who have long been through girls’ puberty initiation, perform that ritual’s final dance (cf. van Binsbergen 1987a), without any signs of the appropriate stage fright and modesty, and with their already too mature breasts not nude and in full view (as is the requirement during the girl’s coming-out dance at her puberty ceremony), but against all tradition tucked into conspicuous white bras; yet despite this performative artificiality their sublime bodily movements, which in this case are far from censored by any Christian canon, approach the village-based original sufficiently close to bring the spectators, men as well as women, to ecstatic expressions of a recognised and shared identity.

Obviously commoditification and transformative selection, however important, do not tell the whole story, and even after the recreation of Nkoya culture in the form Kazanga format enough reason for enthusiasm and identification is left for us not to be too cynical about the globalising erosion of the symbolic and ethnic domain.

¹⁸² All these attributes – regalia, in fact – have now become non-commodities, pertaining to a royal circuit that in the present time is no longer mercantile, although it was more so during the nineteenth century CE.