

6000 (689.4)  
 301.185.12 Nkoya  
 321.21  
 394.4

## The Kazanga Festival Ethnicity as Cultural Mediation and Transformation in Central Western Zambia<sup>1</sup>

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### Abstract

This paper explores the cultural dynamics of ethnicity in a context of a post-colonial African state, Zambia. The opening sections seek to define ethnicity and to pinpoint its central dilemma: while unmistakably constructed and thus selectively empowering the brokers co-ordinating the construction process, ethnicity yet tends to pose as unchangeable, innate and inescapable. The paper then presents a detailed analysis of the recent Kazanga festival among people identifying as Nkoya in Western Zambia. As an instance of ethnic self-representation *vis-à-vis* the national state, the annual festival brings out the extent to which cultural reconstruction in ethnicity radically transforms local historical cultural forms towards a global idiom of performance, inequality along class and gender lines, and commodification or folklorisation of culture. Yet such transformation is shown to have a revitalising effect on local expressive culture and on the historic kingship, and is argued to be a survival strategy for local cultural forms in a globalising world.

1. An earlier, Dutch version of this argument served as inaugural lecture, Chair of Ethnicity and Ideology in Development Processes in the Third World, Free University, Amsterdam, 20 March 1992; a much shortened French version was published as Wim M.J. van Binsbergen, 'Kazanga: Ethnicité en Afrique entre État et Tradition', in W. van Binsbergen and K. Schilder (eds), *Ethnicity in Africa. Special Issue of Afrika Focus* 9(1-2), 1993, 16-41. The present version was expanded in the light of additional insights gained during two short visits to Zambia in May and October 1992, as well as correspondence with members of the Kazanga cultural association, a perusal of the association's files as kept by its Hon. Secretary, and analysis of videotapes and photographs of the Kazanga ceremonies in 1991 and 1992 as kindly made available by Messrs J. Kapangila and W.M. Shihenyata.

### 1 ETHNICITY

A perennial and probably universal aspect of the human condition is that we give names, not only to human individuals and to elements of the non-human world, but also to the groupings into which we organise ourselves.<sup>2</sup> It is common for members of a society to designate their own grouping by a proper name, and even more common for them to give names to other groupings around them. Although such nomenclature is often vague, it brings about a dramatic ordering within the wider social field which various communities share with one another. To project on to another grouping a distinct name which does not apply to one's own grouping is to deny that other grouping the possibility of differing only gradually from one's own. Naming renders the opposition between groupings absolute.<sup>3</sup>

Every society comprises a large number of named sets of people: local communities, kin groupings, production groupings, parts of an administrative apparatus, cults, voluntary associations. We would call such a named set of people an 'ethnic group' only if certain additional characteristics were present: if individual membership were ascribed to or derived from a birthright, if the set of people consciously and explicitly distinguished itself from other such sets in its social environment by reference to specific cultural differences, and if the members of such a set identified with one another on the basis of shared historical experience.

The nature of the additional characteristics mentioned is gradual and not absolute. In order to be effective, the relationships which people enter into with one another have to be not only systematic but also flexible and contradictory. Most ethnic groups, for example, include a minority of members who have gained their membership not at birth but only later in life, in the context of marriage, migration, language acquisition, adoption, the assumption of a new identity and life style, or religious conversion.<sup>4</sup> Ethnic fields are differently organised at different places in the world and in different periods of human history: there is a great variation in the way in

2. R. Fardon, 'African Ethnogenesis: Limits to the Comparability of Ethnic Phenomena', in L. Holy (ed.), *Comparative Anthropology* (Oxford, 1987), 168-88, however, denies the existence of universals in the study of ethnicity.

3. On the important role of binary opposition in human thought, see C. Lévi-Strauss, *Le Totémisme aujourd'hui* (Paris, 1962); *La Pensée sauvage* (Paris, 1962).

4. See F. Salamone, 'Becoming Hausa: Ethnic Identity Change and its Implications for the Study of Ethnic Pluralism and Stratification', *Africa* 45(5), 1975, 410-25; E.A. Schultz, 'From Pagan to Pullo: Ethnic Identity Change in Northern Cameroon', *Africa* 54(1), 1984, 46-64. The few migrants from Kaoma district who are successful in town sometimes seek to pose as members of a more prestigious ethnic group: Bemba, or Lozi. Such posing ('passing') is a much studied aspect of ethnic and race relations in North America; see for example St.C. Drake and H.R. Cayton, *Black Metropolis*, 2 vols (New York/Evanston, 1962), 159f.

which people demarcate ethnic groups through distinctive cultural attributes such as language, and through historical consciousness.<sup>5</sup>

It is only in the most recent decades that anthropology has recognised the varied and contradictory nature of ethnic names, rather than seeing them as labels marking apparently self-evident units of culture and social organisation. From the 1960s, the concept of 'tribe' has been subjected to scrutiny, and has been revealed as an ethnocentric and reified designation of an ethnic group, within the global ethnic field but outside the politically dominant civilisation in other words, in the so-called 'Third World'.<sup>6</sup>

The literature exploring the rise and fall of the concept of tribe in Africa has centred on several key processes. In the course of *colonisation* the state created administrative units which were presented as 'tribes' – a concept which Africans soon took over in their own perception and political action.<sup>7</sup> The *implantation of capitalism* by means of cash crops and migrant labour eroded local systems of production, reproduction, and signification, and at the same time produced regional inequalities which soon came to be interpreted in terms of an ethnic idiom. In the course of *urbanisation* a plurality of ethnic

- 5: This is stressed, for example, by D.L. Horowitz, 'Ethnic Identity', in N. Glazer and D.P. Moynihan (eds), *Ethnicity: Theory and Experience* (Cambridge Mass., 1975), 111-40; R. Fardon, 'African Ethnogenesis: 168-88; G. Prunier, 'Evolution des critères de définition ethnique en Ouganda (Du xvie siècle à la fin de l'ère coloniale)', in J.P. Chrétien and G. Prunier (eds), *Les Ethnies ont une histoire* (Paris, 1989), 201-12. Ethnic groups may have a subjective historical consciousness, but what they always have is an objective history open to academic enquiry, from their emergence to their disappearance. See E. Tonkin, M. McDonald and M. Chapman (eds), *History and Ethnicity* (London, 1989); L. Vail (ed.), *The Creation of Tribalism in Southern Africa* (London, 1989); Chrétien and Prunier, *Les Ethnies*. Analytical distinctions between ethnic groups and other ascriptive groupings such as castes and classes do not necessarily correspond with analogous distinctions in the consciousness of the social actors themselves. Within an ethnic field, participants may articulate political, economic, and ritual inequalities between ethnic groups in a way which the analyst would rather associate with classes and castes. A famous example of such ambiguity is E. Leach, *Political Systems of Highland Burma* (London, 1954); see also F. Barth, 'Introduction', in F. Barth (ed.), *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries: The Social Organization of Culture Differences* (Bergen, 1969); M.R. Doornbos, *Not All the King's Men* (Paris, 1978); J.C. Mitchell, *The Kalela Dance: Aspects of Social Relationships among Urban Africans in Northern Rhodesia* (Manchester, 1956); 'Perceptions of Ethnicity and Ethnic Behaviour: An Empirical Exploration', in A. Cohen (ed.), *Urban Ethnicity* (London, 1974), 1-35; R. Lemarchand, 'The State and Society in Africa: Ethnic Stratification and Re-stratification in Historical and Comparative Perspective', in D. Rothchild and V.A. Olorunsola (eds), *State Versus Ethnic Claims: African Policy Dilemmas* (Boulder, 1983), 44-66.
6. P.C.W. Gutkind (ed.), *The Passing of Tribal Man in Africa* (Leiden, 1970); J. Helm (ed.), *Essays on the Problem of Tribe: Proceedings of the 1967 Spring Meeting of the American Ethnological Society* (Seattle, 1968); M. Godelier, 'Le concept de tribu: Crise d'un concept ou crise des fondements empiriques de l'anthropologie?', in *Horizon, trajets marxistes en anthropologie* (Paris, 1973), 93-131.
7. For example, T.O. Ranger, 'Race and Tribe in Southern Africa: European Ideas and African Acceptance', in R. Ross (ed.), *Race and Colonialism* (The Hague, 1982), 121-42; Vail, *The Creation*.

groups and their members engaged in urban relationships which, through a process of selective transformation, referred less and less to the traditional culture of their respective region of origin.<sup>8</sup> *Decolonisation* involved the rise of a nationalism which exposed ethnic fragmentation as a product of manipulation by the state: at the same time, there were ethnic overtones of political mobilisation and networks of patronage in the post-colonial states,<sup>9</sup> and military and one-party regimes often presented themselves as the solution for ethnically-based domestic political problems. Most recently there has been *the rise of democratic alternatives* which, despite their emphasis on constitutional universalism, would yet seem to offer new opportunities for ethnic mobilisation.<sup>10</sup>

Despite the proliferation of Africanist literature on these topics, we still know little of the processes of symbolic and cultural transformation which have informed ethnicity in these contexts.<sup>11</sup> It is these processes, specifically, which constitute the main topic of the present argument.

## 2

## ETHNIC IDENTITY AND ETHNIC BROKERAGE

Writers on ethnicity often use the term 'identity',<sup>12</sup> which we might define as the socially constructed perception of self as subsumed within a group membership. A person plays different roles in the context of different groupings, and therefore has a plurality of identities, acquired in the course

8. Among many studies I cite only the classic Mitchell, *Kalela Dance*.
9. For an excellent analysis, see J.F. Bayart, 'Le Théâtre d'ombres de l'ethnicité', in *L'Etat en Afrique: La Politique du Ventre* (Paris, 1989), 65-86.
10. See R. Buijtenhuijs, 'Democratisering en Etniciteit in Zwart Afrika', paper presented at the workshop, 'Etniciteit in Afrika', Leiden, African Studies Centre (1991); R. Buijtenhuijs and E. Rijnerse, *Democratization in Sub-Saharan Africa (1989-1992): An Overview of the Literature*, African Studies Centre Research Report No. 51 (Leiden, 1993).
11. A trend in recent Dutch and Belgian research on ethnicity seeks to address this one-sidedness by stressing cultural aspects; see K. Schilder & W.M.J. van Binsbergen, 'Recent Dutch and Belgian Perspectives on Ethnicity in Africa', in Van Binsbergen and Schilder, *Ethnicity in Africa*, 3-15.
12. In the limited scope of this argument I cannot do justice to the very extensive, multi-disciplinary literature on identity. For Zambia specifically, see A. Epstein, *Ethos and Identity: Three Studies in Ethnicity* (London, 1978), which dissociates itself from the earlier emphasis by his close colleague Mitchell on more classification in the ethnicity research. A masterly approach, with emphasis on expressive culture, is J. Blacking, 'The Concept of Identity and Folk Concepts of Self: A Venda Case Study', in A. Jacobson-Widding (ed.), *Identity: Personal and Socio-cultural* (Uppsala, 1983), 47-65. For an inspiring French contribution, see J.L. Amselle, *Logiques métisses: Anthropologie de l'identité en Afrique et ailleurs* (Paris, 1990).

of his/her socialisation into the membership of these groupings.

The rise of an ethnic group in Africa has often involved the launching of a new identity, and the installation of that identity in the personalities of the ethnic group's prospective members. The project of ethnicisation privileges the ethnic identity over other identities, and subsumes them within itself. It presents the ethnic identity as the most deeply-anchored one, and as all-encompassing.

In the savannah belt of South Central Africa, which will be the scene of most of my argument, scores of ethnic groups have been distinguishing themselves from one another since the nineteenth century, despite the fact that the distribution of patterns of production, reproduction, and signification reveals an underlying cultural unity in the area.<sup>13</sup> For those sharing in this regional cultural continuity, self-perception is primarily anchored in ethnic names. Only more diffusely do people conceive of their identity as that of members of kin groups, or of local groups at other levels of inclusiveness and scale.

Ethnicity comprises the process of assuming a consciousness, often at the persuasion of ethnic leaders and brokers. In the course of this process a plurality of diffuse, accumulated, often cross-cutting, identities is brought under the denominator of one ethnic identity. The boundary of this identity is then marked by a specific name. Elements from the pre-existing culture, which are selectively reassembled so as to fall within that boundary, serve as distinctive attributes. In this bundling and reshuffling of identities, the personal experience of self and of the world is transformed: the discovery 'I am a Fleming, Azeri, Yoruba, Nkoya' offers an ordering perspective in which previously experienced powerlessness, deprivation, and estrangement suddenly appear in a new light. It is as if collective historical experience suddenly makes sense of these experiences, and offers hope of their meaningful transformation. Viewed in this way, ethnicity has many parallels with other ideological phenomena such as nationalism, the awakening of class consciousness, religious conversion, and religious innovation.

Ethnicity has a dialectical quality which may, indeed, serve as its engine.<sup>14</sup> On the one hand, ethnic naming with its binary oppositions presents an image of ethnic groups as *unconditional, bounded, inescapable, and timeless*.<sup>15</sup> On

13. Such continuity was especially stressed by Vansina in his pioneering work: J. Vansina, *Kingdoms of the Savanna* (Madison, 1966); W.M.J. van Binsbergen, *Religious Change in Zambia* (London, 1981), is an attempt to explore the religious dimension of this continuity.
14. For a similar insight see V.C. Uchendu, 'The Dilemma of Ethnicity and Polity Primacy in Black Africa', in G. de Vos and L. Romanucci-Ross (eds), *Ethnic Identity: Cultural Continuities and Change* (Palo Alto, 1975), 265.
15. Early researchers of ethnic phenomena in Africa have been persuaded, precisely by this aspect, to analyse ethnicity in terms of primordial identity — a view exploded by M.R. Doornbos, 'Some Conceptual Problems Concerning Ethnicity in Integration Analysis', *Civilisations* 22(2), 1972, 268-83.

the other hand, the process of constructing a culture which marks the group's boundary with distinctive symbols and with the consciousness of a shared history entails *flexibility, choice, constructedness, and recent change*. Both, entirely contradictory, aspects form part of ethnicity. This dialectical quality renders ethnicity particularly suitable for mediating, in processes of social change, between fundamentally different social contexts, and particularly between the local level on the one hand and the state and wider economic structures on the other.<sup>16</sup>

Under conditions of ethnicisation, integration between the local level and the national/international level becomes a matter of group rather than of individual action. A set of people is restructured internally so as to become an ethnic group. The cultural package which they design in the process is of value, not just because it symbolises abstract power relations between the local and national levels, but because in its own right it gives group members a major stake in the negotiations between the emerging ethnic group and the broader world. Strategically emphasising cultural and linguistic elements, group members distinguish themselves from members of rival groups at the local or regional level, while at the national level of socio-political organisation they compete for the state's political and economic prizes — for the exercise of power and the benefit of government expenditure — by making use of the state's recognition of the ethnically constructed cultural package.

Although all persons involved in this process are in principle equals as carriers of the ethnic identity, contact with the broader world, especially if it yields the desired results, causes new inequalities within the group. The mediation takes place via political, economic, and ideological brokers who — through greater knowledge, better education, more experience, better political contacts and/or more material means of sustaining such contacts — are better placed than their fellow-members of the ethnic group to exploit the opportunities offered by the outside world.<sup>17</sup> These brokers develop ethnic leadership into an instrument of power formation which works in two directions: externally, towards the outside world, where these leaders claim

16. Marxist anthropology analyses the mediation between such fundamentally structured social sectors in terms of the articulation, or linking, of modes of production; see P.L. Geschiere, *Village Communities and the State* (London, 1982); W.M.J. van Binsbergen and P.L. Geschiere (eds), *Old Modes of Production and Capitalist Encroachment* (London, 1985). Although the study of ethnicity demonstrates that the symbolic domain cannot be regarded as subordinate to production and reproduction, the articulation of modes of production perspective remains inspiring in this field — see W.M.J. van Binsbergen, 'From Tribe to Ethnicity in Western Zambia: The Unit of Study as an Ideological Problem', in Van Binsbergen and Geschiere, *Old Modes*.
17. The central role of this type of broker is discussed in an extensive anthropological literature, in which F. Barth, *Models of Social Organization*, Occasional Papers No. 23 (London, 1966), features as a classic.

resources in exchange for an effective ordering of the local domain;<sup>18</sup> and internally, within the ethnic group itself, where the brokers trade a limited share of their outside spoils for internal authority, prestige, and control at the local level.

In the context of this brokerage between local community and the outside world, asserting the apparently traditional and authentic – but in fact newly reconstructed – culture appears as an important task and as a source of power for the brokers. As part of this task, ethnic brokers become active in promoting associations, publications, and festivals.

The insistence on ethnic identity produces powerful ideological claims, which the outside world sometimes meets with more sympathy than with analytical understanding. Outside actors may not recognise these claims as recent, strategic, and rhetorical products, but may idealise them – as the ethnic brokers themselves do – as ‘the courageous expressions, worthy of our deepest respect, of an inescapable identity which these people have acquired in childhood socialisation and which takes a desperate stand against the encroachments of the outside world’. In today’s thinking about intercontinental development co-operation, for instance, a fair place has been reserved for such claims and for their associated cultural expressions.

*Is it really the mediation of a deeply anchored tradition which is at stake here? Is that the reason why ethnic processes deserve the kind of sympathy and support which we, in a rapidly changing world, are inclined to extend to forms of culture threatened with extinction? How do these ethnic manifestations reveal the details of the negotiation process between the outside world and the local community? How do they express new inequalities? Can we find here new arguments for the classic thesis of Marxist researchers and politicians, who claim that the ethnic process produces a false consciousness which prevents the actors from realising the underlying structures of exploitation such as should be interpreted in class*

18. In ethnic mediation, the outside world does not merely consist of the state and nothing more. J.D.Y. Peel, ‘The Cultural Work of Yoruba Ethnogenesis’, in Tonkin *et al.*, *History and Ethnicity*, 198-215, describes Yoruba ethnicity as a nineteenth-century project in which an early church leader played a leading part – just as was the case among the Nkoya. L. Vail, ‘Ethnicity in Southern African History’, in Vail, *The Creation*, 1-19, mentions, besides local politicians and church leaders, academic researchers as mediators in many ethnicisation processes in Southern Africa; cf. R.J. Papstein, ‘From Ethnic Identity to Tribalism: The Upper Zambezi Region of Zambia, 1830-1981’, in Vail, *The Creation*, 372-94; Van Binsbergen, ‘From Tribe’, 181-234. The mediation process is also a theme in Ranger, ‘Race and Tribe, 121-42. Recent studies of Afrikaners or Boers in South Africa have also elucidated the role of creative writers, and in this respect there are numerous parallels with other parts of Africa; for example, Okot p’Bitek as a champion of Acholi ethnicity in Uganda; J.K. van de Werk, ‘Nawoord’, in Okot p’Bitek, *Lied van Lawino en Lied van Ocol*, trans. W.M.J. van Binsbergen and A. van Rijsewijk (Maasbree, 1980), 257-69.

terms?’<sup>19</sup> *What does the analysis of the ethnic negotiation process teach us about the characteristics of the wider political and economic system in which this process is embedded in the world today?*

I invite the reader to come with me to an ethnic festival in Central Western Zambia to which these questions are eminently applicable, and where they may find some provisional answer.

## 3

### THE EMERGENCE OF THE NKOYA AS AN ETHNIC GROUP, AND THE ‘KAZANGA CULTURAL ASSOCIATION’<sup>20</sup>

Every year since 1988 the Kazanga ceremony has taken place on the first weekend of July in Kaoma district in Western Zambia. From its inception

19. See J.C. Edelstein, ‘Pluralist and Marxist Perspectives on Ethnicity and Nation-building’, in W. Bell and W.E. Freeman (eds), *Ethnicity and Nation-Building: Comparative, International and Historical Perspectives* (Beverly Hills, 1974), 45-57; J. Saul, *The State and Revolution in Eastern Africa* (New York, 1979); J. Kahn, ‘Explaining Ethnicity: A Review Article’, *Critique of Anthropology* 4(16), 1981, 43-52; Van Binsbergen, ‘From Tribe’. Until recently, the Marxist approach has dominated the study of ethnicity among South African blacks. The struggle against the apartheid state as a manipulator or even creator of black ethnicity has led analysts – in a way which is laudable from a political point of view, but too reductionist from a scholarly point of view – to deny the status of ethnicity as an independent variable: ethnicity for them could not be anything but perverted class consciousness; for example, H.J. and R.E. Simons, *Class and Colour in South Africa 1850-1950* (Harmondsworth, 1969); A. Mafeje, ‘The Ideology of Tribalism’, *Journal of Modern African Studies* 9, 1971, 253-61; I.R. Phimister and C. van Onselen, ‘The Political Economy of Tribal Animosity: A Case Study of the 1929 Bulawayo “Faction Fight”’, *Journal of Southern African Studies* 6(1), 1979, 1-43. In the last few years we have witnessed a gradual change away from this position among South African students of ethnicity; for example, W. Beinart, ‘Worker Consciousness, Ethnic Particularism and Nationalism: The Experience of a South African Migrant, 1930-1960’, in S. Marks and S. Trapido (eds), *The Politics of Race, Class and Nationalism in Twentieth-Century South Africa* (London, 1988), 286-309, who presents a detailed biography of a labour migrant, and in the process pays ample attention to the ethnic strategies of the black population.

20. Fieldwork in Kaoma district and among migrants from Kaoma district living in Lusaka was undertaken in 1972-1974, and, during shorter visits, generously financed by the African Studies Centre, Leiden, in 1977, 1978, 1981, 1988, 1989, and 1992 (twice); to the Netherlands Foundation for Tropical Research (WOTRO) I owe a debt of gratitude for financing one year of writing-up in 1974-1975. On the local society and its history, see Van Binsbergen, *Religious Change*; ‘From Tribe’; ‘De Schaduw waar Je niet Overheen mag Stappen: Een Westers Onderzoeker op het Meisjesfeest van de Zambiaanse Nkoya’, in W.M.S. van Binsbergen and M.R. Doornbos (eds), *Afrika in Spiegelbeeld* (Haarlem, 1987); ‘De Chaos Getemd? Samenwonen en Zingeving in Modern Afrika’, in H.J.M. Claessen (ed.), *De Chaos Getemd?* (Leiden, 1991), 31-47; ‘Minority Language, Ethnicity and the State in Two African Situations: The Nkoya of Zambia and the Kalanga of Botswana’, paper presented at the Conference on African Languages, Development and the State, Centre of African Studies, SOAS, 1991; *Tears of Rain: Ethnicity and History in Central Western Zambia* (London/New York, 1992); and Van Binsbergen and Geschiere, *Old Modes*.

until 1991 it was held at Shikombwe, the capital of Chief (*Mwene*) Mutondo. That Shikombwe is a royal residence (*lukena*, pl. *zinkenena*) is clear from the *lilapa* surrounding the inner part of the agglomeration: a reed fence supported by pointed poles, which is a royal prerogative. Inside the *lilapa* is a simple four-roomed house which serves as the royal palace, a reed audience hall, and a shelter where the instruments of the royal orchestra are kept and where they are played twice a day. A large open space outside the *lilapa* is dominated by the modern court building, in front of which a rough flagpole has been erected; here the *Kapasus* constables attached to the royal court hoist the Zambian flag every morning. This open space, surrounded by the residential compounds of the courtiers and members of the royal family, is the scene of the Kazanga festival.

Mutondo's area consists of about ten thousand square kilometres of fertile wooded savannah inhabited by peasants in small villages that are mostly concentrated along the many rivers and streams. The inhabitants of the area are ethnically diverse: many who live here consider themselves subjects of Mutondo and members of the Nkoya ethnic group, and speak the Nkoya language by preference; others identify with the Lozi group,<sup>21</sup> which is politically and socially dominant in Western Zambia; while others are aligned with the groups which since the beginning of the twentieth century have immigrated en masse from Angola, especially the Luvale<sup>22</sup> and Luchazi.

Mutondo derives his hereditary title and hence royal status from a kingdom which was established in this region in the eighteenth century by his ancestors, who were dissidents breaking away from the famous Lunda empire in southern Zaire. The dynastic group adopted the name of Nkoya, derived from the name of a forested area around the confluence of the Zambezi and the Kabompo rivers.<sup>23</sup> After beginning to pay tribute to Barotseland's rulers in the middle of the nineteenth century, they were later incorporated as the 'Makonya' within the colonial state of Northern Rhodesia in 1900, with Mutondo becoming a relatively high-ranking title within the Lozi aristocracy. When Zambia was declared an independent republic in 1964, its government continued to subsidise the royal residence and its retinue in recognition of the treaty which had been concluded with the Lozi king in 1900 and 1964.

Despite these attempts to foster peaceful co-existence, the Nkoya have experienced the Lozi as exercising a humiliating domination, especially during the period of colonial rule which allowed the indigenous Lozi

21. See G. Prins, *The Hidden Hippopotamus* (Cambridge, 1980).

22. See Papstein, 'From Ethnic Identity to Tribalism'.

23. There are indications (whose linguistic plausibility I cannot judge) that the name *Nkoya* goes back even further: that it is a corruption of the name 'Kola', which designates the Lunda core area — the cradle of many dynasties in South Central Africa.

administration much freedom.<sup>24</sup> Besides Mutondo, only one royal title in the region managed to survive the process of incorporation into the Lozi state: Mwene Kahare of the Mashasha people. The bearers of other royal titles were replaced by Lozi representative *indunas*, or moved beyond the borders of Barotseland.

A decisive year in the development of Nkoya into a self-assertive ethnic group was 1937, when the Lozi king established a filial branch of his own court smack in the middle of Mankoya district, in order to control the local chiefs, the judiciary, and district finance. Similarly decisive was 1947, when the dissenting Mutondo Muchayila was demoted and exiled for ten years by the Lozi king. At the same time the Rev. Johasaphat Shimunika, the first autochthonous pastor of the Evangelical Church of Zambia,<sup>25</sup> translated the New Testament and the Psalms<sup>26</sup> into the local language, which by then was being called Nkoya along with its speakers. Despite much effort from the missionaries it proved impossible to have this language recognised for use in education and in the media — understandably, since its speakers comprise less than one per cent of the Zambian population.<sup>27</sup> Attempts at acceptance also came from Rev. Shimunika, who between 1950 and 1960 processed oral traditions into writings which depicted a glorious past for the growing Nkoya identity, which claimed the exiled royals and their subjects as part of the broader collectivity, and which exposed Lozi domination as historically unjustified.<sup>28</sup>

During this period of its formation as an ethnic group, the Nkoya regarded Zambia's struggle for national independence primarily as an opportunity to end Lozi domination at the regional level, but their political initiatives were prohibited.<sup>29</sup> Their bid to oppose Lozi power by supporting UNIP (the United

24. In the northern part of Barotseland in 1940 the Luvale group managed to break away from the Lozi administration and to create their own district directly under the central state; see Papstein, 'From Ethnic Identity to Tribalism'; for the influence of this process on Nkoya ethnicity see Van Binsbergen, *Tears*, 39.

25. In fact, 'Andrew Murray Memorial Mission', later named 'Africa Evangelical Fellowship', whose mission church became organisationally independent under the name of 'Evangelical Church of Zambia'.

26. *Testamenta ya Yipya/Nyimbo* (Nkoya New Testament and Psalms), (London, 1952).

27. Zambia, in addition to having English as its official language, has recognised as many as seven regional languages, including Lozi.

28. Anonymous [J.M. Shimunika], n.d., Muhumpu wa Byambo bya Mwaka — Nkoya [Luampa, Mankoya: South African General Mission], photocopy, author's collection; and Shimunika's *magnum opus*, W.M.J. van Binsbergen (ed.), *J. Shimunika's Likota lya Bankoya: Nkoya version*, Research Report No. 31B, African Studies Centre (Leiden, 1988).

29. Two political organisations under a 'Mankoya' emblem were founded: the 'Mankoya and Bantu Fighting Fund' and the 'Mankoya Front'; however, on grounds of 'tribalist' agitation these were very soon prohibited. In addition, the creation of an African National Congress (ANC) branch in Mankoya was initially prevented by the colonial authorities in collusion with the Lozi indigenous administration; D.C. Mulford, *Zambia: The Politics of Independence, 1957-1964* (London, 1967).

National Independence Party) backfired when the party within Barotseland became a focus of Lozi support. This caused many Nkoya to join the opposition in protest, and estranged them from the UNIP-ruled national state during the first years of Zambia's independence. The Nkoya were to gain their first and only parliamentary seat and ministerial position in the 1973 general elections, after the decline of the Lozi in national politics which began in 1969.<sup>30</sup>

The activities of the modern and the traditional political Nkoya elite further promoted the growth of Nkoya ethnicity. Benefiting from the influx of population into the eastern part of the district after the initiation of a large development project, this elite developed a loyal, enthusiastic, and ethnically defined clientele by formulating goals such as increasing the subsidies of state-recognised chiefs, reinstating lapsed titles, and propagating the use of the Nkoya language in education and the media. The growth of local UNIP branches under the leadership of this modern elite rendered the expression of Nkoya ethnicity acceptable to the national state. For the first time the Zambian national anthem and the UNIP marching songs could be heard to be sung in the Nkoya language.

But it was among the migrant working people of the region that ethnicity was to have its most immediate and practical application. Forced by economic circumstance to work in the urban areas or on the commercial farms of Zambia, Zimbabwe, and South Africa, these migrants maintained a strong orientation to the villages to which they hoped to return. Although their low level of education, limited job experience, and low ethnic status made it difficult for them collectively and permanently to occupy purely Nkoya niches within the capitalist labour market, groups of 'homeboys' nevertheless, played an important role in providing support upon the migrants arrival in town, and in times of unemployment, illness, and death. Wherever in town their numbers allowed for the staging of collective, ceremonial rites of healing, of puberty, and of death and mourning, all accompanied by home music and dance, such rites offered the opportunity to keep alive contacts with homeboys. For those who had a measure of success in town the Evangelical Church of Zambia offered an urban network, power base, and identity; this church was mainly active in their home area, and through its mission schools had offered a modest channel of upward mobility. Of broader popular appeal to most villagers and urban migrants, however, were the syncretist cults, which combined autochthonous religion with a measure of Christianity.

It is perhaps the continually tenuous status of Nkoya ethnicity which explains why the urban-based Nkoya, despite the existence of many other

30. G. Caplan, *The Elites of Barotseland 1878-1969* (London, 1970); R. Molteno, 'Cleavage and Conflict in Zambian Politics', in W. Tordoff (ed.), *Politics in Zambia* (Manchester, 1974), 62-106.

ethnic associations in Zambia during the colonial period, formalised their organisation so late. Only in 1982 did the 'Kazanga Cultural Association' materialise as a formally registered society under the patronage of the Nkoya minister. This was an initiative of a handful of people from Kaoma district, who, by middle age, had made the difficult leap from insecure circulatory migrant labour to membership of the capital's middle class. But even once ensconced in seeming security in the ranks of the urban middle class, these people were not immune to the economic crisis precipitated in Zambia by the drop in the copper price in 1975, which has lasted until today and which has had crucial implications for local districts such as Kaoma. Faced with this crisis, some returned to the district forever, while others started farming there but continued to live in town. Their enthusiasm for Nkoya identity brought these urbanites into close contact with the district's political elite, and gave them new credit in the eyes of the villagers from whom they had earlier distanced themselves through their class position and urbanisation. They began to adopt Nkoya ethnic goals.

Against the background of these developments, the Kazanga association played a variety of roles. Although its membership is primarily middle class, it has continued to offer a support structure to migrants, and has provided an infrastructure for several conferences intended to validate the Nkoya translation of the Old Testament, a project left unfinished when the Revd Shimunika died in 1981. But its main goal was and remains the promotion, through an annual festival of the same name, of the local culture which was labelled Nkoya as well. From the name of a forest, via that of a dynasty and a district, the name came to designate an ethnic group, and at the same time a language, a culture, and a cultural project intended to articulate this newly emerged group at the regional and national levels.

## 4

*THE KAZANGA FESTIVAL IN 1989*

In the open space around the court building reed shelters have been erected, offering a refuge from the winter's sun to a minority of the audience, numbering in total roughly one thousand. Also two 'loges' have been constructed out of the same material: one for the chiefs, and, at the other side of a reed wall, another one for a handful of state dignitaries, including two ministers.<sup>31</sup> The two-pronged strategy of ethnic mediation could not be

31. In 1989 the state loge was occupied by, among others: the Cabinet Minister for Labour, Social Development and Culture, Mr J. Mulimba, also member of the UNIP Central Committee; the Junior Minister of Culture, Mr L. Tembo; Mr J. Kalaluka, a private citizen, until 1988 Member of Parliament for part of the district, and Minister of Economic Affairs; and Mrs S. Mulenga, wife of the Kaoma district Governor, who was himself prevented from attending because of illness.

expressed more eloquently: the construction of ethnic identity towards the chiefs' loge coincides, along a parallel axis in the same viewing direction, with the assertion of that identity towards the state loge.

Since in 1989 the media were still disappointingly absent from Kazanga, no special recording facilities are required. However, there is a loudspeaker installation, which constantly squeals and thus leaves no doubt about the fact that the local music, song, and dance are now to be produced in a format different from the usual one. The audience does not pay an entrance fee. Rather, the costs are borne out of spontaneous contributions from the audience during the dances: people come up to the dancing ground to place their coins and bills on the head or shoulders of the dancers. Costs are covered, too, from a general collection, and from a fund earned by the Kazanga association from the sale of Nkoya-language calendars depicting 'heights of Nkoya culture': the dance of the *kankanga*, which marks the end of the life phase between a woman's menarche and her becoming nubile, and the traditional hunter complete with his bow and arrow, axe, and tinderbox.

After the spectators have installed themselves on the festival grounds, the four chiefs, one after the other, make their dramatic entrance. The festival controllers tell people to kneel down for the traditional royal salute. Directly in front of a small thatched shrine, which is situated in the centre of the festival grounds, musicians produce the unique sounds of the snare drum (*ngoma ntambwe*) and the royal bell (*ngongi*), which are very rarely heard even at the royal courts. Preceded by a *kapasu* walking with measured parade steps, the chief struts on to the festival grounds, followed by a procession of subjects, which, in the vanguard staying narrowly behind the chief towards the back, tapers out to the left and the right, where the stately steps transform into dance steps. The women in the retinue ululate thrilling guttural sounds. The musicians immediately behind the chief are all but pushed away by two of the festival directors, who on their shoulders carry a cassette recorder for the purpose of recording the festival's every detail. When the chief has proceeded half way around the festival grounds, a few other members of the Kazanga association step forward to welcome him. Cheered by the crowd, and while the chief's traditional praise names blast from the loudspeakers, he takes his place in the loge. After a few minutes of silence, during which several more owners of cassette recorders place their equipment, in recording position, near the musicians, the crowd claps the royal salute. The musicians, kneeling behind their instruments, then proceed to sound one of the praise songs from their habitual repertoire. This sequence is repeated for each of the four chiefs.

Besides the chief's entrances the day's programme, distributed to participants and onlookers in mimeographed form, displays the following items:

- an official section featuring the Zambian national anthem, sung in Nkoya, and speeches by the chairman of the Kazanga association and the minister of culture; and
- performances by various dancing groups, solo dancers, and the accompanying orchestra composed of xylophones and drums, aimed at presenting a representative sample of Nkoya expressive culture.<sup>32</sup>

In the pages which follow, I shall look first at the official part of the festival, in which Kazanga clearly appears as mediation towards the national state. Then I shall assess how the festival, by virtue of its organisational structure, selects and transforms the local culture. The festival not only expresses new inequalities, but also exerts a decisive influence on the hierarchy of the traditional chiefs. Finally I shall consider the festival's symbolic production, in which its mediatory nature is most acutely expressed.

## 5

## KAZANGA AND THE STATE

Kazanga's mediation is directed vertically, at the state, rather than horizontally, at other ethnic groups. The festival no longer carries any explicit reference to the Lozi as ethnic enemies or as a reference group.<sup>33</sup> Meanwhile

32. According to the 1989 programme, the list of solo dancers featured Mwene Mutondo himself, whose royal dance was to constitute the festival's culmination point. However, this part of the programme was cancelled — the explicit reason given that the aged chief was not feeling well (he died of old age in 1990 two weeks after that year's Kazanga festival); but probably another major reason was that the organisers were prevented from articulating Mutondo hegemony to an even larger extent than was already the case — as we shall see in Section 7 — even without Mwene Mutondo's solo dance.
33. It is remarkable, however, that the *misisi*, a woman's upper garment derived from the Victorian dress of early missionary women in Barotseland and the neo-traditional dress of the Lozi elite, is never seen to be worn at Kazanga, although several prominent Nkoya women do possess a *misisi* and do not hesitate to wear it in public appearances at the provincial level (the province roughly coincides with the former Barotseland). Even though the Lozi are not explicitly referred to as ethnic enemies during Kazanga, elements suggestive of a cultural heritage shared between Nkoya and Lozi are avoided at Kazanga.

The absence of open expressions of Nkoya-Lozi hostility at Kazanga, however, does not mean that this is no longer an issue. In recent years such hostility has been exacerbated by the fact that individual Lozi farmers take possession (often with the consent of the Nkoya chiefs) of fallow land which the Nkoya consider as ancestrally theirs. Kazanga members claim that prominent Lozi are trying to discredit Kazanga by spreading the rumour that human sacrifice is secretly practised on that occasion, as in the original form of Kazanga over a century ago (see p.109). Moreover, early in 1991 Kazanga leaders helped Mwene Mutondo and Mwene Kahare appeal to President Kaunda to prevent the Lozi Paramount Chief from abolishing the latter's chieftainship or at least making them totally subordinate to the Lozi establishment at Naliele. The President's intervention reinforced his popularity in the district to such an extent that even after MMD's national victory in October 1991 (see below) UNIP continues to have a strong backing in Kaoma district. In the Kazanga executive, UNIP and MMD supporters have worked hand in hand in the last few years.

the Lozi at the district level have been partly supplanted by the Luvale and the Luchazi, who in 1988 wrested Mr Kalaluka's parliamentary seat from him. Their *makishi* (male circumcision) mask dances, normally never absent from cultural presentations at the district level, are excluded from the Kazanga festival as being non-Nkoya, even though the circumcision ceremony in question was still practised as late as the end of the nineteenth century by the ancestors of those now identifying as Nkoya, particularly in the Mutondo state.<sup>34</sup>

In his address the Kazanga chairman expresses his disappointment about the absence of the media, which, he claims, is all the more unjustified since Kazanga is not a tribal ceremony:

Kazanga ceremony is a ceremony of the Nkoya people like any other ceremony that are [*sic*] held in other parts of the Republic. I wish the government could help us organise this ceremony as the other kinds<sup>35</sup> have received the same help. And I would have wished the TV to cover this ceremony and at the same time the radio. But unfortunately enough this has not been the case on our ceremony for the second time. The party and its government have been made to believe that Kazanga is a tribal ceremony.<sup>36</sup> I say: No! And it is quite unfortunate that people have said so. Kazanga is merely a ceremony of the Nkoya people just like any other ceremony as I have said. (*Applause*)<sup>37</sup>

34. Male circumcision is a widespread ritual complex throughout the region, of which the *makishi* dances form part. Politically and culturally the Nkoya are closely related to the Luvale. The sharp ethnic boundary which exists today with regard to male circumcision between the Nkoya (who now ridicule the custom) and the Luvale (who continue to practise it, along with the attendant Mukanda initiation ceremonies) is largely a development of the last hundred years. See Van Binsbergen, *Tears*, 214 and *passim*; 'Mukanda: Towards a History of Circumcision Rites in Western Zambia, 18th-20th Century', paper read at the International Colloquium on Religion and History in Sub-Saharan Africa, Paris, 15-17 May, 1991, in G. Prunier (ed.), *L'histoire des religions africaines* (Paris, in press).
35. Given the official abhorrence of 'tribalism' in the Zambian political culture, the chairman in his speech (originally in English) avoids the charged word 'tribes', replacing it with 'kinds', which is the literal translation, of *mishobo* (*mushobo*); the latter word is used by Nkoya speakers to denote not only 'species', 'kind', but also 'tribe' or 'ethnic group'. Because of the coinciding of these meanings most Nkoya speakers among the audience will have missed the subtle distinction between 'kinds' and 'tribes'.
36. Obviously the suspicion of tribalism was the official reason for the media's having stayed away. The presence, however, of two ministers at Kazanga suggests that the opinions within the Zambian political centre were divided on this point. From 1991 Kazanga received ample media coverage, both in regular announcements before the event (where Kazanga has been one of only five ethnic annual festivals in the country to be so announced) and in over one hour of television broadcasting of the programme itself.
37. Official address by Mr M. Malapa, Chairman of the Kazanga Cultural Association, at Shikombwe, 1 July 1989.

The Junior Minister of Culture, Mr Tembo, hails from Eastern Zambia, and like ninety-five per cent of the Zambian population he does not know Nkoya.<sup>38</sup> Until a few years ago he would have made his speech entirely in English. But in recognition of the increasingly well-enunciated Nkoya ethnic identity, he has had one of the Kazanga leaders dictate a number of appropriate Nkoya phrases to him, and these he now pronounces – not from paper but, being blind, invisibly from braille notes in his jacket pocket. This is the very first time that a state representative in an official capacity is addressing the Nkoya in their own language. The acclamation is overwhelming.

'Our culture,' says Mr Tembo in laboriously and imperfectly pronounced Nkoya, 'is the Nkoya culture, the culture of Zambia, a great culture which is very dear to us.'<sup>39</sup> Soon switching to English, which Mr Mupishi translates into Nkoya, the minister praises the festival organisers for the excellent reception they have given the politicians, and pronounces their ethnic mediation successful: 'We are here to express the party's policy of cultural unity through diversity. Kazanga is a Zambian ceremony.'

He calls upon the elders to educate the youth 'on the meaning of Kazanga', and exhorts the youth to show interest. 'Let us all be proud that we are Zambians.' This year, 1989, will see the celebration of the silver anniversary of Zambian Independence, and the minister extols God's great blessings praises and the wisdom of President Kaunda:

When we think of the miraculous – er – escape from certain tribes. When we think of the wisdom of our leadership – our great beloved President's wisdom.... We will meaningfully praise God if we treasure what we have. God wants us to look after our nation by following the party's policy, the party's direction; by treasuring our leadership; to listen to them especially when they tell us over and over again: 'love one another', 'love one another'.

At the time of this festival, the Zambian state was bankrupt and needed all the support it could get. The Kaunda regime was near its end; in the democratic elections in 1991 UNIP, after controlling the state for almost thirty years, was defeated by a national democratic coalition named MMD (Movement for Multi-party Democracy), led by Mr F. Chiluba. On the eve of the Kazanga festival in 1989 the Zambian currency was once again devalued by one hundred per cent. His use of the religious idiom concealed the fact that the minister had nothing of more political import to say. But that did not

38. Less than one per cent of the Zambian population has Nkoya as a first language, but given the high degree of multilingualism in Western Zambia, we may assume the number of those who speak Nkoya as a second language to be somewhat higher.
39. The Nkoya word for culture here is *shihemuwa* (lit. 'origin, descent', from *hemuwa*: 'that which one acquires at birth'); the word thus coincides with the analytical term 'ascription'.



disqualify him in the eyes of his audience. Particularly in the light of Nkoya humiliation during the colonial period, and of the initial distrust between the Nkoya and the post-colonial state, Minister Tembo's message of the unconditional acceptance of Nkoya ethnicity by the state is more than sufficient.

At the end of his speech the minister, once Zambia's most popular singer, calls upon the public to sing, in Nkoya, a simple song on Zambian development, with lyrics written by the minister himself. His call is answered reluctantly. In accompaniment he strikes the ground in front of the microphone with the folding parts of his blind man's stick.

Let us now analyse the details of the ethnic mediation process as it presents itself at the Kazanga festival.

## 6

### CULTURAL SELECTION AND TRANSFORMATION IN KAZANGA

In Zambia, as almost anywhere in the modern world, public life and the national political culture are dominated by the media, especially radio and television. The conveying of a locally generated ethnic message to the outside world thus requires access to the media, and festivals are a time-honoured means to acquire such access.

In the specific case of the Nkoya two important considerations must also be borne in mind. Of old, Kaoma district has had an extremely rich musical tradition.<sup>40</sup> At the beginning of the nineteenth century the Nkoya royal orchestra was even permanently adopted by the Lozi. Therefore, music often heard through the Zambian media is recognised by Nkoya as their own but is claimed as a distinguishing attribute by the hated traditional establishment of the Lozi. It is only in very recent years that concerted Nkoya efforts to procure radio broadcasts in their own language have borne fruit.

Secondly, the principal public expression of Lozi dominance has been the Kuomboka ceremony, held every April to mark the Lozi king's (later paramount chief's) relocation from his summer to his winter residence. For a century the Kuomboka ceremony has attracted the keen attention of national dignitaries, and later of the media. The Kazanga festival was designed as the Nkoya answer to the Kuomboka ceremony, just as the Kazanga Association was an attempt to emulate the richer, more powerful, numerically stronger,

40. E.D. Brown, 'Drums of Life: Royal Music and Social Life in Western Zambia', Doctoral thesis, University of Washington, School of Music, 1984; D. Kawanga, 'Nkoya Songs as taped by Wim van Binsbergen: Translations and Notes', manuscript, author's collection.

and more efficient Lozi association, which organises the Kuomboka ceremony.<sup>41</sup>

The Kazanga festival, then, is a strategically chosen new form. In what ways does it select and transform existing local culture?

#### *Kazanga in the Nineteenth Century*

The name *Kazanga* is derived from a ritual, in disuse since the end of the nineteenth century,<sup>42</sup> aimed at gaining supernatural permission to partake of the new harvest. The ritual, with the king as principal officiant, climaxed in the sacrifice of one or more slaves over an anthill, which symbolised the land's fertility, with the victims' blood being led into the ground along gullies dug for that purpose.<sup>43</sup> Kazanga was the only moment in the year when the entire people came together around the king, and it was surrounded by extensive performance of music and dance.

It is exclusively these latter aspects which the leaders of the new association have selected in designing a new and modern Kazanga ceremony. It would have been unthinkable to revive the sacrificial and fertility aspects of the old harvest ceremony. This is partly because Nkoya identity has been so inextricably intertwined with the development of the Evangelical Church of Zambia. It is also because Nkoya self-identification has occurred in the

41. Brown, 'Drums'; W.M.J. van Binsbergen, 'Chiefs and the State in Independent Zambia: Exploring the Zambian National Press', *Journal of Legal Pluralism and Unofficial Law* 25-26, 1987, 139-201. See also concluding paragraphs of this article.
42. The morphology of the Nkoya word *Kazanga* is: Ka [nominal prefix, human person, singular] + z ['to come'] + anga [verbal suffix, iterative]: 'the one who comes lastingly or repeatedly'. It thus refers to the chiefs' entrances, to the people's annual coming together on the occasion of the ceremony, but also to the ascent of the Nkoya who articulate their culture at the national level as a self-asserting ethnic group, and probably even to the ethnic brokers who hope to be 'coming men' in the political sense. Probably the word also contains a reference to the harvest (which comes repeatedly, that is annually), personalised as a concept or as a supernatural being — the principle which renders the new food inedible until it has been propitiated in the right manner. Because of the association with *kwezanga mutena*, 'the coming of the day, dawn, east', the word *Kazanga* ties in with the national political symbolism of UNIP (whose slogan has been *Kwacha!*, 'Sunrise!'), and especially with the old cosmological notions in Kaoma district — and not only there — as expressed in the standard prayer used in the purification and healing ritual at the village shrine: the good things of life come, as the rising sun, from the east, whereas the bad things, like the day at sunset, must depart to the west (*Kwayanga mutena*). Incidentally, Lusaka is east of Kaoma district, and Kahare's *lukena* east of that of Mutondo; at Kazanga, Kahare's temporary *lukena* was also situated east of Mutondo's permanent capital.
43. Van Binsbergen, *Tears*, 49f. Incidentally, human sacrifice formed a usual aspect of the royal cult in South Central Africa: in the states of Kaoma district and the surrounding region slaves were ritually sacrificed not only at Kazanga but also to the *lilapa* and to the royal drums, on the occasion of royal burials, and for the preparation of royal medicine. Substitution of humans by sacrificial animals was not possible, since in this tsetse-infested region there were hardly any domestic animals, and hunting and fishing formed the principal sources of animal protein.

context of a post-colonial state insisting on its respect for human rights, and in the context of peripheral capitalism, in which food and crops are viewed as commodities and where the fertility of the land has lost its sacred nature.

#### *Kazanga for Four Chiefs*

As an expression of the recent Nkoya identity, the new-style Kazanga ceremony would make sense only if it involved all four chiefs with their retinue and subjects, rather than being limited to the original single ruler. Here there is a major problem. In Western Zambia royal persons, as an expression of their incomparable political and ritual status, are separated from their subjects through strict rules of avoidance and respect. For instance, they must not eat together with anybody else (except very close kin), nor come into contact with death. They should be approached only through the intervention of court dignitaries, and on such occasions the visitor displays humility through the adoption of a kneeling, squatting, or sitting position and through rhythmic clapping. The purpose of court life is not so much the handling of administrative affairs as the glorification of the king and the guarding of his prestige, protocol, and person. The king in his residence (*lukena*) is the living centre of the community and the single axis on which the world turns. It is this fundamental idea which was expressed by the old Kazanga ceremony.

Kings who are equals should not, strictly speaking, visit one another, eat together, or sleep under one roof.<sup>44</sup> When a meeting is inevitable, the visiting king should have his own retinue and a separate, temporary *lukena* at his disposal.<sup>45</sup> Bringing together several royal chiefs, as the new-style Kazanga did, was therefore a fundamental innovation which required that much of the Nkoya cultural logic be sacrificed. At a distance of about one kilometre from the festival location, four temporary royal residences had to be erected. The royal procession and entrance in themselves did follow a

44. Around 1870, fleeing from Yeke raiders, who were tributary to the formidable king Msidi (see T.Q. Reefe, *The Rainbow and the Kings: A History of the Luba Empire to 1891* [Berkeley, 1981]), Mwene Kahare Kabimba approached Mwene Mutondo Shinkisha's *lukena* so closely that his party could hear the sound of her royal orchestra. Kabimba, however, preferred to continue his wanderings, at the end of which he was flayed by the Yeke, than appeal to his colleague, although she was his kinswoman; see Van Binsbergen, *Tears*, 396 and *passim*.

45. When about 1820 the Lozi king Mulambwa came to visit Mwene Kayambila, one of Shinkisha's predecessors, in order to request royal medicine and a royal orchestra, a temporary royal court was built for Mulambwa and his retinue in an open space between two villages; the spot is still known today; see Van Binsbergen, *Tears*, 417 and *passim*.

historical model,<sup>46</sup> but their fourfold repetition was unheard of.

#### *Kazanga and the Dynastic Shrine of Mutondo*

In the middle of the festival area there is a shrine for the deceased members of the Mutondo dynasty, consisting of a low round thatched shelter enclosing an area where a dozen sticks protrude from the ground. The special erection of this shrine for the festival and in the festival area represents a dramatic departure from convention. The shrine should normally be situated inside the sacred and secluded *lilapa*, but constraints of space dictate that it be situated elsewhere.<sup>47</sup>

But the shrine's relocation is not merely a matter of irksome inappropriateness. It has important implications for the reconceptualisation of space and time, and for the unleashing of the symbolic potential of the new-style Kazanga. The shrine adds to the festival the sanction of an ancestral past: a strong suggestion of continuity *vis-à-vis* the tradition, which helps to dissimulate breaches of cultural logic. Revolutionarily situated in the open festival space, it transforms its new locality into a sacred space.

Thus a symbolic decrease of scale is effected: the dynastic shrine poses as village shrine, transforming the entire region into an imaginarily unified Nkoya village. The loges represent the men's shelter, and the nearby *lilapa* represents the headman's house, implying Mutondo's metamorphosis into the traditional leader not only of his own subjects but also of all those – including the other chiefs' subjects – who embrace Nkoya identity.

By articulating itself as the sacred centre of the entire social and geographical space within which Nkoya identity is being constructed and expressed, the shrine lends a cosmic significance to that identity. It is near

46. H. Capello and R. Ivens, *De Angola á Contra-costa: Descrição de Uma Viagem Atravez do Continente Africano Compreendendo Narrativas Diversas, Aventuras e Importantes Descobertas entre as Quaes Figuram a des Origens do Lualaba, Caminho entre as Duas Costas, Visita ás terras da Garanganja, Katanga e ao Curso do Luapula, Bem Como a Descida do Zambeze, do Choa oa Oceano*, 2 vols (Lisbon, 1886), i, 419; Van Binsbergen, *Tears*, 131.

47. During my visits to Shikombwe in the late 1970s there was no such structure at this central and public spot, the shrine being inside the *lilapa*. In an interview I conducted at the Shikombwe Royal Establishment with the Mwanashihemi and the Mwana Mwene (other courtiers present) on 5 May 1992, it was stated that when the shrine was deliberately moved for the occasion of the Kazanga ceremony, the original ancestral sticks — which appear to be of great antiquity, both as a type and as individual specimens — were uprooted from the *lilapa* area and planted on the new spot (a most irreverent and unusual procedure, I should add). (In that interview it was emphasised that the dynastic shrine was bestowed on the Mwene, who owned the right to oversee the Mukanda male initiation ritual — which ties in with other evidence — see note below.) F.H. Melland, *In Witchbound Africa* (London, 1967), 133f, 167, describes a similar type of shrine for the Lunda of North-western Zambia; the Lunda also practise Mukanda. For the Kahare dynastic shrine, which is totally different, see Van Binsbergen, *Religious Change*, plates 3a, b; the Kahare dynasty is claimed to have rejected Mukanda from its very beginning.

this shrine that the most sacred, ancient, and rare royal instruments are played.<sup>48</sup>

The Mutondo shrine doubly breaches customary practice: it stands in place of the sacrificial anthill in the old Kazanga ritual; and it stands in a place where it ought not to be. But these ruptures in convention allow it nevertheless to stand for a continuing glorification of the kingship, which thus remains one of the pillars of Nkoya ethnicity.

## 7

### KAZANGA IN 1989 AS CONFIRMATION OF MUTONDO HEGEMONY

While the ethnic brokers who organise Kazanga strengthen their own positions of power both in the outside world and within the Nkoya ethnic group, they also have an impact on the hierarchy of the traditional chiefs. The 1989 festival presented Mutondo in a position of seniority to which customary practice does not entitle him to lay claim.

In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, there were several royal titles, each defining an independent polity. The political relationships existing between groups at particular moments were expressed, within the Lunda sphere of influence in South Central Africa, as permanent kinship relations between titles, in such a way that each holder of title X, regardless of period, age, sex, or actual biological relationship, would appear as the 'younger brother', 'father', etcetera of each holder of title Y. This system of so-called 'perpetual kinship'<sup>49</sup> formed the basis for positional succession, according to which individual title-holders in the course of their career would be promoted from lower to higher titles as the latter became vacant through death or demotion. These time-honoured instruments of political integration had not, however, been applied between the constituent polities within Kaoma

48. Situated in that conceptual centre is no longer the earth as formerly symbolised by the anthill, but representations of royal ancestors. In this respect the shrine, despite the partial christianisation of the region since the early twentieth century, is really a step in a much older process which took place over much of South Central Africa in the course of the past half millennium: a process in which stranger-rulers, in their search for local legitimacy, seized power over the older cult of the land by propounding their own dynastic ancestors as mediators of rain, fertility, and crops, as fighting against the forces (of murder, incest, and sorcery) which threaten these blessings, and thus as guardians of the social and cosmic order. See J.M. Schoffeleers (ed.), *Guardians of the Land* (Gwelo, 1979); T.O. Ranger, 'Religious Studies and Political Economy: The Mwari Cult and the Peasant Experience in Southern Rhodesia', in W.M.J. van Binsbergen and J.M. Schoffeleers (eds), *Theoretical Explorations in African Religion* (London, 1985), 287-321; Van Binsbergen, *Religious Change*.

49. I. Cunnison, 'Perpetual Kinship: A Political Institution of the Luapula Peoples', *Rhodes-Livingstone Journal* 20, 1956, 28-48.

district;<sup>50</sup> and it was the resultant political fragmentation which in large measure lay at the basis of these polities' defencelessness against Lozi invasion and the incursions of the colonial state. When locally only the two titles of Mutondo and Kahare survived, a strong rivalry arose between the title-holders and their followers. The colonial district was named after the Mutondo dynasty, and, in accordance with Kahare's more peripheral geographical position, Mutondo's following claimed seniority for their prince. It is only from this early colonial period that Kahare – in a belated attempt at perpetual kinship, and despite the greater antiquity of his own title<sup>51</sup> – began to address Mutondo as 'elder brother' (*yaya*). Kabulwebulwe and Momba also follow this convention *vis-à-vis* Mutondo, with somewhat more justification, since incumbents of these titles are known to have seceded from the Mutondo dynastic group only very recently.<sup>52</sup>

This formal subordination is not confirmed by the broader world. In general, the hierarchy of state-recognised chiefs in Zambia comprises 'Paramount Chiefs', 'Senior Chiefs', and 'Chiefs'; Mutondo and Kahare are both 'Chief' and as such should be equal. Also, in the hierarchy of the Lozi indigenous administration they occupy the same, relatively exalted level of royal chief,<sup>53</sup> entitled to a *lilapa* and to an orchestra but not to the most senior type of royal drums, the Mawoma kettle drums.<sup>54</sup>

50. Break-away dissidents from Mwaat Yaamv's Lunda empire rejected the idea of an overarching, inter-regional authority, as well as the central ritual basis for such an authority, the Mukanda complex of male circumcision. The latter was soon to be the occasion for a war with the Humbu branch of the Lunda, and remained a bone of contention between the Kahare title and the Mutondo title which came up later — the latter trying repeatedly to restore Mukanda; Van Binsbergen, *Tears*; 'Mukanda'.

51. Van Binsbergen, *Tears*, 234f.

52. *Ibid.*, 295f and *passim*.

53. But under the post-colonial state, the position of Kahare – as a member of the House of Chiefs, as a UNIP trustee, as a member of the Kaoma Rural Council, and as a close relative of the only Nkoya minister and Member of Parliament – has always been even stronger than that of Mutondo.

54. The Nkoya had such drums prior to incorporation in the Kololo/Lozi state in the mid-nineteenth century; the Lozi Paramount Chief still has them. According to one plausible etymology, the Kaoma River, which in 1969 gave its name to the nearby district capital and the district as a whole, was named thus by Mwene Liyoka c. 1850, since its banks were the scene of the destruction of one of his Mawoma (Van Binsbergen, *Tears*, 310 and *passim*). Thus President Kaunda's attempt in 1969 to 'detrribalise' the name of the district by changing it from Mankoya to Kaoma ironically ended up by giving the area a name which implicitly refers to a central Nkoya symbol of power and identity; however, for a Bemba speaker like President Kaunda, the name *Kaoma* would primarily evoke ethnically neutral associations with the High God, who is called Nyambi in Nkoya. Ever since Lozi incorporation, the capture and subsequent prohibition of the Nkoya Mawoma has been felt as the most tangible symbol of humiliation. Although enlightened Nkoya today, like those making up the Kazanga executive, are aware that the Lozi traditional authorities can no longer stop the Nkoya chiefs from re-adopting Mawoma, the latter have so far refrained from doing so.

The issue of equality among the Nkoya chiefs has played a major role in the choice of location for the new-style Kazanga festival. The large majority of those identifying as Nkoya live in Kaoma district as subjects of either Mutondo or Kahare, and a location outside the district was therefore not contemplated. The district capital, where the Nkoya are politically and economically a minority, was rejected as a possible location, and initially preference was given to either of the two *zinkena*. In principle it was decided to have Kazanga alternate each year between Mutondo's and Kahare's capital. In practice, however, all festivals between 1988 and 1991 have taken place at Mutondo's court at Shikombwe. It was here that Muchayila, demoted as chief in 1947 in favour of a pro-Lozi puppet chief, was reinstated after the death of his successor to become the undisputed symbol of Nkoya ascendancy. Here, despite the pan-Nkoya signature of Kazanga and the presence of other chiefs with their retinue, it is Mutondo's royal bell and snare drums which are being played by *his* musicians. The few solo dancers who will significantly touch the shrine during their performance are members of the Mutondo royal family, and so are the score of persons who, in a separate item on the festival programme, are to dance around the shrine.

The subordination of the other chiefdoms under Mutondo hegemony in the context of Kazanga is also clear from other details in the course of the festival. Not only is Mutondo the chief who makes the first entrance (at the same time as the modern dignitaries, who unobtrusively take their places in the loge), but it is also he who, standing in front of the royal loge, welcomes the other chiefs with a handshake upon their arrival. This, in contrast to the customary Nkoya clapping, is an originally exotic gesture which has subsequently become an accepted aspect of Zambian national culture. With the handshake Mutondo asserts himself as the host, and as senior to and more urbane than the other chiefs at this pan-Nkoya festival. As if to stress that Mutondo, more than his colleagues, represents the link with the glorious past, he is the only one to wear historic regalia over his Western costume: his breast and back are covered with leopard skins, and he dons three spiralled shell disks on his brow.<sup>55</sup> All four chiefs, however, carry an eland tail (*hefu*) as regalia, which they wield as a fly-switch when walking or sitting in state.<sup>56</sup>

The presentation of Mutondo as the most senior Nkoya chief in the context of Kazanga is reiterated by the state representatives at the festival. Minister

55. These disks, widespread in South Central and Southern Africa, are made from the polished circular bottom of the Conus shell found in the Indian Ocean. They constituted major trade items in pre-colonial times, and have formed major symbols of royal status. In Nkoya they are called *zimpane*, (s. *mpande*); a general Southern African term is *ndoro*. See M.D.W. Jeffreys, 'Cowry: Ndoro', *NADA (Native Affairs Department Annual)* 30, 1953, 35-52.

56. Only Mwene Momba dons an additional regalia: a loose black, red-bordered gown — the official garment which the colonial state issued to chiefs in Southern Province, that is, outside Barotseland, and which has persisted ever since. For an analysis of the symbolism of dress and bodily stance of Zambian chiefs and modern politicians as a key to their mutual relationships, see Van Binsbergen, 'Chiefs'.

Tembo explicitly directs his speech to Mutondo, whom he erroneously calls 'Senior Chief' and whom he addresses by the Nkoya honorific '*ba Hekulu*' (Your Majesty).

The expression of pan-Nkoya identity in new-style Kazanga thus entails the favouring of the Mutondo title and its incumbent and followers over their nominally equal counterparts. Integration of the geographically and politically fragmented local groupings under the Nkoya emblem has not produced a unity of equals. Presentation of Nkoya identity to the outside world has not done away with internal contradictions, but rather has reinforced these within the new political space which has opened up through the integration of local communities within a post-colonial state. We shall see, however, that the attempt to create hegemony through the Kazanga festival has had only temporary success. More recently, this attempt resulted in a compromise in which unity was derived from a combination of village culture and the culture of the national state.

## 8

*EXPRESSIVE CULTURE IN KAZANGA*

As a form of ethnic mediation the Kazanga festival seeks to present a sample of Nkoya culture. What would we expect such a sample to look like, given the habitual forms of expressive culture in the village situation?

*Expressive Culture in the Village Situation and in Kazanga*

For two centuries, local dance and music, with its Nkoya lyrics, have been a model for the whole of Western Zambia.<sup>57</sup> These forms of expressive culture are linked to specific ceremonial situations: girls' initiation, marriage, therapy, name inheritance, royal accession, the twice-daily performance of the royal orchestra, and the hunters' guild's celebrations. There is also a fashionably changing festival repertoire (*ruhñwa*). The playing of the main instruments — drums and xylophone — is reserved for men; solo roles as singer or dancer are often reserved for specific ceremonial participants; royal instruments are reserved for paid court musicians; and certain expressive forms (*makwasha*) are reserved for persons of middle age or older. But apart from this relatively limited structuring of the expressive domain, each member of the community has both the right and the competence to make public and active use of virtually the entire repertoire of Nkoya expressive culture.

Whether singing and dancing along with others supporting the sound of drums and xylophone by clapping, shaking a rattle, or shouting exhortations,

57. This rich field contrasts with the paucity of the visual arts and of ornamental architecture.

criticisms, and witticisms or rewarding the dancers by dancing forward to put money on the dancer's head or shoulders the villager experiences music and dance as a cultural domain in which he or she is competent, both in the cognitive sense of knowing what to do and how to appreciate, and in the normative sense of possessing an unchallenged birthright to participate. This does not mean that in every musical event everybody present dances and sings along constantly. Many of those present are content, most of the time, with a place at the men's fire or the women's fire, where people engage in conversation, where the plastic beer container, the cigarette, and the snuff box are passed from hand to hand, and where ambiguous joking is standard. Nevertheless, the expectation of active participation is there during the entire ceremony, and almost everybody does participate at one moment or another in the course of the event.

In everyday life in Kaoma district the social and economic roles people play are little formalised. Social control is weak, there is ample freedom for personal interpretation, and conflicts frequently erupt for which the standard solution is a move to another village. Local society manifests the somewhat amorphous social organisation which the Rhodes-Livingstone Institute and the Manchester School considered characteristic of South Central Africa.<sup>58</sup> Expressive culture, through ceremonies and rituals, provides for the imposing of a cosmological ordering upon and an imparting of meaning to this loose social structure. Music and dance offer situations in which the individual, pivotal within social and symbolic production and reproduction, can articulate his/her membership of a social group. The expressive domain thus forms the axis of village society.<sup>59</sup>

In the new-style Kazanga festival, performance has a rather different significance. The festival is dominated by a produced 'performance'. Its format provides for the presentation of structured, standardised, stage-directed activity, which is disconnected in space and time from the habitual local context of material production and reproduction, and which involves a strict separation between controllers, direct producers, or performers and a crowd of symbolic consumers who have been reduced to effective non-participation.

Such a production format denies the characteristics of the expressive domain in the village society. It offers a modular matrix into which

58. For instance, in 1973-74, in the valleys of Njonjolo and Kazo, comprising about forty small villages with hardly a thousand inhabitants, during the dry winter season from May to August hardly a weekend passed without a major, ritually prescribed musical event in one of the villages within walking distance of the others. My impression is that the rate and scale of musical performance at the village level has since declined somewhat, but not dramatically so.

59. J. van Velsen, *The Politics of Kinship: A Study of Social Manipulation among the Lakeside Tonga of Malawi* (Manchester, 1971); V.W. Turner, *Schism and Continuity in an African Society* (Manchester, 1957).

disconnected parts can be arbitrarily placed and replaced. Through the process of performance, these parts are made into objects and are consumed, having gained a market value in the broader world. Some of the constituent parts of the performance are derived from a local idiom, but they come to function in a radically different context. Kazanga is the uprooted performance, the ostentatious playing-back, of the local domain of symbolic production. Under the guise of articulating the vitality of the local culture in the world today, it offers a format within which that culture runs the risk of being turned into a meaningless folkloristic cultural product.

A closer analysis of the chiefs' four entrances, for example, reveals how Kazanga is a carefully directed performance, in which the suggestion of the traditional 'royal procession' is achieved by cinematic means. The naïve spectator sees four chiefs in a row, each followed by his own orchestra and retinue and by representatives of his people sufficiently numerous to raise clouds of dust with their dancing. This impression is correct only for Mutondo and Kahare, however. The other two chiefs, having been able to bring only a few subjects from their distant capitals, are accompanied by a procession of local 'extras' who have just accompanied the previous chiefs in their entrances. In view of the emphasis, in this society, on exclusive allegiance to one specific chief as a method of social placement, and in view of the rivalry between the chiefdoms, it is clear that Kazanga, as a planned performance, asks performers to distance themselves (almost cynically) from their own cultural logic.

Let us now look at the three roles of spectator, controller, and performer.

#### *The Spectators*

Within the format of Kazanga the spectators along the borders of the festival grounds have become consumers, adopting a passive role reinforced by the directions blasting from the loudspeakers. Although they respond to the chiefs' entrances and to the performances with enthusiastic cries and sometimes with inadvertent movements in time to the music, it is only a few elderly women who do claim their birthright by dancing and singing wholeheartedly along with the performances. Their dancing movements are uninhibited, and one or two of them have donned customary dress made out of gameskins or bark, or are wielding a miniature hoe as a dancing prop.

#### *The Performers*

Of the fifteen performances listed in the programme, only a few are presented by villagers, who have been transported to Shikombwe in an open truck for the purpose of performing. They articulate their expressive culture with a minimum of stage direction and choreography, in their everyday clothes, and many barefoot. Their participation, although enthusiastic, is not, however, spontaneously generated, but results from co-option by ethnic brokers. The

promise of financial gain which drew them to perform in the festival proves hollow when they are sent home with no more than the price of a packet of cigarettes. Their participation in the festival on these terms suggests in itself that the villagers have become accustomed to seeing Kazanga as a performance, and to seeing their own dancing as productive wage labour.<sup>60</sup>

All this is in contrast to the more spontaneous activity which takes place during the two nights before and after the festival, when the combination of instruments, musicians, and a crowd in the same open space produces a celebration virtually indistinguishable from the village *ruhñwa*. The large xylophone flanked by drums, the crowd which spontaneously wheels around the musicians and improvises joking songs, the women who peddle their village beer and scones, and the chance meetings with kinsmen and friends sometimes from hundreds of kilometres away – all these elements are present in village ceremonies and are constitutive in the formulation of local cultural identities not yet transformed by ethnic mediation.

The other performers are solo dancers impersonating a traditional court jester, hunter, or warrior in archaic apparel, and women's dancing groups, both village- and urban-based. Two young village women perform the dance of the *kankanga* (pubescent girls). They are led on to the dancing ground in a stooping position and concealed under a blanket, as is usual in a girl's puberty ritual. But they are clearly no longer *kankangas*: their breasts are covered under conspicuous white brassieres, and they display nothing of the shy grace of the adolescent debutante, but rather wave little white scarves almost in the manner of revue artists. The urban dancing group is conspicuously urban: all wear shoes, they have expensive coiffures, some have sunglasses, and all wear – over the *chitenge* wrapper skirt which is an inevitable concession to village taste and norms of propriety – a uniform T-shirt with the stencilled text 'Kazanga 1989 – Nkoya Cultural Ceremony'. Their inhibited movements refer to North Atlantic middle-class ideas and to cosmopolitan Christianity, and contrast with the shaking of breasts and bottoms which occurs in a village context. The ethnic culture thus constructed is directed towards the wider society in the sense that it emphatically denies 'pagan' and 'primitive' stereotypes. The members of each women's group are dressed identically, and they take every effort to keep time with the others, making the same movements and taking the same steps along the geometric figures of circle and straight line. The standardisation of their performance stands in stark contrast to the less uniform quality of customary dance and song.

The urban women are co-ordinated by a male dancer, Mr Town, who, despite his transvestite apparel, is at pains to emphasise his male leadership

60. The commercialisation of musical and dancing performance in the context of Kazanga is meanwhile far more prominent in the case of the Lusaka troupe, which performs not only in ceremonial and ethnic contexts but can also be engaged, against a negotiable fee, to perform in bars around Lusaka.

over dancing and singing women, something unheard of in the village situation. Also unusually, he dances along with the other women's groups, even with the pseudo-*kankangas*. Although his attire and behaviour are reminiscent of the historic figure of the jester at Nkoya courts,<sup>61</sup> his role is without customary precedent, and can be understood only by the fact that Mr Town is generally considered a musical and choreographic genius, the 'dreamer' or composer of all the Kazanga songs and director of the Kazanga dancing troupe from Lusaka.

Despite the proclaimed quest for pan-Nkoya identity, the festival presents, through visual and other non-verbal symbols, a series of dichotomies: between the urban and the rural, between classes, between men and women, and between autochthonous religion and Christianity.<sup>62</sup> The contrast between these dichotomies is not suppressed or underplayed: on the contrary, the hegemony exercised by the dominant group – of the urban middle class – is quite explicit.<sup>63</sup> The urban group, proudly sporting regalia considered stylish in the wider society such as shoes and sunglasses, consider it their right constantly to intrude on other performances, to take precedence when welcoming the chief, and the like. As members of the Kazanga Association they are among the ethnic brokers, and they assert themselves as the owners of the Kazanga festival and of Nkoya ethnicity.

A small group of performers, finally, incorporate in stance and apparel another crucial contradiction. These are the uniformed *kapasus*, who stand and salute militarily when everyone else kneels and claps, and who strut in rigid parade fashion when everyone else walks or dances. They are the direct representatives of the state, and their actions constantly emphasise the contradiction between this state and the local level.

### *The Controllers*

Part of the Kazanga leadership we have already encountered, dancing in T-shirts, giving speeches, administering the festival programme, and instructing the public via the intercom system. Besides the T-shirts with their special

61. Van Binsbergen, *Tears*, 407f.

62. One important contradiction, which is unmistakable in the village society of Kaoma district but which does not seem to be expressed in Kazanga, is that between (male) elders and youth.

63. Only Christianity remains implicit, although among the spectators there are a few white missionaries from the Luampa mission station, the main focus of christianising in the district since 1923; after the festival they make use of the opportunity to peddle, to the assembled public, religious tracts and song books which the mission has produced in the Nkoya language. Nevertheless, the mission influence has resulted in the debarring of the music and dance of syncretistic healing cults from the festival programme, even though at the village level such cults have constituted the dominant religious expression for half a century or more, with singing and dancing forms which closely follow those of the historic expressive domain. See Van Binsbergen, *Religious Change; Tears*, Ch. 6. Likewise, any reference to these cults, despite their conspicuous dominance, is absent from Shimunika's work.

imprint, formal European costume with tie is their characteristic apparel. During the festival they engage in ongoing deliberations with the court dignitaries of Mutondo – often their own relatives – who are also formally dressed. Their attitude towards the national politicians is more inhibited, and in this respect the bulk of responsibility is carried by Mr Mupishi, who accompanies the high-ranking guests, and who prompts diplomatic statements to his fellow-members of the executive. None of the leaders in ties can be persuaded to dance or to give the royal salute. Superior distance from the cultural product as offered by Kazanga appears to be a necessary component of their mediating role.

#### *The Performative Format as Commodity in the Broader World*

Examples could be quoted of Third-World societies in which stage-directed performance by specialists has traditionally been a local culture trait. In the case of Kazanga, however, the performative format is an exotic, cosmopolitan formula developed since the beginning of the twentieth century. It was promoted by those involved in mission and formal education, and was subsequently furthered by the post-colonial state in the context of national festivals, agricultural shows, and the like. This formula facilitates mediation towards the state, which, in turn, relies heavily on performative cultural production for its own legitimation.<sup>64</sup> The performance, no longer rooted in material production and reproduction, relegates the target group of consumers to a passive role. The consumption of performance, especially through the mass media, is part of the contemporary African experience which is in line with the experience of North Atlantic media consumers and cultural consumers, in a market of commercialised symbolic products.

Behind the electronic gadgets of Kazanga – such as the intercom system, the cassette recorders, and most recently also the video recorders – stands the globally dominant capitalist system. Kazanga manifests all the characteristics of this system, such as the separation of immediate producers from their products, the ensuing alienation, the market as the principal basis for the formation of value, and the emphasis on standardisation and modular replaceability.<sup>65</sup> The festival must thus be seen as mediating not only

64. On this aspect of cultural transformation in the African post-colonial state, Ranger and Werbner organised a conference at Manchester in 1986, 'Culture and Consciousness in Southern Africa', many of whose contributions have since appeared in the *Journal of Southern African Studies*; also see P. Kaarsholm, 'Quiet after the Storm', *African Languages and Cultures* 2(2), 1989, 175-202; 'Mental Colonization or Catharsis', *Journal of Southern African Studies* 16(2), 1990, 246-75.

65. See the *gleichschaltende* stage direction of uniform and motor patterns, the suppression of polyphony and polychory, the financial reward, and the reduction to incompetent symbolic consumers of the majority of those present at the festival.

between the local community and the state, but also between the non-capitalist production of that community and the global capitalist mode of production.

## 9

### CONCLUSION

An uninformed onlooker stumbling upon the Kazanga festival would probably assume it to be an integral part of the local culture. However, the information yielded by anthropological research in the district over the past twenty years provides a touchstone for what the festival presents as 'traditional Nkoya culture', and illuminates the ethnic mediation process with all its political and cultural implications. Kazanga represents the relinquishing of diffuse local identities in exchange for an ethnic identity easily recognisable and therefore saleable in the broader world.

One might consider new-style Kazanga as an example of 'bricolage' or of the 'invention of tradition'. In anthropology 'bricolage' has become a term for an innovation which selectively brings together elements from a culture's repertoire in a new combination while more or less retaining the pre-existing underlying cultural logic.<sup>66</sup> Kazanga is not bricolage, because it involves the profound transformation of all elements and their utilisation in a way which violates the cultural logic of village society.

'Invention of tradition' was introduced a decade ago by Hobsbawm and Ranger as a term for the process whereby newly-developed symbols of group identity and of political legitimacy are represented as having considerable antiquity.<sup>67</sup> This term would at first sight seem to fit Kazanga: even its name is derived from a nineteenth-century ritual. However, I have shown in my analysis that the festival involves not so much legitimation with reference to the past as the mediation of the local culture towards the contemporary outside world. In the process, that culture is radically transformed, and new inequalities are created and emphasised. To call this the 'invention of tradition' would be to risk overlooking these features and to mistake the prime direction of the ethnic processes involved in Kazanga: they look to the future more than towards the past, and are extrovert rather than introvert.

Kazanga illustrates a model of cultural selection and transformation in the context of ethnic mediation. The model appears to be applicable to a wide

66. See R.P. Werbner, 'The Political Economy of Bricolage', *Journal of Southern African Studies* 13, 1986, 151-56

67. E. Hobsbawm and T.O. Ranger (eds), *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge, 1983), the concept formalises a notion which earlier was expressed by the term 'neo-traditional'.

range of cases, from the Afrikaner and the Zulu movements in South Africa<sup>68</sup> to patterns of leadership in a multi-cultural society like that of the Netherlands.<sup>69</sup> But the analysis of Kazanga does more than merely offer one illustration of such a model. It also poses questions which are of the greatest importance in today's growth towards a global society. *What prospect is there for the cultural riches of Third World societies other than to be encapsulated as folklore within an alien performative format? Is detachment from the original context inevitable in the process of cultural exchange through which the accomplishments of the numerous distinct cultures in the Third World are incorporated as part of the universal inheritance of mankind?*

It appears from Kazanga that opportunities for negotiation with the state and the global economy may well provide the only means for the survival of local cultural elements. The unmitigated enthusiasm with which the villagers acclaimed the chiefs at their entrances, and with which they gave money even to the pseudo-*kankangas*, suggests that they value the vibrancy of new-style Kazanga more than they regret any breaches in cultural logic which it may embody. Their implicit trust that whatever really counts will remain intact despite selection, transformation, and the burden of new inequalities may give us as social scientists courage in our own attempts to mediate between

68. On Afrikaners, see T.D. Moodie, *The Rise of Afrikanerdom* (Berkeley, 1975); V. February, *The Afrikaners of South Africa* (London, 1991); H. Giliomee, 'The Beginnings of Afrikaner Ethnic Consciousness, 1850-1915', in Vail, *The Creation*, 21-54; I. Hofmeyr, 'Building a Nation from Words: Afrikaans Language, Literature and Ethnic Identity, 1902-1924', in Marks and Trapido, *The Politics*, 95-123. On the Zulu and Inkatha, see P. Coquerel, 'Les Zulu dans l'Afrique du Sud contemporaine', in Chretien and Prunier, *Les Ethnies*; G. Maré and G. Hamilton, *An Appetite for Power: Buthelezi's Inkatha and the Politics of 'Loyal Resistance'* (Johannesburg, 1987); S. Marks, 'Patriotism, Patriarchy and Purity: Natal and the Politics of Zulu Ethnic Consciousness', in Vail, *The Creation*, 215-40; L. Schlemmer, 'The Stirring Giant: Observations on the Inkatha and Other Black Political Movements in South Africa', in R.M. Price and C.G. Rosberg (eds), *The Apartheid Regime: Political Power and Racial Domination* (Berkeley, 1980), 99-126.

69. In the study of Dutch multi-cultural society special attention has been paid to ethnic brokers who do not belong to the asserting ethnic groups, but to the (Dutch) outside world — the 'caretakers'. See A.J.F. Köbben, *De Zaakwaarnemer*, Oratie Erasmusuniversiteit (Rotterdam, 1983); D. van Borselen, 'Etnisering en Etnische Belangenbehartiging: Een Reactie', *Migrantenstudies*, 1(3), 1985, 214-24; for brokers who come forth from these ethnic groups themselves, see W. van Wetering, 'A Statue for Mother Earth: The Politics of Multiculturalism in Bijlmermeer, Amsterdam', paper read at the Workshop, 'Etniciteit in Afrika', December 1991, Leiden, Afrika-Studiecentrum; C. van der Burg and P. van der Veer, 'Pandits, Power and Profit: Religious Organization and the Construction of Identity among Surinamese Hindus', *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 9(4), 1986, 514-28; W. Koot and P.U. Venema, 'Etnisering en Etnische Belangenbehartiging bij Surinamers: Een Nieuw Stijgskanaal', *Migrantenstudies* 1(1), 4-16; K. Bruin, 'Het Oostersch Feest', in F. Bovenkerk, K. Bruin, L. Brunt and H. Wouters, *Vreemd Volk, Gemengde Gevoelens* (Meppel, 1985), 155-259.

local societies in the Third World and the intimidating globalising structures of today.<sup>70</sup>

That the actors' optimism is partly justified — that the ethnic mediation produced by Kazanga is revitalising rather than destructive — can be gauged not only from the unexpected way in which the Kazanga dances and songs are now, in their turn, invading musical expression in the villages themselves, but also from some recent innovations in the Nkoya kingship derived from the Kazanga festival and association.

In the early 1970s the Nkoya neo-traditional court culture was marked by a rigid, wholly introverted splendour. The maintenance of historic forms of protocol and symbolic production reflected the fact that the need for boundary maintenance *vis-à-vis* the outside world was at its peak. But these symbolic forms do not imply a correspondence with any power embodied in the kingship: the region's people have lacked political autonomy since their incorporation by the Barotse polity, and later by the colonial and post-colonial states. The maintenance of royal symbols is not purely nostalgic, however, but combines with innovation in the fervent reconstruction process which is taking place. Kazanga's effective negotiation between the state, the kingship, and the villagers provides a new symbolic and ceremonial role to all four Nkoya kings together, restoring to them a degree of significance perhaps unprecedented in twentieth century Nkoya history.

Mwene Kahare, once a somewhat pathetic, stammering, and alcoholic figure dressed in a faded suit with ragged shirt collar now appears in his seventies at the 1992 Kazanga festival covered in leopard skins and with a headband adorned with regal *zimpane* — regalia he has probably never worn since his installation in 1955 — formidably brandishing his royal axe in a solo dance that keeps the audience breathless and moves them to tears. He does so not at his own *lukena* or at that of his rival, Mutondo, but at the newly-designated Kazanga festival grounds, which are neutrally situated on the banks of the Luena River at the border between both chief's area. The festival's relocation occurred in the context of the suspiciously untimely death of Muchayila's successor, Mwene Kanchimpi, in 1991, which prevented Mutondo control over the 1992 festival and which in any case rendered the Mutondo *lukena* inappropriate as a venue for the festival in this

70. See J. Clifford and G. Marcus (eds), *Writing Culture* (Berkeley, 1986); C. Geertz, *Works and Lives* (Stanford, 1988). I have been preoccupied with the idea of anthropology as cultural mediation between local societies and the cosmopolitan outside world, and have tried to explore some of the attending methodological, aesthetic, ethical, and political problems; see W.M.J. van Binsbergen, 'Can Anthropology become the Theory of Peripheral Class Struggle?: Reflexions on the Work of P.P. Rey', in W.M.J. van Binsbergen and G.S.C.M. Hesseling (eds), *Aspecten van Staat en Maatschappij in Afrika: Recent Dutch and Belgian Research on the African State* (Leiden, 1984), 163-80; 'From Tribe'; 'Reflections'; *Een Buik Openen* (Haarlem, 1988); 'Becoming a Sangoma: Religious Anthropological Field-work in Francistown, Botswana', *Journal on Religion in Africa* 21(4), 1991, 309-44; Van Binsbergen and Doornbos, *Afrika in Spiegelbeeld*.



time of mourning. Mwene Kahare's royal dance centres on a shrine situated at the hub of the festival grounds: this is no longer the Mukanda-related thatched shrine of Mutondo, nor his own wooded pole adorned with buffalo trophies, but rather a neutral shrub of the type featuring as ancestral shrine in most Nkoya villages.

In 1992 the state delegation to the Kazanga festival was led by the Cabinet Minister for Education, the Hon. Arthur Wina M.P., a Zambian politician of very long standing, now a member of President Chiluba's MMD cabinet, and son of a former Lozi Ngambela (traditional Prime Minister).<sup>71</sup> In his speech, Minister Wina joked that the recent shortage of water in the Zambezi flood plain, where the Lozi Paramount Chief's residences are located, made the trip to Kuomboka a pointless one, and indicated that the new Kazanga festival grounds provided an adequate alternative. In coded language this was understood by the audience as a statement on the limits if not the decline of Lozi power under the new government,<sup>72</sup> and on the full acceptance of Nkoya ethnic aspirations in the wake of Mr Kaunda's political demise.

With such a high-powered state delegation the courtiers from Mutondo could not persist in their earlier refusal to attend Kazanga in a form which so effectively denied Mutondo hegemony. In fact, the Kazanga executive, in which MMD and UNIP supporters now work hand in hand, made it clear that staying away would be interpreted by the new government as an anti-MMD demonstration, and might therefore have unpleasant consequences. From being a distant enemy, the state has become an ally; and from promoting introversion and divisiveness, ethnicity has come to combine inward symbolic reconstruction with confident participation in the national space.

### POSTSCRIPT

Things are moving fast among the Nkoya these days. I visited the Kazanga festival again in July 1994, and was able to spend a few weeks looking behind the screens at the Kazanga organisation. Tensions between those in the executive based in Lusaka and those of Kaoma were rising now; the new executive as chosen at the Kazanga society's annual general meeting (the night after Kazanga's conclusion) is strongly district-based, consisting of retired Nkoya from the highest-ranking formal sector occupations. The fraternal peace between MMD supporters and those remaining loyal to Kaunda's UNIP is now crumbling, while the National Party captures

71. The fact that only a few months earlier the present author's book on Nkoya history and ethnicity (see Van Binsbergen, *Tears*) had been officially presented to this minister may have been not unrelated to his appearance at Kazanga; ethnic festivals do not evidently fall under the Ministry of Education.

72. Although Mr Wina, and, for instance, a former Lozi king's grandson, Mbikusita-Lewanika, are clear examples of Lozi ethnic prominence in MMD circles.

increasing support in the district and in the Kazanga executive. As far as the district's traditional politics are concerned, Mutondo hegemony has now largely collapsed, and interestingly Mwene Muchayila's son (not a chief but a mere Mwana Mwene, prince) polluted – according to Nkoya opinion – the Mutondo royal residence at the new Kazanga festival site by temporarily taking up residence there and even hearing cases. Mwene Kahare Kabambi died in December 1993 and his successor, Mwene Kahare Kubama, played a major role in the 1994 festival. Meanwhile a new Mutondo had been enthroned, and he played a trump card (thus asserting his status *vis-à-vis* both Kahare and the Lozi) by the construction of a real Mawoma kettle drum of the type captured by the Kololo in the mid-nineteenth century and kept in the Lozi capital; since then the Nkoya chiefs had been forbidden to own such a decisive sign of royal status. While construction was taking place, two children, the child of one client woodworker and the grandchild of another, died mysteriously, no doubt deliberately sacrificed in order to render the drum effective as a sacred royal attribute. Nevertheless, the drum, though ready, was not displayed at Kazanga. Nkoya defiance of Lozi domination, which in earlier years was eclipsed by direct Nkoya/state negotiations, arose with greater force than ever before. There were some very explicit Kazanga songs, one of them including Minister Wina's words about Kuomboka in 1992, and the effective expulsion of the hated Lozi induna at Naliele by physical force or by magical means seemed imminent.