

MANIMORY AND THE AESTHETICS OF MIMESIS: FOREST, ISLAM AND STATE IN IVOIRIAN DOZOYA

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DOZO MIMESIS IN THE FOREST AND ISLAM

In the north-western Denguélé region of Côte d'Ivoire, initiated Jula hunters, who call themselves *dozos*, relate to Islam the way they relate to the forest where they hunt, assimilating to both in order to master them. In contrast to Africans who relate to Islam in the context of tensions between tradition and modernity (Grosz-Ngaté 2002; Lambek 2002; Lewis 1989; Masquelier 2001; Stoller 1989a), *dozos* obviate such distinctions (see Wagner 1978). They embrace Islam's modernity – its ties to a worldwide religious community (Launay 1992: 106–21) and references to universal scriptural texts (Sanneh 1994) – in the same way they hunt, by assimilating mimetically to their surroundings to empower themselves within them (see Stoller 1995; Taussig 1993).

No sources better illustrate *dozos*' mimetic aesthetic than stories of their tutelary spirit, Manimory, and the texts of their hunting songs, incantations and epics. In this article, I examine these texts to suggest that *dozos*' discourses and practices defy description as post-modern, modern, or traditional. *Dozos* cultivate a cosmopolitanism (Piot 1999) that results from a deliberate embrace of difference which, they claim, preceded the arrival of Islam, colonialism and independence. Like Mudimbe (1988: 196), they affirm that 'acculturation is not an African disease but the very character of all histories'.

Whereas anthropologists have argued that Africans use shape-shifting (Jackson 1990), spirit possession (Lewis 1989), and independent religious movements (Comaroff 1985; Lanternari 1963; van Binsbergen 1981) to mend contradictions between pre-colonial and colonial or post-colonial worlds, *dozos*' stories of Manimory evoke a world beyond fracture. Manimory personifies multiple sources and epochs of power with no need of further reconciliation (see Wagner 1991). Long ago, *dozos* say, Manimory vanished in the forest (*tu*), becoming one with it and gaining the ability to protect *dozos* from danger within it. Some *dozos* see his miraculous disappearance as proof that he was a Muslim saint (*wali*). Others say he descended from Abraham's

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revered proto-Muslim lineage. These claims encode an openness to difference inexplicable in terms of a uniform, pre-Islamic *dozo* tradition or post-modern combination of pre-Islamic and Muslim elements. *Dozos* practise local rituals and Islam as mutually encompassing. They mimetically transform one into the other while leaving room for non-Muslims in their ranks. They incorporate their patron into Islam to neutralize self-styled orthodox condemnations of their practices much as they claim to assume the appearance of flora and fauna to ambush game in the forest (Hellweg 1997; Leach 2000).

Dozos alter themselves in pursuit of game as a reflection of the plurality of their identities (see Jackson 1990: 63–5; Piot 1999: 22–4) and of the forest's, a place as volatile as any post-modern space due to its dangers (Piot 1999: 132). Their cultural practices, which they call *dozoya*, and which include Islam, are therefore more than 'hybrid' combinations of traditional and modern elements (see Nyamnjoh 2002: 112–13; cf. Comaroff and Comaroff 1997: 34, 1999: 20; Ferme 2001b: 220). If the same mimetic aesthetic that informs the hunt characterizes *dozos*' relations with Islam, then their relation to the forest offers them a holistic framework for interpreting historical change – and affords scholars a hermeneutic for understanding *dozos*' historical imagination. *Dozos*' aesthetic helps account, for instance, for their adoption of unofficial police duties across Côte d'Ivoire in the 1990s (Bassett 2003, 2004; Hellweg 2004).

I begin this article by reviewing anthropological literature on relations in Africa between local ritual practice and Islam and between tradition and modernity. I then discuss the tropes and narratives with which *dozos* relate to the hunt and Islam. Because *dozo* aesthetics encompasses both hunting and Islam, it transcends divisions between tradition and modernity. I justify my attention to aesthetics on this basis. Finally, I show how *dozos*' ideas of mimetic transformation, as illustrated in a hunting incantation, a tale of *dozo* sorcery, and a *dozo* epic, embody *dozos*' ability to mimic their founder as a model for ongoing cultural innovation, as in their assumption of state security roles.

Neither a bulwark against time (Lévi-Strauss 1966: 233–6), nor a discourse whose symbols unwittingly reflect the principles of more pragmatic power dynamics (Bourdieu 1977: 165, 171–83), *dozoya* – 'what *dozos* do' – exemplifies a range of thought and practice that measures success independent of history's legacies (traditional, modern or post-modern) because it encompasses them all. *Dozo* 'culture' may never have been 'some sort of inert, local substance' even before the advent of contemporary globalization, but rather a 'more volatile form of difference' that some would attribute only to modernity (Appadurai 1996: 60). *Dozoya* is no less local for its 'transhistoric thought', no less an 'absolute discourse' for its particularity (Mudimbe 1988: 199–200); indeed, only a close analysis of *dozos*' local aesthetics can explain their attraction to universalizing Islam and public safety.

I base my findings on three years of fieldwork among Denguélé *dozos* in 1994–7, both in and around the regional capital, Odienné.

DOZOYA AND ISLAM IN TRADITION AND MODERNITY

Scholars have long documented ambivalent or antagonistic relations between local ritual practice and self-styled orthodox Islam in Africa. They explain these relations in terms of tensions between Islam as a force for modernity and nationalism, on the one hand, and local ritual practice as a manifestation of tradition – or resistance to modernity – on the other. Spirit possession in Muslim contexts offers multiple examples. Masquelier (2001: 84) notes that Nigerien Mawri Muslims consider *bori* possession ‘antithetical to the principles preached by the Koran’ that legitimize the Nigerien state. National elites turn to *bori* when Islam fails ‘to provide satisfactory solutions to the problems and paradoxes of contemporary life’ (Masquelier 2001: 87). Through *bori*, Mawri ‘appropriate and reconfigure ... elements of tradition while simultaneously mediating the effects of modernity’ (Masquelier 2001: 298). Stoller (1989a: 177) likewise observes that Sasale possession among Nigerien Songhay ‘celebrates people ... who have violated the moral code of Islam’. Songhay performed Sasale to oppose the modernizing agenda of late President Kountché who ‘promoted a set of social policies based on the tenets of scripturalist Islam’ (Stoller 1989a: 174; Stoller 1995). On Mayotte, Lambek describes how a Muslim sultan’s spirit channelled by a medium exudes ‘a deep suspicion’ of ‘modern’ elites’ ‘French values’ and ‘transnationalist Islam’ (Lambek 2002: 35). In Sudan and Somalia, *zar* possession articulates women’s protests against their marginalization in contemporary Islam (Boddy 1989; Lewis 1989).

Muslim movements of reform and conversion similarly crystallize around confrontations between local tradition and global modernity. Launay writes that in Côte d’Ivoire after 1945, Julas (Dyulas) began to emphasize their membership in the worldwide community of Muslim believers (*umma*) over their historically inherited merchant roles in response to new economic opportunities (Launay 1992: 75). So too, in Cameroon, Wawa and Kwanja converted to Islam and Christianity in the 1950s and 1960s to be more ‘modern’ (Gausset 1999). The spread of Wahhabi Islam in West Africa in the twentieth century paralleled this shift from local identities to more universal ones (Amselle 1985; Brenner 1993; Kaba 1974; Niezen 1990; Triaud 1986). In each case, authors describe tensions between tradition and modernity as coterminous with relations between local ritual and Islam – even when Islam ‘embodies redemption’ from both the ‘“evils” of modernity’ and the ‘“ignorance” and ‘“misconceptions” of tradition’, as LeBlanc (2000: 45) argues for Mande women in Bouaké, Côte d’Ivoire.

Tensions with Islam also characterize Mande rituals elsewhere. Trimingham (1959: 107–8) has argued that the Mande *komo* society is ‘just [the] type of organization to which Islam is implacably opposed, and which, once Islam is adopted, is proscribed [and] forced underground’ (see Grosz-Ngaté 2002: 9–10; Zobel 1996: 629). In Mali, the placement of *bamana* ritual objects in the National Museum defines them as ‘embodiments of tradition and authenticity even as the country

strives for economic development and modernity' (Grosz-Ngaté 2002: 15). Cissé (1994: 37–49) and Thoyer (1995: 14) portray Malian hunters as non-Muslims because hunters revere the deities Sanènè and Kontron rather than Allah. In Côte d'Ivoire, Ivoirian Dan Wahhabis condemn Muslim Dan masked dancers for 'mixing ... local religion and Islam', and Dan who uphold what they call 'traditional' religion condemn others for mixing it with Islam (Reed 2003: 43). Other Dan, Reed observes, simply 'practice aspects of Islam in certain settings and aspects of Dan religion in others. ... fluidly rang[ing] across different religious options' (43). Like Reed, the other scholars mentioned above also document how Africans practise local rituals in harmony with Islam. I wish only to show that scholars consistently explain the tensions they observe between Islam and local rituals in terms of conflicts between tradition and modernity.

Dichotomies of tradition and modernity even inform portrayals of non-ritual aspects of *dozo* practice. By the 1990s, *dozos* had assumed new security roles as parallel police forces in Burkina Faso (Hagberg 1998, 2004), Mali (Cashion 1984:103; Hellweg 2001: 289–90) and Côte d'Ivoire (Bassett 2003, 2004; Hellweg 2004). In Côte d'Ivoire, they manned roadblocks and security patrols as profitable enterprises, collecting fees from the neighbourhoods they guarded to earn money. They organized themselves bureaucratically through a network of presidents and secretaries that included younger francophone men working beside a pre-existing hierarchy of Jula-speaking *dozo* chiefs.¹ Bassett (2004: 43) and Hagberg (2004: 51) describe *dozos*' assumption of such roles as the adoption of modern functions by traditional hunters. Traoré (2004: 99–104) documents how Malian elites appropriated *dozos*' local cachet to attract international development funding. And Ellis (2003: 6) characterizes *dozos*' involvement in Côte d'Ivoire's civil war as resulting from 'the revival of traditional fraternities ... organized as a modern fighting force'.

Elsewhere, Ellis (1999: 279) clearly defines both tradition – 'more a mode of considering historical change than an actual corpus of knowledge' – and modernity:

the submission of rural communities to a national government making use of bureaucratic techniques of organization, the spread of a money economy, the weakening of the authority of elders ... the growth of cities, enhanced possibilities of long-distance communication, and the influence of the universal religious ideas of Islam and Christianity.

The fact that *dozo* tradition includes 'the universal ideas of Islam' at its core, however, upsets Ellis's definition of modernity, according to which

¹ Odiennéka refer to their Mande language as *Wojenekakan* or *Julakan*, or in French as *dioula*. In English, I use the term 'Jula' in place of *Julakan*. Jula (Dioula or Dyula) also names a widespread Mande lingua franca (also called Tagbusikan) spoken in markets and cities across Côte d'Ivoire wherever Mande-speakers live and work. *Wojenekakan* and many other Ivoirian forms of Jula are mutually intelligible with Mali's Bamanakan and the Jula of Burkina Faso.

Islam is 'modern'. That *dozoya* motivated *dozos* to adopt bureaucratic roles, give greater authority to francophone youth, and guard urban neighbourhoods for cash further confounds his distinctions.

Africans, of course, can consider themselves Muslims and citizens of nation states no matter how heterodox or local their perspectives. While Africans use the words 'traditional' and 'modern' to describe aspects of their daily lives, they also live beyond such distinctions, as Ellis and those scholars cited above have shown. In this article, however, I take such paradoxes as my topic. I describe the aesthetic that allows *dozos* to be both Muslims and citizens beyond controversies over tradition and modernity. I explore the cultural logic by which they render orthodox and worldly the ritual practices and security work their critics consider unorthodox and parochial.

On the one hand, Denguélé's *dozos* approach Islam from the assumption of orthodoxy. The vast majority profess faith in Allah and in Muhammad as his prophet. They aspire to pray five times a day (*ka seli kε*), give alms (*ka saraka kε*), fast during Ramadan (*ka sun tege*), and make the *haj* – practices that make one Muslim. On the other hand, Wahhabis, drawing on the Qur'an and the Hadiths, accuse *dozos* of *shirk* – blasphemous idolatry (Ibn 'Abd al Wahhāb 1992) – for a variety of sins: making sacrifices to Manimory (see Hellweg 2004), using sorcery, talismans, amulets and power objects (see McNaughton 1982: 58; Cashion 1984: 180–95), and practising divination – in short, for substituting other powers for Allah. In 1996 in the south-western city of Gagnoa, *dozos* bound and beat a Wahhabi imam who reportedly preached that, 'If a *dozo* dies here in Gagnoa, it is out of the question that a believer approach his corpse, for he is not a Muslim' (*SoirINFO*, 19 November 1996, p. 11). While Wahhabis and *dozos* rarely come to blows, so-called orthodox Muslims condemn *dozoya* for impeding the reform of 'folk' Islam (see Brenner 1993: 62, 65–7).

For *dozos*, however, neither hunting nor Islam is folkloric or modern *per se*. In French, *dozos* may refer to hunting as *traditionnel*, and to their security movement as *moderne*, but their tradition is a dynamic one and their modern movement grounded in traditional sacrifices to Manimory. According to *dozos* in the 1990s, their sacrifices protected them simultaneously from the criminals they captured in towns and the animals they caught in forests (Hellweg 2004: 10–14). Since *dozos* framed their security movement in the context of hunting tropes, it is no surprise that they embraced Islam and ignored Wahhabis in the same aesthetic terms.

DOZO ROLES AND THE AESTHETICS OF HUNTING

I define aesthetics for the purposes of this article as a hierarchy of preferences for satisfying sensual expectations or, in other words, as the inventive deployment of signs and symbols derived from sensuous experience (see Morphy 1996: 255, 258–9; Stoller 1989b: 8–9). *Dozos* describe their hunting activities and relate to Manimory and Islam

in terms of assumptions about how things taste, satisfy hunger and visibly appear. To that extent, *dozos* create an aesthetic formal enough to span different domains of experience – like taste, hunting and Islam – but grounded enough in specific sensual metaphors to resist overly formal analysis. An aesthetic ‘perspective on other cultures’ (Gow 1996: 274) can therefore aid in the cross-cultural comparison (Coote 1996: 266) of different categories of sensuous experience without essentializing ‘aesthetics’ as a cross-cultural category (see Overing 1996) or recapitulating the concept of culture. Culture is the more inclusive term. An aesthetic focus, as I define it, challenges universalizing statements about sensuous experience (see Stoller 1989b: 37–9), emphasizing the relativity of all systems of classification (Boas 1982) and justifying the exploration of embodiment as a template for socio-political life (Boddy 1989; Ferme 2001b: 159–86; Geurts 2003; Hardin 1993; Taylor 2004; see also Ellis 1999: 220–80; Taylor 1999). In particular, aesthetics provides a useful heuristic for exploring power relations in Africa where political discourses often fail to conform to the standards of Western *realpolitik*.

Mbembe (2001: 102–41) notes, for example, that an ‘aesthetics of vulgarity’ structures political life in many African states. Autocrats sustain an ‘obscene and grotesque’ discourse centred on bodily idioms of consumption, reproduction, and defecation to create easily controlled worlds centred on themselves. The public participate because they seek similar excess even as they secretly ridicule the powers-that-be in the same vulgar idioms (Mbembe 2001: 105–10). The resulting complicity between rulers and ruled renders obsolete ‘the binary categories used in standard interpretations of domination, such as resistance vs passivity, autonomy vs subjection, state vs civil society’ (Mbembe 2001: 103).

Although *dozos*’ aesthetic is not one of vulgarity or obscenity, it likewise relies upon sensuous tropes to fashion ‘convivial’ relations (Mbembe 2001: 104). *Dozos* profess Islam and bureaucracy to coexist with a volatile *umma* and a suspicious state without resisting, or submitting to, either one. To these ends, they portray Manimory as a Muslim saint, and they created a security movement which they called Benkadi, or ‘Agreement is Sweet’ (*ben ka di*), with the aim of collaborating with police to end crime. Their motivations, however, stemmed from an aesthetic different from both Wahhabi orthodoxy and Ivoirian popular culture. Whereas Mbembe posits a pre-existing, mutually exploitive collusion between president and populace, *dozos* elicited a reciprocally respectful consensus with authorities. Only an attention to the motivating use of their hunting aesthetic can explain their creative obviation of religious intolerance and negligent state security.

Dozoya

Before discussing *dozos*’ hunting tropes, I want first to introduce *dozoya* more generally. Men assume the *dozo* role, or a parallel, initiated hunter role, in almost every West African country where Mande or Gur languages are spoken: Burkina Faso, Côte d’Ivoire, Guinea, Liberia,

Mali, Senegal and Sierra Leone. Across West Africa, they hunt to add meat to a diet composed mostly of grains and tubers. In Sierra Leone, hunters who call themselves *kamajors* also took part in their country's civil war (Ferme 2001a; Ferme 2001b; Ferme and Hoffman 2004).

While many West African men hunt, not all hunters are *dozos*. To become a *dozo*, one earns the trust of a *dozo* who can sponsor one's initiation. An initiate offers a red chicken and several red kola nuts to his sponsor and promises not to lie, steal, or commit adultery with *dozos'* wives or betray other *dozos* (Hellweg 2004: 10). Either the sponsor or local *dozo* chief then tosses and reads the two halves of one of the kola nuts to divine Manimory's will. If Manimory approves, the sacrificer sacrifices the chicken to Manimory.

All this occurs in the *dangun*, a place located in a forested area (*tun*) on the outskirts of the village, town or city where *dozos* live, between inhabited spaces and the wider forests and fields where *dozos* hunt. In addition to initiatory sacrifices, *dozos* make offerings to Manimory annually to request his protection in the forest from brush fires, shots by other hunters, venomous snakes, etc. When not in use, a *dangun* appears as an empty clearing among trees and grass. When *dozos* are present, lay people pass by quietly, offering only respectful greetings. In other settings, lay people rely on *dozos'* plant expertise for medical treatment and sorcery. Prominent *dozo* healers and sorcerers attract clients from as far as Guinea, Mali and Abidjan. *Dozos* also share sorcery among themselves to aid in hunting. Incantations (*yirisi*) and power objects (*jo*) enable *dozos* to shape-shift (*k'i yerema*), so blending into the forest to surprise animals.

Dozos are therefore more than mere hunters. Since the thirteenth century, they have played important political roles, helping to found the pre-colonial states of Mali and Segou and peopling Samory Touré's armies (Cashion 1984: 81–2; Cissé 1994: 16; Person 1968; Thoyer 1995: 12). In the early 1990s, when they became an auxiliary police force in Côte d'Ivoire – the state police having proved inept – *dozos* patrolled urban neighbourhoods, rural villages and highways against crime, and collected payment from local people for doing so. Local officials tacitly approved *dozo* patrols, and *dozos* formed national associations whose bureaucratic offices, judicial procedures and security activities resembled those of Côte d'Ivoire's 'modern' political parties, judiciary and salaried state police, respectively (Bassett 2003; Bassett 2004; Ellis 1999: 279; Hellweg 2004).

All this changed in 1996 when the state began to perceive *dozos* as a *de facto* militia for opposition politician Alassane Ouattara, who held presidential ambitions. In 1998, the state banned *dozo* activities in southern Côte d'Ivoire, a region which many Ivoirians considered beyond *dozos'* historical, northern patrimony (Bassett 2004; Hellweg 2004). In 2002, many *dozos* joined the rebellion against current president Laurent Gbagbo (Ellis 2003; Hellweg 2004). When I worked with *dozos* in 1994–7, the Ivoirian government was already stereotyping them as traditional hunters out of place in the

modern state (Hellweg 2004: 9), but *dozos'* aesthetics suggested otherwise.

Hunting aesthetics

Denguélé *dozos* describe the hunt in their Jula language in ways that at first seem contradictory. On the one hand, *dozos* describe hunting as difficult, *dozoya a gbelen*, much as someone's words may be difficult to hear, tolerate or understand, *a kumakan a gbelen*, or as a job might be 'really hard', *bagala a gbelen de*. On the other hand, *dozos* say that hunting is 'sweet', *dozoya a di*, in the way one might say that honey, tea, or even meat or money are 'sweet' or 'satisfying' – that is, delectable without necessarily being sugary (*timin*). In Jula, one places a subject before the verb phrase, *a ja ni ye*, to say, 'it pleases me' or 'it is sweet to me'. I heard Jula-speakers on more than one occasion translate this expression into French as, *ça c'est doux moi*. The French adjective *doux* translates variously into English as 'soft', 'mild', 'gentle', 'sweet', 'good', 'agreeable', or 'pleasant', depending on the context. In the case of the *dozo* security movement, *dozos* saw the 'agreeable' result of curbing crime so 'sweet' as to name their movement, 'Agreement is sweet' – Benkadi. The American English exclamation, 'Sweet!', captures the relevant meaning; the word *di* in Jula has the same connotations. To express satisfaction with a particular hunt, *dozos* say that the 'fields were sweet', *koy janin*, an expression which my *dozo* friend and research collaborator, Drissa Koné, once translated into French as *la chasse a été belle*, 'the hunt was beautiful', equating the francophone idea of beauty with the Mande notion of sweetness. I take his translation as evidence that an anthropological discussion of *dozo* aesthetics is far from an imposition.

If you were to ask a *dozo* why hunting is sweet, he might say that he learns a lot while hunting: how to heal or do sorcery with the plants and incantations he discovers in the forest when *dozos*, animals or spirits (*jina*) reveal them, and how to stalk game, use guns and navigate the forest. Together, these skills enable *dozos* to protect their communities by healing others, using sorcery against malevolent sorcerers, and providing family and friends with meat. *Dozos* learn many of these skills by fraternizing with each other between hunts and at colleagues' funerals. In colleagues' company, a *dozo* strives to 'cool his heart', *k'i jusu suma*, in order to forge relationships of trust with other *dozos* by humbling himself (*k'i majigi*) and respecting (*ka bonya*) those whose trust he hopes to gain. *Dozos* called their security movement Benkadi in part to affirm such collaborative agreement.

In contrast, when hunting goes poorly, a *dozo* might say, *koyma ja*, 'the fields weren't sweet', *ka ja* being a verbal form of the adjective *di* and meaning, 'to be sweet'. *Dozo* musicians sing, '*Koyma ja*', while greeting *dozos* on a six-stringed, calabash-based harp-lute (*ngmun*) at night-time *dozo* funerals:

Hunting master, oh

The fields weren't sweet (*koŋma ja*)
 Night fell on the hunters
 The fields weren't sweet.²

Just as unsuccessful hunters return at nightfall empty-handed, sad *dozos* arrive at night in the deceased's compound to mourn him. Losing a colleague, like failing to kill game, is not sweet.

On the other hand, leaving the village in the morning, killing game quickly, and returning before nightfall is sweet. Eating honey or meat is sweet. Learning incantations and the medicinal powers of plants is also sweet. All that is sweet satisfies one's hunger for food, knowledge or camaraderie; that which is sweet fills one up. When a host offers more rice at the end of a meal, one might say, *n'bara fa*, 'I am full' – or, *n'bara fa kinin la*, 'I'm full of rice'. One similarly denotes a powerful sorcerer by saying, *a fanin*, 'she or he is full'. Like food, sorcery fills one's 'stomach' or 'insides' (*kɔnɔ*). The phrase, *a kɔnɔ fanin*, 'his or her stomach is full', may describe a sorcerer, a glutton, or both.

Across this semiotic field of sweetness and fullness, *dozos* play a vital role. They supply, cultivate, and safeguard things that 'fill' people in the best sense. *Dozos* provide meat, healing and sorcery to their communities. They are 'full', and their fullness allows them to fill and give 'satisfaction', *janna* – a noun derived from the verb, *ka ja*, 'to be sweet' – to others.

Sweet satisfaction comes only after hard work, however. Catching game and gaining knowledge require sweat and perseverance. *Dozos* risk injury and death in doing so. Hunger, thirst, heat, lack of sleep, charging buffalo, gunfire by hunters who mistake colleagues for game, and the grass-clearing forest fires that hunters set in the dry season can weaken, wound or kill *dozos*. Like all sweet things, the meat, healing and sorcery *dozos* provide are hard to acquire. The greetings that *dozos* exchange with each other and with which the public greet them acknowledge the hazards they face and the forbearance they show in facing them: *i ni ko*, 'you and your exploits'; *i ni nyanin*, 'you and your suffering'; *i ni sege*, 'you and your weariness'. Pain and exhaustion follow *dozos* due to the hazards of hunting and to the impossibility of filling others' desires for sweetness once and for all. Meat is eaten, medicinal plants consumed, and sorcery dispatched, requiring further meat, medicine and sorcery. 'Good sauce', Julas say, 'doesn't last long in the pot', *na duma temyenla daga rɔ*. The image of needy emptiness stalks the fullness *dozos* provide. In *dozos*' stories of Manimory, *dozos* walk a narrow path between plenitude and privation, difficulty and delectability, literally in Manimory's footsteps.

² Julia original: *Karanmɔɔ we / A koŋ ma ja / Su kola dozoy la / A koŋ ma ja*.

STORIES OF MANIMORY

In May 1997, when *dozos* were organizing security patrols in Côte d'Ivoire, Ivoirian Radio and Television invited *dozos* from across the country, including four from Denguélé, to discuss Benkadi on an evening talk show, *Appatam*. Moussa Fofana, president of Odienné's Benkadi office, which organized *dozo* security patrols in Odienné, asked if I would tell my host in Denguélé, celebrated *dozo* singer Dramane Coulibaly, about the event. Inza Fanny, a national *dozo* organizer, had agreed to recruit Denguélé *dozos* for the show and called Fofana from Abidjan to do so. Fofana requested Dramane because of Dramane's knowledge of *dozo* lore.

The next day, Fofana, four senior *dozos* – Dramane Coulibaly, Gbaga Soungalo, Fofana Lansiné, and Odienné's chief *dozo*, Kanamankan Diarrassouba – two junior *dozos*, one of whom was Drissa Koné,³ and I took the thirteen-hour bus ride to Abidjan. The following day, before the taping, three of the senior *dozos* shared stories about Manimory's life, which Moussa Fofana thought might help explain Benkadi and which I summarize below. By then, *dozos* were used to my requests to tape-record conversations and allowed me to do so despite their usual reluctance to reveal personal knowledge of *dozoya* on tape.

Manimory's mysteries

Dramane Coulibaly began by relating events from Manimory's life. He explained that Manimory became important to *dozos* because of the sacrifices he made. As soon as Manimory married his first wife, he sacrificed her in the *dangun*. Then, after his second wife had a son, he sacrificed him as well. Eventually, Manimory disappeared, leaving no trace. 'This is the basis (*ju*) of *dozoya*', said Dramane, '... [Manimory] disappeared (*a tununin*)'. Without Manimory's sacrifices and disappearance, *dozos* could make no sacrifices to gain his protection.

An older *dozo*, Gbaga Soungalo, picked up where Dramane left off. Early one morning, Manimory went hunting. The entire day passed without his return, prompting other hunters to look for him. Following his footprints, they came to a fork in the path he had taken. His tracks ended there, at the *dangun* where he had buried his first wife and son. They found no trace of Manimory's body, only his rifle and shirt in a tree. He had vanished. By Dramane and Soungalo's accounts, Manimory's disappearance somehow made him accessible to *dozos* in the forest. After vanishing, he could protect from danger those who made sacrifices to him, filling the forest with his presence to sweeten the hunt.

³ In Hellweg 2001, I referred to Dramane Coulibaly, Gbaga Soungalo, Fofana Lansiné, and Drissa Koné with pseudonyms – Samka Soumaoro, Zaki Camara, Yacou Koné, and Issa Traoré, respectively. In this article I use their real names as they originally allowed me to do.

Sacrifice in the forest

Dozos access Manimory's forest presence through sacrifice. On moonless nights in the midst of the dry season from April to the beginning of June, *dozos* embark together on *wasi*, an overnight hunt. They do so after the period of burning that clears forests of grass but after the first rains when underbrush starts to regrow. They leave their villages after the noon meal. At a location where they can find game – near a water source, for instance – they make camp. Then they disperse to hunt. They may return with small game to eat, like duiker, guinea fowl, or mongoose. Some will have also brought yams, coffee and cooking pots from home. After cooking and eating their evening meal, they make a sacrifice to Manimory in the midst of the forest, far from any *dangun*. They offer him a kola nut and water in exchange for his protection, sacrificing in the forest as did Manimory. If they have 'filled' themselves with hunting sorcery and kept their vows, then they should return uninjured with game for family and friends.

After the sacrifice, *dozos* separate to hunt at night, returning to camp the next morning to share hunting stories, carve up slain game, and go home together. Without Manimory's example, *dozos* would lack the privileged relationship to the forest through which they fill their communities' lack of food and protection. Manimory personifies the fullness to which *dozos* aspire, the emptiness they forfend, and the mimetic power to mediate between the two.

Inzu, Ismaïla and Ibrahim

While Soungalo and Dramane's tales depicted *dozoya* as a self-contained system centred on the forest, subsequent stories gave a different impression. Fofana Lanciné spoke of Manimory's ancestor, Inzu, whom Dramane had once told me was related to Manimory. Before Inzu went out to hunt, his father, being near death, promised him a blessing on his return. After Inzu left, the father's second wife called her son, Ismaïla, and said, 'Your father is going to give Inzu his blessing.' She then put a sheep skin around Ismaïla so he would resemble his hairier brother. When Ismaïla went to see his father, his father asked, 'Are you Inzu?' The mother said, 'Are you so old you no longer recognize your own son?' The father gave Ismaïla his blessing, doubting nonetheless. When Inzu returned, his father recognized his mistake and said, 'Until the end of the world, your name will not fade. All your disciples will honour you.'

Lanciné's story echoes the Genesis story of Abraham's son, Isaac, and Isaac's two sons, Jacob and the hunter Esau (Genesis 27). In that story, Jacob disguises himself as Esau to steal Esau's inheritance while Esau hunts. In Lanciné's version, Esau is Inzu, and Lanciné replaces Jacob with Ismaïla (Ishmael). Inzu loses his inheritance but wins future respect from *dozos*. The story hints at a link between Islam and *dozoya*; Inzu's loss is somehow *dozos*' gain.

Dramane made the link more palpable: 'When Ismaïla's mother was pregnant, his father, Ibrahim, sent her into the bush (*biŋ*) where she gave birth. How could the son of one born in the bush know fear?

Inzu is the son of Ismaïla, who was born in the bush ... Manimory descended from Inzu.⁴ For Dramane, Ismaïla was Inzu's father, not his sibling, and Manimory descended from Inzu and Ibrahimia (Abraham), whom Dramane identified to me on another occasion as the first hunter: while travelling to Mecca to clear the Kabba of idols, Ibrahimia hunted to avoid starvation, handily inventing hunting and monotheism on the same trip.

Lanciné and Dramane thus grafted Manimory and *dozos* onto the family of the proto-Muslim Abraham (Gibb 1982: 26), the first person to worship Allah. Lanciné suggests an indirect link between *dozoya* and Islam, while Dramane traces a direct one through Ismaïla, Inzu and Manimory. Both find shared roots for *dozoya* and Islam in events involving Abraham and his progeny – figures revered in Islam, Judaism and Christianity. In contrast, Soungalo's tale and Dramane's first story ignore Islam, portraying *dozoya* as independent of it.

In all four stories, however, hunters gain power in hazardous contexts – the forest, an inheritance dispute, and the bush – by making themselves vulnerable. In Soungalo's tale and Dramane's first story, Manimory appears to sacrifice himself to master the forest, vanishing in the *dangun* at the spot where he sacrificed his wife and son. In Lanciné's story, Inzu loses his inheritance in exchange for future honour. And in Dramane's second story, Inzu is born in the bush and consequently knows no fear. Hostile environments threaten hunters; their only recourse is to assimilate to the voids that threaten to engulf them. Manimory vanishes, Inzu hunts and loses his inheritance, and Ismaïla is born beyond his father's compound. Each finds a place in the domain that threatens to annihilate him. The emptiness they embrace fills them with power.

Dozos see this fullness and emptiness in the *dangun*. Although it appears vacant without *dozos* present, *dozos* know that Manimory fills it at all times. Whenever Dramane led *dozos* to the *dangun*, he sang:

We go to the *dangun*
 The *dangun* is not empty
 The *dozos* are in the *dangun*
 The *dangun* is not empty.⁴

Only the uninitiated see the emptiness of the *dangun* and the absence of Manimory from Muslim scripture as paradoxes, for Manimory inhabits both. He and his forebears made the wilderness their home or became Muslim saints. *Dozos*' stories of Manimory offer alternative ways for *dozos* to juxtapose *dozoya* and Islam: as unrelated (in Soungalo's tale and Dramane's first story), as vaguely linked (in Lanciné's tale), or as inextricably intertwined (in Dramane's second story).

⁴ Julia original: *Anugu watɔ dangun na / Dangun lɔkolon tɛ / Dozoy ye dangun na / Dangun lɔkolon tɛ.*

Manimory and Asanènè

A fifth story offers the most explicit link between *dozoya* and Islam. Seven months before *dozos'* discussion of Manimory in Abidjan, Drissa Koné and I visited the village of Kiémou,⁵ about 300 km east of Odienné in the Korhogo prefecture, where the majority population is Senufo. A *dozo* native of the village, Tiécoura Ouattara, had invited us there to learn about *dozoya* in a Senufo context. While Drissa was greeting villagers, he met Mory Diakitè,⁶ a *dozo* who had left his natal village of Minignan in Denguélé years before to settle in Kiémou. I summarize his tale below, which he attributed to his *dozo* master (*karanmɔɔɔɔɔɔ*) from Minignan.

One day Manimory and the hunter Asanènè met in the bush while hunting. After repeated meetings they came to trust each other. Eventually they made camp together and planned their hunts in tandem so as to avoid disturbing each other. They agreed that if either betrayed the other he would die – an agreement Diakitè took as the origin of *dozos'* initiatory oath. Eventually, other hunters came to their camp, and the camp became a village. Then one day Manimory failed to return from hunting. Asanènè and a group of hunters searched for him and found his shirt, weapons and equipment piled at the fork of a path in the bush (*koy*). Asanènè said, 'You do not know Manimory, but I know my master. He wasn't just anyone. From the way he worked and the way he disappeared, he was a saint (*waliju*).'⁷ The hunters found one or two kola nuts and made a sacrifice where Manimory had left his things. Then they took his things back to the village and fired several rounds. 'If you see today that we speak of the ... *dangun*,' Diakitè said, 'this is how it began.' Each subsequent *dangun* mimetically recreates the place where Manimory vanished. Each *dozo* sacrifice mimics Asanènè's initial offering to his fallen companion. Diakitè concluded by describing the hunt as a means for assuring one's salvation:

Without hunting ... the things of the bush would [by now] have finished off human beings altogether. ... When you enter the bush to hunt, you expiate your sins. ... [The hunt] removes sin from your body as if you have washed yourself. All your sins are removed. ... The hunt is a very good thing because Allah loves people more than anything. Without *dozos*, the things of the bush would have exterminated humanity.

(cf. Hellweg 2004: 11)

In other words, if *dozos* did not protect people from forest predators, predators would hunt humans to extinction. According to Diakitè, *dozos* expiate sin by protecting Allah's most precious human creatures. At the final judgment, Diakitè said, 'you will say that you killed your chicken [were initiated as a *dozo*] with me. I will say that I killed mine [with

⁵ Pronounced, 'chay-moo', with stress on the second syllable. In Hellweg 2001, 2004, I used the name Tiékaha as a pseudonym.

⁶ In Hellweg 2001, 2004, I gave Sidibé as a pseudonym for Mory's surname.

my master], and so on, back to . . . the great hunters of the past [and] we will all find peace' (cf. Hellweg 2004: 11). For Diakit , *dozoya* finds its ultimate meaning in Islam: a *dozo*'s initiatory sacrifice wins him paradise. *Dozos* thus routinely invoked Manimory and Allah in the same breath in the benedictions they made for each other: *Alla Manimory duan ye*, 'May Allah grant Manimory's blessing', or *Ka koy ja ka faran Manimory ya, Alla o ke*, 'May Allah make the fields sweet by the intercession of Manimory'.

For Ioan Lewis, 'what is really at stake here', as in other instances of so-called syncretic Islam,

is a broader issue: the fierce and constantly recharged theological debate concerning the interpretation of the Prophet's message. Here attention focuses on the meaning and importance of such famous revelatory passages in the Koran as the injunction to believers to 'seek the means to come to Him' (v. 39).⁷ (Lewis 1996: 95–6)

According to Lewis, Sufis use this verse to justify their reverence for saints who intercede on their behalf with Allah. Diakit  likewise describes how his saint, Manimory, assures *dozos*' salvation before God. One by one, Isma la, Inzu, and Manimory emptied themselves into the forest and bush – respectively abandoned by a father, bereft of an inheritance, or consumed completely – only to become fearless, renowned or omnipresent as a result.

SORCERY AS MIMESIS

The dozo who said, 'nee-'

In the forest, *dozos* similarly transform themselves, using sorcery to blend into and master their surroundings. *Dozo* Drissa Kon , for example, related an incantation to me that he said *dozos* use to become invisible to prey:

To whom did Allah give the power to change shape?⁸

The chameleon says something

The chameleon becomes it

That which the chameleon sees

The chameleon becomes it.⁹

Drissa said that if a *dozo* were to recite these words and make the appropriate gestures, a baboon, for instance, would see the *dozo* as another baboon, seeing no threat until it is too late.¹⁰ The *dozo* would

⁷ Lewis provides no *sura* number for the quoted verse.

⁸ Note that the incantation invokes Allah.

⁹ Jula original: *Ala tagana yel emali bisi jenin bolo? / O n ziy k'a fo min ye / N ziyi ke we / Fon min ka n ziy ye / N ziyi ke we.*

¹⁰ Any other person would see the *dozo* in human form.

blend so perfectly into the forest that he would become, for all practical purposes, invisible.

Such mimesis epitomizes *dozoya*, and Drissa Koné related a *dozo* narrative to make the point. When animals learned that a famous *dozo* was seeking a wife, they turned into women and offered themselves to him to learn his hunting secrets. The *dozo* began to share his knowledge with them. He said he could turn into a rock, a leaf, or a *nee-* but his mother shushed him before he could finish the word, warning him to be careful.¹¹ Eventually, the *dozo* married one of the shape-shifting animals, a hyena, and she took him into the woods, ostensibly to meet her family. She insisted he leave his gun behind. Once in the forest, the animals ambushed him, whereupon the *dozo* vanished. The animals, knowing that he could become a rock, upended every rock in sight. As they neared the one he had become, he vanished again. Then the animals remembered that he could become a leaf, so they examined every leaf they saw. As they neared the leaf he had become, he vanished once more. Now the animals remembered that he could turn into a *nee-* but they searched in vain, never finding the *needle* (*mɛsɛni*) he had become. The tale warns *dozos* to dissemble their full mimetic power by feigning their lack if they wish to master the forest.

The epic of Bamori

A *dozo* epic further illustrates *dozo* mimesis. Denguélé's popular epic of the *dozo* Bamori, as told by Amara Fofana (Derive 1978), begins at the night-time funeral of a deceased *dozo*. Among the *dozos* stands Kowulen, an elephant-sorcerer responsible for 280 *dozos*' deaths. He has taken *dozo* form and offered a chicken and two kola nuts in sacrifice to Manimory, and he is present when *dozo* singer Yiran provokes Bamori in song to kill game in the deceased's memory:

If you have become a *dozo*

If you are not a homebody. . .

Then offer me Kowulen's tail. (Derive 1978: 20–1, lines 138–44)

I have seen Dramane Coulibaly provoke *dozos* this way at *dozo* funerals. Singers like Dramane and Yiran trail *dozos* the way vultures follow predators; they expect a share in the spoils for spurring *dozos* to hunt (Derive 1978: 53, n. 16). In the epic, Yiran sings:

Empty-handed. . .

The vulture has no bow

The vulture has no trap

Yet the vulture's beak is never empty. (Derive 1978:14–15, lines 75–8)

Like vultures, Yiran and Dramane eat prey killed by others, evoking in song the lack of meat that *dozos* fill. In response to Yiran, Bamori agrees

¹¹ The *dozo* said *mɛ-* in Jula.

to kill Kowulen, and Kowulen overhears, having taken a woman's form in the crowd.

The next morning, after a quick breakfast and despite oracles foretelling Bamori's death, Bamori pursues Kowulen. In the forest, they chase and elude each other through sorcery. Bamori becomes a ditch, Kowulen, flowing water; Bamori a fly, Kowulen a bee; Bamori a monkey, Kowulen a dog, all in rapid succession. At last Bamori throws his gun's stock – what remains of his gun – into the air and leaps onto it, high above Kowulen. Then Kowulen, now a swallow, dismembers Bamori, strewing his limbs and accoutrements across the forest.

Afterward, Bamori's colleagues collect his remains in a blanket and return them to his widow for burial:

[The *dozos*] saw Bamori's footprints
 They saw Bamori's axe and satchel
 They saw his old pants
 They saw his old shirt. . .
 They saw one of Bamori's feet. . .
 They saw Bamori's head
 And put [them] in the blanket (Derive 1978:46–7, lines 395–402)

The scene recalls Manimory's disappearance and the traces he left in the forest. Bamori's disappearance assumes a similar, otherworldly air. As his colleagues return to the village, Yiran sings of hunting's imminent mortal risk:

What then can I say to *dozos*' wives?
 Speed the *dozos*' breakfast
 It is my men's food for the afterlife. (Derive 1978: 46–7, lines 415–17)

His word for 'afterlife', *kiyama*, derives from the Arabic, *al-qiyamah*, or 'resurrection', revealing a Muslim orientation further evidenced by his final refrain, 'A good person's death . . . is the mark of Allah' (Derive 1978: 50–1, line 453), a phrase Dramane sang at every *dozo* funeral I attended.¹²

A man's life as a *dozo* begins, like Bamori's epic, with a sacrifice to Manimory – albeit an initiatory one – and ends in a Muslim eulogy. Yiran the hungry vulture called Bamori to hunt. Bamori shifted shape to fulfil Yiran's expectations, and Bamori's gruesome death won favour with Allah. Like Manimory, Bamori dissolved into the forest and afterlife through the hunt. For Muslim *dozos*, the path to heaven and hunting can be one and the same.

¹² Dramane sang, *Mɔɔ bɛrɛ sa / Ala le nɔ*.

DOZOYA, NARRATIVE AND ISLAM

Dozos narrate the lives of Manimory, his ancestors and other *dozo* heroes in ways that variously relate hunting to Islam. Lanciné depicts Inzu's hunting as a Muslim pursuit based on a Muslim patriarch's prediction of renown. Dramane links *dozoya* and Islam through the tropes of exile and shared substance; Ismaïla becomes a hunter through his birth in the bush, and Inzu, Manimory and their *dozo* followers inherit Ismaïla's affinity for hunting. Lanciné and Dramane both count a prophetic lineage's predilection for hunting as a sign of *dozos*' incipient Muslim faith, just as Muslims count Abraham and Ishmael as proto-Muslims. Diakité also links Islam and *dozoya* through the hunt. *Dozos* earn Allah's gratitude by protecting human beings from predators, and *dozos*' initiatory sacrifices assure their salvation by transforming their hunting exploits into offerings to expiate sin. Muslim *dozos* may hunt and invoke Allah and Manimory without contradiction.

By contrast, Soungalo's tale and Dramane's second story place Manimory's non-Muslim sacrifices at *dozoya*'s core. Soungalo and Dramane ground Manimory's power in the sacrifice of his wife and son and in his disappearance in the forest, reminding *dozos* that they need not be Muslim to hunt. Such stories trace *dozoya* exclusively to *dozos*' relations with the forest.

Each narrative offers a particular trope – non-Muslim sacrifice, disappearance, disinheritance, exile, and Muslim sacrifice – to depict a different relationship, or none whatsoever, between *dozoya* and Islam. No overarching contrast between tradition and modernity defines *dozos*' ritual identities; some practise Islam, some don't. And no single shared substance or process need link hunting and Islam. In Denguélé, most *dozos* practised Islam, but some did not – among whom were some members of the *kɔma* (*komo*) society (see McNaughton 1988) – yet they worked together as colleagues. About Islam, *dozos* agreed to disagree.

Dozos also distinguished themselves from Mande or other Sudanic groups who link themselves to Islam via an associate of Muhammad or through his political successors, the caliphs. Malian dynasties claimed descent from the Prophet's friend Bilali Bounama, other associates of the Prophet, or members of his family (Niane 1965: 85–6, n. 4; Johnson 1992: 25–7). Askia Muhammad Touré, Songhay's early-sixteenth-century ruler, sought and received from the Egyptian caliph the title Caliph of the Sudan, signifying political succession from Muhammad (Trimingham 1962: 98). Mande Muslim bards, the *funé*, trace descent from a man who showed Muhammad hospitality, converted to Islam, and gained Muhammad's blessing (Conrad 1995: 88–9). In contrast, *jelis* (griots) trace descent from Surakata, an enemy of Muhammad who, in some accounts, later converts to Islam (Hale 1998: 65–7; Makarius 1969; Zemp 1968).

Dozos take a different approach. They neither link themselves to Muhammad through his associates, nor do they trace descent from enemies or friends of the Prophet. Through Manimory they tie themselves instead to figures who predated Muhammad but revered

Allah: Ibrahim, Ismaïla, and Inzu. Their version of Islam stands at some remove from the Qur'an and Hadiths. Nowhere in the Qur'an does Esau appear or his father make a favourable prediction for him – not even in Genesis – nor does Manimory descend from Ismaïla or Inzu, or hunting expiate sins.

Dozos' Muslim pedigree is intertextual rather than merely Qur'anic; it references the Torah, the Qur'an, and *dozo* orature. Denguélé *dozos'* narratives allude to Muslim scripture and, at the same time, creatively distantiate and reinterpret it (Ricoeur 1981: 110–14, 131–44). They establish Muslim precedents for practices some Muslims condemn on scriptural grounds. In this spirit, Dramane Coulibaly called his harp-lute the '*dozos'* Qur'an' (*dozoy ya kurana*). The *dozo* songs and epics it accompanies parallel the Qur'an as a source of revelation. It gives *dozos* a non-Qur'anic basis for Muslim integrity. Just as Sufis access divine 'grace' (*baraka*) in proximity to their saints (Brenner 1988: 34–6; Robinson 2004: 19), *dozos* commune through Manimory with Allah as much as with the forest.¹³

SWEETNESS AND POWER

To conclude, I have argued that *dozos* structure their hunts, narratives, epics, sorcery and relations to Islam with tropes of sweetness and difficulty, fullness and emptiness, and the process of mimetic transformation that mediates these contrasts. *Dozos* shift shape to fulfil their communities' desires. As these desires change, *dozos'* goals for transformation change – from hunting animals, to becoming Muslim, to running Benkadi. Their relation to Islam and the Ivoirian state depends on the dynamic disappearance of a Muslim saint in the forest, not on a conjuncture of traditional hunting with modernity (cf. Comaroff 1985: 1, 12; Sahlins 1981: 50). Dichotomies of tradition and modernity fail to explain the diversity of *dozoya's* manifestations, structured as they are according to more salient aesthetic criteria.

Following Lewis (1996), one need not oppose *dozoya* to modern Islam because it relies on local ritual practice any more than one should consider Sunni Islam 'syncretic' because it acknowledges the existence of *jinn* recognized before Islam. *Dozos* who recite the Muslim credo, who pray, fast, give alms, and make the *haj* are Muslim *dozos*. The tropes of their Muslim oral histories circumvent Wahhabis' Qur'anic and Hadith-based condemnations by revealing common origins for *dozoya* and Islam; and their aesthetic eludes characterization as a syncretic hybrid of traditional and modern elements because Muslim *dozos* see Islam and *dozoya* as working towards the same unifying end: the salvation of *dozos* and their communities.

It is, as Lambek (1990: 23–4) notes, far from 'a truism to say that Islam is a text-based religion'. Without examining the 'local hermeneutics'

¹³ One might even think provisionally of *dozos* as a Sufi order who revere Manimory as a saint while allowing non-Muslim members to join.

of religious practice, one assumes at one's peril that Muslim texts are primarily if not uniquely literate. By distantiating, reinterpreting and combining Muslim texts and practices, Biblical stories and *dozo* epics, *dozo* orature invents *dozoya* as Islam. Manimory is a saint linked to Qur'anic figures by a shared predilection for hunting and a miraculous disappearance akin to Inzu's loss of inheritance and Ismaïla's birth in exile.

Dozos thus transcend the local and traditional to engage in Islam's global modernity through an aesthetic that links their regional beliefs to Islam's universal claims (see Mudimbe 1988: 199–200). Their aesthetic relates the hunt to Islam as an event: Manimory's disappearance in the forest, Inzu's disinheritance, or Ismaïla's birth in exile. The event elicits a process: the transfer of shared substance – be it honour, a taste for hunting, or a series of human sacrifices and disappearances that transform hunting into Muslim sacrifice. The process, in turn, enacts a metaphor that underlies Manimory's – and *dozos*' – relationship to the forest and Islam: mimetic transformation into one's surroundings. The *dozo* becomes the forest, and *dozoya* becomes Islam – metaphorical equations of two ostensibly unlike phenomena that highlight underlying similarities between them (Sapir 1977: 4). Finally, the metaphor becomes an analogy that *dozos* deploy in other domains (see Crocker 1977: 58). In the 1990s, *dozos* became security agents by assuming the appearance of the persons who eventually ended their movement, state security officials. Just as mimesis strengthened them in the forest, so it empowered them to work with, rather than subvert, the state. They infiltrated its dangerous terrain as they might have the forest's, by mimicking its features – its bureaucracy, profit motive, official language and surveillance operations – to achieve a goal as 'sweet' as game meat, 'agreement'. The state, unconvinced of *dozos*' sincerity, restricted Benkadi to the north, curtailing its national presence.

Dozos nonetheless proved that contradictions between their hunting and security roles, like the supposed tensions between modern Islam and *dozo* hunting, were as illusory as the *dangun*'s emptiness. Their search for both earthly and heavenly satisfaction begins, after all, with the hunt and its aesthetic. Like Manimory, however, *dozos* finish the hunt empty-handed because what they seek is either too difficult to catch or so sweet that others take it from them as soon as they return. Their work never ends, but their suffering wins rewards both temporal and eternal. The hunt is sweet, but *dozoya* is divine.

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'Pour avoir prêché contre les dozos. . . L'Imam Wahabite ligoté', *SoirINFO*, 19 November 1996, p. 11.

ABSTRACT

This article explores the hunting aesthetics of initiated Jula hunters of Côte d'Ivoire who call themselves *dozos*. It explains how their hunting aesthetic structures their relationship to Islam and the Ivoirian state. Although many Africans approach Islam in the context of tensions between local ritual traditions and modernizing Muslim reform, *dozos* approach Islam the way they approach the forests where they hunt, assimilating to both in order to tame them. They organize their hunting activities around an aesthetic centred on notions of sweetness and fullness; their contraries, difficulty and emptiness; and the process of mimetic transformation (shape-shifting) that mediates between these extremes. With these categories *dozos* assimilate themselves to and appropriate power from the forest to kill game. They also link themselves to pre-Qur'anic Muslim figures to legitimize themselves as Muslims. More recently, they tried to assimilate to the Ivoirian state to become a parallel police force. Stories of their

tutelary spirit, Manimory, and the texts of their hunting songs, incantations, and epics encode diverse ways for *dozos* to relate to Islam, leaving room for *dozos* to eschew it as well. Their texts reveal a dynamic sense of history that defies classification in terms of tradition, modernity or postmodernity.

RÉSUMÉ

Cet article examine l'esthétique de la chasse chez les chasseurs initiés julas de Côte d'Ivoire, qui se donnent le nom de *dozos*. Il explique comme leur esthétique de chasse structure leur rapport à l'islam et à l'État ivoirien. Alors que de nombreux Africains abordent l'islam dans le contexte de tensions entre traditions rituelles locales et réforme musulmane modernisatrice, les *dozos* abordent l'islam de la même manière qu'ils abordent les forêts dans lesquelles ils chassent, s'assimilant aux deux pour les maîtriser. Ils organisent leurs activités de chasse autour d'une esthétique centrée sur des notions de douceur et de plénitude, des notions contraires de difficulté et de vide, ainsi que sur le processus de transformation mimétique (métamorphose) qui assure la médiation entre ces extrêmes. Avec ces catégories, les *dozos* s'assimilent à la forêt et s'en approprient les pouvoirs pour tuer le gibier. Ils s'associent également à des figures musulmanes pré-coraniques pour se justifier en tant que musulmans. Plus récemment, ils ont essayé de s'assimiler à l'État ivoirien pour devenir une force de police parallèle. Les récits de leur esprit tutélaire, Manimory, ainsi que les textes de leurs chants de chasse, incantations et récits épiques codifient les différentes manières qu'ont les *dozos* de se situer par rapport à l'islam et qui leur laissent également latitude pour l'éviter. Leurs textes révèlent un sens dynamique de l'histoire qui défie la classification en termes de tradition, de modernité ou de postmodernité.