Kitawala in the Congo:
Religion, Politics, and Healing in 20th-21st Century Central African History

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Introduction

I go a little forward and a little back. We are still afraid. If I go too fast you will see that the one that we pray to in the forest has already killed me. Everyone – whether they take the vaccine or not – they are all my believers. If they refuse you and you cannot agree with that, then you might as well take us all into a plane and throw us into the ocean. All your problems will be gone.

- Pastor Paul II (PP2), a Kitawalist pastor in Northern Katanga, 2012[1]

In 2011, the government of the Democratic Republic of Congo decided, with the support of UNICEF, to push for universal vaccination against polio. In some parts of the country, particularly in the northern parts of the province of Katanga, government health workers encountered serious pushback from these efforts, as numerous local communities exhibited deep mistrust of their intentions. PP2 [Image 1][2] is the leader of one such community: Kitawala-Filadelphie. In the article and short documentary produced by UNICEF detailing the story of PP2 (known in his community as the "Elephant King") and his community in their interactions with health officials dealing with the vaccine, PP2 is presented as the brave but cautious modernizer. In a place where the road to universal vaccination is "strewn with magical pitfalls and biblical challenges" and "people act based on tradition and faith," PP2 is portrayed as UNICEF's great hope.[3] "The Filadelphie process of reform may show potential," the UNICEF reporter writes, "but it relies completely on the strength of the Elephant King; and he, in turn, risks

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[1] UNICEFpolio, "The Owl's Secret: a powerful ally in the fight to end polio in DRC" https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IOXkHzRbt7Y&feature=player_embedded Accessed 6/9/13

[2] All images can be found in Appendix 1.

[3] V. Petit and J. Pittenger, "Part 2: A Trojan Horse Strategy." UNICEF http://www.polioinfo.org/index.php/communication-in-action/drc/stories-from-the-field/246-the-elephant-king-of-the-congo-making-a-powerful-ally-in-the-fight-to-end-polio-part-2 Accessed 6/6/13.

permanently weakening his authority or even being thrown out of his role as leader."[4] This is so, we are told, because PP2 lives in a community divided, where the 'Civilian Kitawala' are "more open to modernization", but the 'Armed Kitawala' are "fundamentalists" who are "more likely to wear clothes made of raffia and to carry bows and arrows."[5]

This juxtaposition of 'Civilian' and 'Armed' Kitawalists recalls a much older juxtaposition, one that dates back to the colonial history of Kitawala: 'Religious Kitawala' v. 'Political Kitawala.' Sixty years earlier, Belgian officials were also convinced that there were two kinds of Kitawala – a relatively benign 'religious' Kitawala that might, with the appropriate use of development and propaganda, be rendered compatible with the state, and a more dangerous, 'xenophobic' and 'political' Kitawala that used 'magic and superstition' to turn the Congolese against them and posed a grave threat to the colonial project. Though the two contexts are different, the parallels in representation are striking, as are the parallels in the proposed methods of combating Kitawalist 'doctrine': education and development. Of course, there are important differences. Certainly UNICEF would never imprison Kitawalists for their beliefs and propose forcible reeducation in prison camps, which was, for decades, a core policy of the colonial administration in their struggle to suppress Kitawala. The health workers with UNICEF propose a much more nuanced approach: dialogue with the community (led by Congolese health officials) and training community members to educate their

[4] Ibid.
[5] Ibid.

peers (what they call the "Trojan Horse Strategy").[6] Yet, the underlying principles of social engineering in the two contexts arguably expose a clear ideological congruence.

It is hardly a novel observation that development projects today share an ideological and political heritage with colonial development projects.[7] More pertinent to this study is the question of enduring representations and of histories articulated, but not addressed. Woven into UNICEF's account of triumph over "tradition and faith" are the layers of an unacknowledged history. Indeed, one would not realize from the UNICEF presentation of the story that there is a very particular history of state-sanctioned oppression and coercion informing the interactions with Kitwalists and the state. Clearly exasperated by the constant incursion of the health officials, PP2 sardonically tells them that if they do not like the way his community functions, then they can "throw them all into the ocean." That PP2 imagines the endgame of the state interference as violence is significant, for in that moment, he is evoking a long history in which that has, indeed, been the case.

Nor would one realize from reading the account that notions of health in the communities in question are themselves a matter of historical and conceptual depth. One is told that Kitawalists "do not use modern medicine, preferring the virtues of home brews and prayer."[8] Thus, the complex questions surrounding what Stacey Langwick has

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[6] Ibid.

[7] See, for example: Megan Vaughan, *Curing Their Ills: Colonial Power and African Illness*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, particularly pages 205-6; Henrietta Moore and M.A. Vaughan, *Cutting Down Trees: Gender, Nutrition and Change in the Northern Province of Zambia, 1890-1990*. New York: Heinemann, 1994, especially chapters 7-8.

[8] V. Petit and J. Pittenger, "Part 1: Gaining the Ear of an Elephant King" http://www.polioinfo.org/index.php/communication-in-action/drc/stories-from-the-field/244-the-elephant-king-of-the-congo-making-a-powerful-ally-in-the-fight-to-end-polio-part-1, Accessed 6/6/13.

called the "alternative materialities" that guide people's understandings of malady and therapy in the post-colonial space where religion and healing meet in Africa are subsumed into the categories of "home brews and prayer."[9] The possibility that notions of health in the community may not correlate with the presence or absence of a single pathogen – polio – is overlooked, even as the Kitawalists themselves suggest as much:

> These cases of polio you're talking about. Look around. You won't see even one. You could pass through 5 more villages and you still wouldn't see one….But [the vaccine] won't stop our children's fevers. And they die.[10]

Tradition, in the report, is an empty signifier. It refers to a time before: a time in the past when people were oppressed by 'magical pitfalls' and wore 'raffia clothing' and cloaks of leaves. This tradition is juxtaposed to a modernity of cellphones, radios, and polio vaccines. PP2 finds himself in between. Meaningful observations about how PP2 and his community mobilize and engage with discourses of tradition are absent.[11]

The overall effect is to flatten the experiences and interpretations of the Kitawalists, who are denied a complex history. Of course, the UNICEF article and accompanying documentary are not academic texts. They were never meant to highlight the complicated questions of historical experience and representation suggested above.

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[9] Stacey Langwick, *Bodies, Politics and Healing*, Indiana University Press, 2011.
[10] UNICEFpolio.
[11] The fact that PP2 employs the image of the elephant, which has a particular historical significance related to a regionally influential political-healing association known as *bwami* is present in the text but neither acknowledged nor interrogated for its significance as part of a larger discourse of power. Whether or not the area of Katanga where Filadelphie is located has a history of *bwami* association is a question that would require more research, but the association of the elephant with power in both instances is significant nonetheless. On *bwami*, see: Daniel P Biebuyck, *Lega Culture; Art, Initiation, and Moral Philosophy Among a Central African People.* Berkeley: University of California Press, 1973.

Rather, their purpose was to demonstrate to the world the good work that UNICEF is doing with polio vaccination in Congo. Still, popular representations matter and are themselves in dialogue with history.[12] In their capacity to shape perceptions of Kitawalists, such representations are particularly powerful, for the subject of Kitawala in Congolese history suffers from a palpable dearth of substantive studies that can counter the flattened narrative the UNICEF pieces present.[13]

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[12] Though the 'doctors' featured in the story are not quite the intrepid white 'jungle doctors' that Megan Vaughan highlights in her study of biomedicine and popular genres of representation in the colonial era, as she suggests herself, "there is a continuity in the images associated with the European biomedical endeavour in Africa." Vaughan, 1991, 155.

[13] Most of the available studies are in French: Mwene-Batende, *Mouvements messianique et protestation sociale*. Kinshasa : Faculte de Theologie Catholique, 1982 ; Mwene-Batende, "Le Kitawala dans l'Evolution Socio-Politique Recente: Cas du Group Bulukela dans la Ville de Kisangani." In *Cahiers des religions africaines* 10:19, 1976, 81-105; Maurice Lovens, *La révolte de Masisi-Lubutu: Congo belge, janvier-mai* 1944. Bruxelles: CEDAF, 1974; Mwene-Batende, Gaston, "La sorcellerie comme pratique sociale des Kumu et l'opposition au Kitawala," 1979 (3111). In *Turner Collection on Religious Movements*: 5-04-007 Fiche 155. Wolverhampton, England: Advance Micrographics, 1983; Jacques E. Gérard, *Les fondements syncretiques du Kitawala*. Bruxelles: Centre de recherche et d'information socio-politiques, 1969; Jean-Pierre Paulus, "Le Kitawala au Congo belge (mouvement indigene a caractere politico-religieux)," 1956 (3213). In *Turner Collection on Religious Movements*: 5-04-007 Fiche 173. Wolverhampton, England: Advance Micrographics, 1983; Spindler, Marc, "Le mouvement Kitawala en Afrique centrale," 1968 (1470). In *Turner Collection on Religious Movements*: 5-06-000 Fiche 227. Wolverhampton, England: Advance Micrographics, 1983; Anyenyola Welo, Jacques-Oscar, "Le mouvement Kitawala en Republique du Zaire," 1972 (3104). In *Turner Collection on Religious Movements*: 5-04-007 Fiche 153. Wolverhampton, England: Advance Micrographics, 1983; Biebuyck, Daniel, "La societe Kumu face au Kitawala," 1957 (3117). In *Turner Collection on Religious Movements*: 5-04-007 Fiche 156. Wolverhampton, England: Advance Micrographics, 1983; Kabazo Kikasa, *Le Début Du Mouvement Kitawala Au Katanga-Shaba, 1923-1937*. Lubumbashi: Université nationale du Zaire, Campus de Lubumbashi, Faculté des lettres, 1972. There is also a novel about Kitawala, written by a Belgian colonizer: Léon Debertry, *Kitawala: Roman*. Elisabethville: Éditions Essor du Congo, 1953. In Anglophone literature, there is: John Higginson, "Liberating the Captives: Independent Watchtower as an Avatar of Colonial Revolt in Southern Africa and Katanga, 1908-1941." In *Journal of Social History*, 26:1, Autumn 1992, 55-80. Kitawala emerges in, but is not the focus of, several studies: Michael Schatzberg, *The Dialectics of*

Yet, I use these materials to introduce this study not simply because they serve as a useful foil, but because the story of PP2 and his community opens a critical window onto the questions at the heart of this history: Why is it that a religious movement that has long been interpreted as an essentially anti-colonial variant of Watchtower persisted in the post-colonial space, emerging in 2013 in a UNICEF report as a neo-traditional enclave of polio vaccine resistors in Katanga? On what terms can we insert these Kitawalists into a larger narrative of Central African history? How might their story, in turn, alter that narrative? The answers to these questions, this study suggests, revolve around the as yet largely unanalyzed role that notions of communal health and healing and the theories of power that inform those notions have played in the history of Kitawala.

Religion, Politics, and Healing in African History

At the confluence of religion, politics, and healing in African history there exists a rich body of literature that can help to illuminate some of the issues outlined above, revealing the impetus for this study. One of the most important insights to emerge from the best of this literature is that boundaries between these three spheres of social influence are in many ways 'post-Enlightenment scholarly abstractions' that reflect little

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Oppression. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, c1988; Ranger, Terence, "Connexions Between 'Primary Resistance' Movements and Modern Mass Nationalism in East and Cenral Africa: Parts 1 and 2," *Journal of African History* (9:3-4), 1968: 437-53, 631-41. There is also one study in German: Hans-Jürgen Greschat. *Kitawala: Ursprung, Ausbreitung Und Religion Der Watch-Tower-Bewegung in Zentralafrika*. Marburg: N.G. Elwert, 1967.

about historical experience in the West and even less in Africa.[14] In this study, I build on this insight by demonstrating how in the history of Kitawala in the Congo specifically, and of Central Africa more broadly, the boundaries between these three spheres have historically been connected by a shared language and practice of power. This shared language and practice has in the past and continues today to animate the ways in which historical agents have engaged with their continually changing world. In their attempts to mediate social circumstances – all too frequently difficult and even volatile in Eastern Congo – Kitawalists have drawn on theories of power – visible and invisible – that are deeply rooted in the history of the region, but have never been static and have always been subject to important and often ambiguous discourses of morality.

That Kitawala has historically been defined by a relationship between religion and politics is hardly a new observation. Indeed, as noted above, the Belgians were convinced that most 'cells' of Kitawala were either overtly political – by which they meant anti-colonial - in their aspirations, or had the potential of becoming political at any moment. This colonial configuration of knowledge about Kitawala profoundly shaped the earliest scholarship about its history, most of which was produced in the 1960s and 70s, and has continued to orient even the most recent scholarship, produced largely in the 1980s. Searching to craft "useable pasts" that could serve as the foundations on which founding narratives of newly independent African nations could be built, early Africanist scholars – building on Terence Ranger's foundational essay on the subject - interpreted millenarian religious movements (i.e. those geared toward bringing an immediate change to the this-worldly via other-worldly means) as a thinly-veiled manifestation of

[14] I borrow the terms here from David Gordon, *Invisible Agents: Spirits in a Central African History*. Athens: Ohio University Press, 2012 [ebook], Loc 175.

(proto)nationalism, just as the Belgians had viewed Kitawala.[15] As Robert Rotberg put it in 1965, "the conquered people cloaked their rejection of colonialism in religious garb," which was, he argued, "the only means by which Africans might reject foreign domination."[16]

Such interpretations have subsequently come under significant critique, as scholars have come to doubt interpretations that placed religious movements like Kitawala somewhere on an evolutionary scale headed inevitably toward a final stage of secular-political agency. Ranger himself revised his initial stance on the matter, writing nearly two decades later that he had "abandoned the attempt to demonstrate that African independent church movements in Central Africa constituted a stage in the evolution of anti- colonial protest."[17] In this later work, Ranger reserves similar judgment for what he calls "proto-class/proletarian" interpretations of colonial religious movements that "depend as heavily on the paranoiac fears of colonial administrators as did the nationalist."[18] Perhaps even more significantly, neither proto-nationalist nor proto-class interpretations could move beyond explanations that centered the colonial state in the everyday lives and concerns of the many people who were drawn into the movements,

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[15] On the "useable past," see: Terence Ranger, "Towards a Usable African Past," in Christopher Fyfe (ed), *African Studies Since 1945: A Tribute to Basil Davidson*. London: Longman, 1976, 17-30. For Rangers foundation piece on millenarian movements and nationalis, see: Terence Ranger, "Connexions Between 'Primary Resistance' Movements and Modern Mass Nationalism in East and Cenral Africa: Parts 1 and 2," Journal of African History (9:3-4), 1968: 437-53, 631-41.

[16] Rotberg, Robert I*, The Rise of Nationalism in Central Africa; The Making of Malawi and Zambia, 1873-1964*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press,1965, 56. See also: Sholto Cross. "The Watchtower Movement in South Central Africa, 1908-1945." D.Phil. thesis, University Oxford, 1973.

[17] Terence O. Ranger, "Religious Movements and Politics in Sub-Saharan Africa", *African Studies Review,* (29:2) Jun 1986, 3.

[18] Ranger, 1986, 17. Examples of such literature are Higginson, 1992 and Sholto Cross, 1973.

even as it was clear from the archival sources that concerns about purifying their communities of witchcraft and, as this dissertation will highlight, pursuit of individual and communal therapies were far more central to the everyday concerns of those who turned to the movements. Ranger calls these "religious" concerns and confesses that he came very close to making a "purely religious analysis of Watch Tower," but remained unconvinced that concerns directed purely at 'a better life at the local level' could suffice to explain the sweeping popularity of the movements.[19]

In her well-received work on Watchtower in Zambia, Karen Fields proposed a novel way to bring the "religious" concerns of Watchtower adherents and their more political manifestations into the same explanatory model.[20] Her argument revolved around the need to acknowledge the 'religious' nature of the colonial state. While the colonial state claimed to be secular, it was, itself, profoundly religious in the sense that it relied heavily on religious agents such as missionaries and local chiefs who made claims to spiritual powers to assert their authority. Because Watchtower, with its emphasis on a direct relationship to God, undermined this colonial power structure, the spiritual practices of the adherents were rendered rebellious by proxy. Watchtower attacked the state at its hypocritical core and it did so simply by making claims to religious sovereignty.[21]

If Fields is largely successful in exposing the profound connection between religion and politics in the colonial government and, thus, exposing the reasons that

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[19] Ranger, 1986, 17.
[20] Readers who are unfamiliar with the history of Watchtower will find an explanation of that history in Chapter Three.
[21] Karen Fields, *Revival and Rebellion in Colonial Central Africa*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1985.

Watchtower posed so grave a political threat to colonial order, she is less successful at interrogating the discourses of power and spiritual agency within Watchtower communities that connected religion to politics. In her eagerness to argue against those who have suggested that the African Watchtower movement was only distantly inspired by American Watchtower ideas - which, she suggests, "has led to baseless argument about the literal-mindedness of African converts, in contrast to others, and about their special propensity to clash with secular authorities" – she largely fails to engage with the complex processes of translation at work in Watchtower communities and, thereby, connect the movement to a larger African history that predates colonial presence.[22] Birgit Meyer, for example, has shown in her work on Pentecostal churches in Ghana that while converts to charismatic Christian churches often vehemently eschew 'traditional' religious practices and beliefs about the agency of spirits, these practices, rather than being abandoned, are 'translated into the Devil'.[23]

Fields is correct in her assertion that religion was politics, but for those within the Watchtower movement and the communities it touched, religion could also be healing or witchcraft, for each of these spheres shared, and continues to share, in a theory of power that in many ways dissolves the boundaries between them. In this theory of power, agency is attributed to the unseen – and those deemed capable of wielding it - in historically contingent ways, and claims to its embodiment are subject to the moral

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[22] Fields, 1985, 97

[23] Birgit Meyer, *Translating the Devil: religion and modernity among the Ewe in Ghana*. Trenton, NJ: Africa World Pres, 1999. On the process of translating Christian concepts into the vernacular, see also: Paul S Landau, *The Realm of the Word: Language, Gender, and Christianity in a Southern African Kingdom*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 1995 and Paul Landau *Popular Politics in the History of South Africa, 1400-1948*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2010.

judgments of communities and individuals. A look at some of the work on politics and the occult and health and healing practices in Central Africa can help to elucidate this point.

In his work on political legitimacy and the occult in Central Africa, for example, Michael Schatzberg has demonstrated that there exists a "moral matrix of legitimate governance" in which political leaders deemed legitimate are those who fulfill the paternal role of providing for the family-nation, whereas those who are perceived to 'eat' resources – often, it is assumed, via occult means – are deemed illegitimate.[24] Wyatt MacGaffey expands on this idea by focusing the conversation on power. In Central Africa, MacGaffey explains, the same power that is understood to be the root of success – *kindoki* – is understood to be the source of evil, the occult means by which the illegitimate leaders described by Schatzberg 'eat' the resources of their communities.[25] Expanding on this idea, in Chapter One I argue for using the term *puissance* when writing about this sort of unseen spiritual power, not because it is inherently more explanatory than other terms (*kindoki*, *force, nguvu, uwezo, bwanga*: these are all terms that have historically been and are still today used to refer to this same notion of power), but because, properly theorized, the term serves as a useful analytical tool for thinking about this ambiguous notion of power that is at the heart of all success and evil, healing and harming, protecting and preying in Central Africa.

Scholars of health and healing have likewise produced rich material from which to build a more nuanced understanding of the theories of power (*puissance*) that were at

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[24] Michael Schatzberg, *Political Legitimacy in Middle Africa*, Indiana University Press, 2001.
[25] MacGaffey, Wyatt, *Kongo Political Culture*. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2000, 2.

work in Watchtower communities, particularly in Congo where they took on a markedly different (though not entirely distinct) form as Kitawala.[26] This literature is of particular importance to one of the central arguments that this dissertation puts forth: the idea that healing – on both the individual and communal levels – was and remains central to the practice of Kitawala and its significance in the communities it has touched. Perhaps the most significant contribution that this growing body of literature has made is to demonstrate the centrality of idioms and practices of health and healing to broader social and political developments in Africa. As early as 1989, Gwin Prins observed that foundational studies in health and healing on the continent had "dismantled" the "conceptual walls that previously separated medicine from the rest of life."[27] Previously held assumptions that health and healing practices in Africa could be understood

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[26] The differences between Watchtower as practiced in Zambia and Kitawala in Congo are certainly discussed in this study, though it is not a central theme. My inclination is to argue – given what is known about the history of Mwana Lesa in Zambia (discussed in Chapter 3) – that the difference between Watchtower and Kitawala, particularly during the early years of its influence, should not be over-exaggerated. The policy of legalization in the late colonial era in Rhodesia – which brought more direct influence from American Watchtower – led to more marked difference between the two movements/churches in the late colonial and post-colonial years. But even in that context, the work of Birgit Meyer (1999) and Paul Landau (1995) suggests that a more nuanced understanding of translation of Watchtower concepts would dismantle any notion that Zambian Watchtower was somehow a more genuine conversion than Kitawala. As I have done not the fieldwork in Zambia necessary to do a more direct comparison, however, this is not an argument that is highlighted in this study.

[27] Gwyn Prins, "But what was the Disease? The Present State of Health and Healing in African Studies," *Past & Present*, no. 124 (Aug., 1989), 165. Some of those foundational studies include: John M. Janzen, *The Quest for Therapy in Lower Zaire.* Berkeley: University of California Press, c1978, 104; John M. Janzen, *Lemba, 1650-1930: A Drum of Affliction in Africa and the New World* . New York: Garland Pub, 1982;
Steven Feierman, "Struggles for Control: The Social Roots of Health and Healing in Modern Africa," *African Studies Review* (28: 2/3) Jun. - Sep.1985, 73-147; John Ford 1910-, *The Role of the Trypanosomiasis in African Ecology; a Study of the Tsetse Fly Problem.* Oxford [Eng.]: Clarendon Press, 1971; John Thornton, "The Slave Trade in Eighteenth Century Angola: Effects on Demographic Structures," *Canadian Journal of African Studies / Revue Canadienne Des Études Africaines* (14: 3) 1980, 417-427.

independent of the political and economic contexts in which they existed dissipated, as did the notion that the African past or present could be understood without serious engagement with the multiple and shifting ways in which Africans have sought to maintain and restore healthy communities.

In the context of understanding the history of Kitawala, one of the most significant contributions that this literature has made is to highlight the ways in which varied kinds of healers and healing associations – whether cults of affliction, networks of spirit mediums, diviners, or herbal healers– have historically constituted important 'nodes of authority' in Africa.[28] In his work on the early history of the Great Lakes region, David Schoenbrun has discussed what he terms "the contradictory historical character of power" in the region.[29] Power, in his configuration, took two forms - instrumental ("exchange of gifts in building patron-client relationships," redistribution of wealth, military power) and creative ("words, pauses, and gestures used by healers and political orators to make people well and sway opinion"). [30] Though often linked and sometimes embodied in the same person, these forms of power were also often at odds with each other. As historian Neil Kodesh explains in his work on public healing early Buganda, spirit mediums (who had access to "spiritual patrons") might be tied to priests (who were also local family heads or guardians of the land) who translated for the mediums in their 'creative' efforts to ensure fertility and general well-being in their communities.

Thus, the 'instrumental' power of family heads (often also priests) depended on

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[28] I borrow the term 'nodes of authority' from Neil Kodesh, *Beyond the Royal Gaze: Clanship and Public Healing in Buganda.* University of Virginia Press, 2010, 4.
[29] Schoenbrun, David Lee, *A Green Place, A Good Place: Agrarian Change, Gender, and Social Identity in the Great Lakes Region to the 15th Century.* Portsmouth, NH: Heineman , 1998, 12.
[30] Schoenbrun, *1998*, 13.

connection with the 'creative' power of spirit mediums. But as wielders of creative spiritual power, mediums might also challenge or undermine those holding instrumental power by using their creative power – their ability to access spirits, their *puissance* - to establish alternative (and often subversive) nodes of authority and to mediate various power relationships, including generational, kinship-based, and gendered relationships.[31] As Chapter Two of this study highlights, this latter point – about gender and creative power – proves particularly important in considering the role of women as wielders of creative power in Kitawalist history, a subject which has been almost entirely ignored in the literature. Highlighting the role of women - rather than simply filling a historiographic gap - alters the narrative entirely, by bringing into the center of the story the questions of when, where, and by whom *puissance* could be and was accessed and wielded by Kitawalists. If, as one Kitawalist leader told me in 2010, the success of Kitawalist men in their most political endeavors to undermine the colonial state depended on the creative power of the "mamas in the prayer chambers," then the story becomes much more complicated than Kitawalist men resisting the colonial government.[32]

Indeed, thinking about this process – whereby those who make claims to the ability to wield creative power could at times undermine and challenge, at other times bolster, and sometimes become those with claims to instrumental power – can help to illuminate much about Kitawala's history. Beyond exposing the significance of women, deep

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[31] See: Feierman, Steve, "Colonizers, Colonized, and the Creation of Invisible Histories." In Victoria E. Bonnell and Lynn Hunt, eds, *Beyond the Cultural Turn: New Directions in the Study of Society and Culture.* Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1999, 190;
Berger, Iris. *Religion and Resistance : East African Kingdoms In the Precolonial Period.* Tervuren, Belgique: Musée royal de l'Afrique centrale, 1981, 22-24.

[32] Kabanga Kamalondo. Interview with Author. Digital Recording. Kalemie, Katanga, DRC, 10/18/10. See Chapter Two.

histories of health and healing in the region offer some insight into the reasons why in some villages, Kitawala – which, as this study demonstrates, had a strong reputation for its claims to creative power – would, at times, be co-opted by existing authorities and used to bolster their claims to power. While in other villages they would find themselves directly opposed to existing authorities and sometimes, as a result, use violence against those authorities. Of course the local context matters here – who the local authorities were, who the Kitawalists in a given community were, what was the relationship between each of those parties,the colonial state and its agents at a given moment – but so, too, does understanding the theories of power that they might have engaged in their decision-making.

That the theories of power that animated public healing could and did also lead to violence is another important point that has been made by more recent work on health and healing. On this point, historian Neil Kodesh notes that in early Buganda "the success of public healers" often "depended in part upon their capacity to wield the means of violence through the coordination of activities related to raiding and warfare."[33] Reminding scholars that some forms of violence can be imagined and experienced even when they are unseen, David Schoenbrun writes that "histories of violence in east Africa that take seriously the challenge of specifying the contexts for potential acts of violence must depict the theories of action that frame imaginary violence, the ever-present double of "real" violence."[34] It is for this reason that discussions of violence in the history of Kitawala must extend beyond political analyses to include the ways in which people

[33] Kodesh 2010, 119.
[34] David Schoenbrun, "Violence and Vulnerability in East Africa before 1800 CE: An Agenda for Research." In *History Compass*, (4/5) 2006, 743.

imagined and talked about *puissance* –hoarding it and wielding it - as both a source of and a remedy for perceived social ills. As I discuss in Chapter Four, the history of this fraught relationship between violence and healing sheds important light onto the history of the Kitawalist-led Lobutu-Masisi uprising in 1944.

But it also calls into question the limits of thinking about the theories of power outlined above in terms of healing and underscores the reasons why I insist on framing the history of Kitawala as an intellectual history of power – of *puissance*. Idioms of health and healing are central to ways in which people in Central Africa imagined, articulated, and embodied *puissance*, but so too are idioms of violence (both 'invisible' and 'real', as Schoenbrun suggests), both of which are intimately connected and ultimately mediated by historically contingent discourses of morality. That is, whether the use of *puissance* is deemed moral or immoral, healing or violent, is in not a matter of consensus, but negotiation, and is often an issue of contention within communities.[35] Moreover, that contention frequently grows out of historically defined rifts – generational, political, gendered, class-based - that divide communities. As I argue in Chapter Six, which places the more recent history of Kitawala in a broader post-colonial context, the ambiguity this breeds renders the language of *puissance* highly potent and easily manipulated in contexts – like that of eastern Congo today - where assertions that *puissance* is being used for the protection of communities can often mask, or be imagined to mask, practices of violence and predation.

This final point – that *puissance*, in addition to being a spiritual force that can be embodied and imagined to have agency, is also discourse that can be doubted, debated,

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[35] Wyatt MacGaffey makes a similar observation in his discussion of the contentious nature of *kindoki*: MacGaffey 2000, 12.

and manipulated – is important. In his recent work on spirits as 'invisible agents' in Central Africa, David Gordon questions the ultimate usefulness of discursive ("symbolic") analyses of spiritual powers which focus on the ways in which people talk about those powers, rather than ways in which they act under the assumption that such powers – he prefers the term 'spirits' - exist and exert agency in their lives. "To understand the agency of spirits," Gordon writes, "is to relate spirits - or spirit discourses – to this nonlinguistic world."[36] Gordon is, of course, correct that in Central Africa, spirits have exerted a form of historical agency that existed in the 'non-linguistic world'. This is how we can think of Kitawalist women – as wielders of *puissance* or, as it were, mediums of spirits – as having had a tangible impact on Kitawalist history, through their interactions with spirits. But as people have not always agreed on the nature of that agency, spirits must also be understood to have a discursive life. Moreover, thinking about this form of power exclusively in terms of 'spirits' seems to contain the nature of their power into beings. While in some cases this is, indeed, the way in which people speak of *puissance* – as territorial spirits, or ancestral spirits, or even the Christian God – at other times they speak of it not as distinct beings, but as a force that can be contained in objects – medicines, *nkisi,* or, as I suggest in Chapter One, money with Lumumba's face on it – and that can be accessed, more or less successfully, by skilled healers, mediums, or, in the case of religious movements like Kitawala, pastors. These objects, then, are not necessarily the spirits themselves, but the power – the *puissance* - of the spirits enacted in the material world.

[36] Gordon 2012, Loc 239.

In this configuration, *puissance,* rather than exclusively a spirit agent, is something that can be exchanged, acquired, or accessed in what might be called an 'economy of *puissance'*. Thinking about *puissance* this way broadens the scope such that spirit agents can be seen as actors in an economy that also includes the objects and people (and religious movements) they empower. In their search to find communal and individual health or to understand the source of their ills, people then engage in transactions within that economy that, in a given historical circumstance, are perceived to best fit their needs.[37] Trying to illuminate what, at a given moment in Congolese history, Kitawala had to offer in the economy of *puissance*, then, might go a long way toward understanding how people perceived their ills and why they were attracted to the movement. Most importantly, it moves the conversation away from the debate about whether or to what extent Kitawala was political or religious, into a conversation about how Kitawalists engaged with and re-imagined theories of power that neither began nor ended with colonial rule.

Of Oral Histories and Conflict Zones

It is undoubtedly true that all histories are a product of the present in which they are written. In the case of this history this is true in some particularly salient ways. When I conducted fieldwork for this project in 2010, the ongoing conflict in the Kivus

[37] I borrow here from Florence Bernault's notion of a transaction as "a wider range of transfers between partners who can own, mobilize, accumulate, get momentary access or relinquish something against something." Bernault argues that "such bargaining operations are often implicit and hidden, while the 'things' they put into motion can be both material and symbolic." Florence Bernault, "The Asthetics of Acquisition**:** Gabonese Spectacles and the Transactional Life of Bodies and Things" *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, under review.

was in a nominally post-conflict period of transition. The arrest of Laurent Nkunda had led to a lull in the violence, precipitated by an (ultimately failed) attempt to integrate rebel militias – particularly Luarent Nkunda's CNDP – into the Congolese national army (FARDC).[38] But this nominal peace process was far from an end to insecurity on the ground, and attacks on civilian populations remained common.[39] This was true throughout the Kivu provinces, but it was particularly true in North Kivu, and especially in the Lobutu-Masisi-Walikale region. This reality would profoundly transform both the content and form of this study.

As I explain in Chapter Four, North Kivu is also the location of one of the most salient events in Kitawalist history: the Lubutu-Masisi Uprising of 1944. This unfortunate circumstance made the field work I had originally conceived – which would have involved significant oral history work in that region, geared toward collecting memories of the uprising and its leader Bushiri and investigating the role that Kitawala has played in the region since the revolt – impossible. It was in an initial short field trip in 2008, I that I learned that there were still communities of Kitawala living in South Kivu, largely in the territory of Fizi, and further south in Katanga, especially in the northern territory of

[38] Laurent Nkunda was one of the most infamous warlords to have emerged in the recent conflict in the region. He was the general a rebel group known as Congrès national pour la défense du peuple (CNDP) that's espoused purpose was to protect the Tutsi populations living in North Kivu. From about 2003 until his arrest in 2009 he was one of the main players in the instability in the region. For more on his history, see Jason Stearns, "Laurent Nkunda and the CNDP," *L'Afrique des Grands Lacs. Annuaire 2007-2008* Nairobi, Kenya, 245-267.

[39] For a cogent critique of the tendency of Western policy makers to use the term 'post-conflict situation' to describe eastern Congo even as localized conflicts continued to generate violence, see: Séverine Autesserre, *The Trouble with the Congo: Local Violence and the Failure of International Peacebuilding.* Leiden: Cambridge University Press, 2010.

Tanganyika.[40] Deciding to do fieldwork among these communities would not only inherently alter the 'sites of recollection' that are featured in this study, but the very questions that I could and would ask of the sources, both oral and archival.[41]

No longer able to conceive of this history as a project related to the local memory of a specific event and those who were involved in it, I necessarily began to imagine it through a much wider scope, both temporally and geographically. For, while Tanganyika had been a site of significant Kitawalist activity since the 1930s, Kitawala had really only come into Fizi in the 1970s. This post-colonial growth of Kitawala raised all kinds of interesting questions about the nature of its continuity. What was it about Kitawala that continued to have appeal and significance in the lives of Congolese people in the post-colonial era? How might understanding the answer to that question change the way in which we can read the archive related to the colonial history of Kitawala? As I argue above and throughout this study, the answers to these questions revolve around the continued relevance of the theories of power that have historically animated Kitawala and the individuals and communities it has touched. It was only in thinking about Kitawala cross-regionally and in finding similarities in disparate historical circumstances that this argument began to emerge.

But the geographic disparity also offered methodological challenges. Much of my archival material – which focused on Katanga, North Kivu, and Orientale - did not line

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[40] Prior to my first short period of fieldwork in 2008, I was unsure whether communities of Kitawalist still existed in eastern Congo. At that point, the most recent accounts of Kitawalist communities in Congo dated back to the 1980s. Mwene-Batende 1982; Michael Schatzberg 1988.

[41] On sites of recollection, see: Tamara Giles-Varnick, "Lives, Histories, and Sites of Recollection," in *African Words, African Voices: Critical Practices in Oral History*, edited by Luise White, Stephen F. Miescher, and David Willian Cohen. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2001, 194-213.

up geographically with my oral materials. Thus, in order to find a methodological language with which these sources could speak to each other, I have relied on the important body of literature that historians of Africa have developed over the past few decades related to techniques of analysis for oral and written texts. In particular, this study benefits from the work that these scholars have done to liberate the oral histories from earlier notions of the oral as 'traditions' that could be stripped of the contingencies of their production in order to reveal unified oral narratives, or 'traditions' that were 'true' and could be proven when compared with other kinds of sources.[42] Such a notion of oral history, beyond ignoring the very centrality of performance and subjectivity in the creation of oral texts, offers little that analytically useful for thinking about oral texts that are produced via interviews and informal conversations with people who are not keepers of formal traditions, but rather – as is the case with most of the interviews featured in this study – keepers of their own experiences and interpretations of the past and present. I rely instead, on the work more recent literature has done to trouble distinctions between truth and falsity, to render rumors reliable sources, and to recognize that while oral texts are inevitably subjective, they are also subject to the conformities of genre that render them comparable across time and space.[43]

Luise White's attention to 'genre' in the reading of oral and archival texts has offered a particularly useful way to think about the relationships between these different

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[42] On this earlier notion of oral history, see Jan Vansina, *Oral Tradition:A Study in Historical Methodology*, translated by H.M. Wright. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1965. Vansina later revised this method in: *Tradition as History*. Madison, University of Wisconsin Press, 1985.

[43] See Luise White, Stephen F. Miescher, and David Willian Cohen (eds), *African Words, African Voices: Critical Practices in Oral History*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2001.

kinds of texts not as sources for 'proving' each other, but as a means of 'refracting' each other - "they provide ways in which to read each other."[44] Thus attention to the ways in which certain "phrases, images, attitudes, and memories" are shared across the genres of archival and oral can help to illuminate something new about their common subject. If attention to genre can illuminate something new about these various texts across the temporal and cultural space dividing archival and oral, however, then I would argue that it can do the same across geographic space[45]. Oral texts and fragments of evidence – rumors, images, attitudes – collected among Kitawalist communities in Fizi and Tanganyika in 2010 cannot 'prove' anything about the experiences of Kitawalists in Elizabethville in the 1930s or North Kivu and Oriental in the 40s and 50s. But they can help us to *read* the archives anew and, in the process, write a history that neither could reveal on its own. This not only allows for the possibility of writing a history of Kitawala in the far-from-ideal context of conflict in Eastern Congo, but suggests that perhaps that very context can both inform and be informed by that history in revealing ways.

Organization

In order that my oral and archival sources might most effectively be used to 'read' one another, the study is broken down into three sections that are arranged in a somewhat a-

[44] Luise White, *Speaking with Vampires*, Berkeley, CA : University of California Press, 2000, 93.

[45] I use the term 'culture space' here reservedly. Nancy Hunt has pointed out the problem with always associating the 'oral' with Africans and the 'archival' with Europeans when, in fact, both groups produced both kinds of text. In the context of the history of Kitawala, however, there are very few archival sources written by Congolese available, so the notion of 'cultural space' is arguably applicable. Nancy Rose Hunt, *A Colonial Lexicon of Birth Ritual, Medicalization, and Mobility In the Congo.* Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1999, 23.

chronological order that begins in the post-colonial, goes back to the colonial, and returns once more to reflect on the post-colonial. In the first section I interpret the post-colonial history of Kitawala in light of a largely oral body of evidence collected in South Kivu and Northern Katanga over the course of my fieldwork in 2010. In these chapters, I begin to ask why a religious movement known mostly for its role in the anti-colonial struggle has persisted and grown in the post-colonial era.

Chapter One focuses on the emergence of Patrice Lumumba, Congo's first Prime Minister, as the most important prophetic figure within most Kitawalist communities in the years following independence. My discussion of Lumumba's place within Kitawalist beliefs revolves around what I have termed "narratives of *puissance,*" a phrase I employ to refer to stories about the powers of Lumumba – political, occult, and therapeutic – that circulate within Kitawalists communities.

In Chapter Two, I discuss Kitawalist healing practices in the context of the history of health and healing in the region, both drawing from and elaborating on the notion of *puissance* introduced in Chapter One. Building on recent work by Stacey Langwick, Steve Feierman, and Johann Fabian, I seek to reframe the discussion of the durability of healing traditions by focusing on the ways in which conceptions of the immaterial – and its capacity to "interfere" with the material - have shifted over time. I argue that paying close attention to alternative understandings of (im)materiality can help historians to more effectively capture the various ways in which Kitawalists – and other "spirit healers" and "Christian healers"- have, since the colonial era, re-imagined "traditional healing."

In Section Two of the study, I shift the focus from oral evidence to a body of largely archival evidence and move the temporal framework back to the beginnings of Kitawala in the colonial period. At the heart of these chapters is the question of how the post-colonial

history of Kitawala presented in the first section, and the oral evidence on which it relied, can help us read the colonial archives relating to Kitawala anew.

Chapter Three raises the question of the 'origins' of Kitawala by looking at the different narratives that have been used to tell the story of where Kitawala began and how and why it spread across Congo. The chapter distinguishes three different 'nodes of origin' that frequently emerge in narrating accounts of Kitawala's history, producing what I label 'Watchtower' narratives, 'materialist' narratives, and the 'tradition' narratives. I then explore the content of 'Watchtower narratives' and 'materialist narratives', before concluding with a discussion of how each of these narratives, each of these narratives, in some way enriches and obscures our understanding of Kitawalist history when taken by themselves.

The third form of narrative – the 'tradition narrative' – is explored in Chapter Four, which tells the story of one of largest uprisings in the colonial history of Congo – the Lobutu-Masisi Uprising of 1944 – which was led by Kitawalists. I investigate the fraught relationship between violence and healing in the region, looking at how the theories of power and the choreographies of violence that animated it might help us to understand how the history of the uprising might be 'tethered' both to the past and to the present.[46]

Chapter Five picks up the colonial history of Kitawala after the revolt, highlighting how the movement became a near obsession for the Belgian officials, and tracing a gradual shift in policy concerning Kitawala in the 1950's from containment to rehabilitation. Paying close attention to the ways in which colonial officials produced knowledge about Kitawala, the chapter highlights the how that knowledge created the enduring debate over the relative 'political' or 'religious' nature of Kitawala. At the same time, the chapter follows the spread

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[46] As explained in the chapter, I borrow the term 'tethered' from: Nancy Hunt ,"An Accoustic Register, Tenatious Images, and Congolese Scenes of Rape and Repetition," *Cultural Anthropology* (23:2) 2008, 243.

of Kitawala into new regions, using colonial interrogation records as one source through which we can begin to understand what drew people to follow the movement, what sort of space it occupied culturally in Congolese communities, and what kinds of 'moral projects' Kitawalists might have been engaged in.

In the third and final section of the dissertation, I move the history of Kitawala back into the post-colonial period. In Chapter Six, I bring Kitawala into a comparative perspective, looking at the broader 'economy of puissance' in the more recent history of Congo. The chapter demonstrates how thinking about the history Kitawala in conjunction with of another influential religious movement in South Kivu, the Wamalkia wa Ubembe, raises interesting questions about to the role that religious leaders and communities – particularly those of a 'prophetic' nature or those rumored to be *puissant* – have played within the largely rural and displaced communities of Eastern Congo. Finally, the study concludes by considering how thinking of the 'economy of *puissance'* alternatively as an 'economy of protection and predation' might offer some insight into the current conflicted context of eastern Congo.

Section One

Chapter One

Narratives of *Puissance*: Power and the Politics of Praying to Lumumba

> Lumumba was a Kitawalist. That power that he used to ask for Independence came from Kitawala. To want to get rid of the whites it was necessary for Lumumba to do a miracle (*kufanya ajabu*).[1] That would scare them away. You see, we have all learned about Lumumba since primary school. He was the one that got the Belgians out of Congo. But, if he had these words that could get rid of the Belgians, where did they come from? The others were at the Roundtable and they were not succeeding. Lumumba stayed back because he was finishing an evocation that would give him that power. (*kifungo cha ile pouvoir*). They said, "Lumumba is still back there, we must wait for him." And when he arrived, he arrived with that power (*pouvoir*) that came from the Kitawalists. That is when he asked for total independence. When he spoke over the radio, his voice emanated from bottles. Imagine: it was as if we were sitting here and there was a bottle there and his voice was coming out of it. It was that kind of power (*pouvoir*). The whites were baffled and said, "We should go." And when they ran away to Brazzaville, many of them were dying, because the Congolese threw them out without pity (*waliwafukuza mubaya*).[2]
>
> - Kabanga Kamalondo, Kalemie, 2010

When Kabanga Kamalondo, the regional representative of the Kitawalist church in Northern Katanga, narrated this story to me in October of 2010, it was neither the first nor last time that I would hear such an account. Stories, rumors, and claims about Lumumba's affiliations with Kitawala – and Kitawalist affiliations with, and affinity for, Lumumba – abound in Eastern Congo, both within and outside of Kitawalist

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[1] I have provided the original Swahili phrasing/word in parentheses throughout this chapter whenever I deem it useful for those interested in knowing how I have translated the text from its originally Swahili.

[2] Kabanga Kamalondo. Interview with Author. Digital Recording. Kalemie, Katanga, DRC, 10/18/10.

communities. In one form or another, these stories, rumors, and claims have been around since Lumumba's rise to prominence. In December of 1959, a Belgian settler in a rural district of Orientale reported that the region was "infested with Kitwalists" who held Lumumba as "their grand liberator."[3]. He complained that in the months leading up to and following the pro-MNC-Lumumba[4] riots that broke out in Stanleyville in November of 1959, Kitawalists were organizing work stoppages, "muttering insults within a short distance of whites," demanding pay increases, and pressuring non-Kitawalists to join them "by refusing to sell them goods," creating a sort of spiritual, economic, and political monopoly in the region.[5] Writing about a particular group of Kitawalists in Kisangani, the Bulukela group, Congolese sociologist Mwene-Batende notes that in the tumultuous years of 1959-61, they had become intimately involved in MNC-Lumumba party activism. He suggests that they joined "in the hope to one day see the realization of the promises of total liberation and the arrival of the 'golden age' long awaited, when Kitawala would be officially recognized as the grand religion of the Blacks and adopted into the national agenda."[6]

This early alignment with Lumumba's nationalist ideas – particularly his call for immediate independence – is not surprising, given fundamental Kitawalist beliefs about the political and spiritual illegitimacy of Belgian colonial rule. Kitawalists, like

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[3] Unidentified Author, "Letter to the governor of Orientale, December 2, 1959," *AA/GG* 73.939.

[4] In 1959 the *Mouvement National Conglolais* split due to internal conflicts. MNC-Lumumba remained in control of the more left-leaning Patrice Lumumba, who advocated for more centralized state. The rest of the party took the name MNC-Kalonji, and remained in control of the more moderate Albert Kolonji, who advocated for a more federalized state.

[5] Unidentified Author, "Letter to the governor of Orientale, December 2, 1959," AA/GG 73.939.

[6] Mwene-Batende1976, 94.

countless Congolese of the time, were drawn to Lumumba's calls for immediate Congolese self-governance. The colonial law that had driven Kitawalists underground since the 1920s had only recently been lifted when Lumumba emerged on the political scene, and many of them used their new freedom of expression to serve as catalysts of the MNC and lend logistical support to the party's cause.[7] Nor did the Lumumbist leanings of Kitawalists end with independence from the Beglians. As I highlight below, many Kitawalists were involved in the Muleleist/Simba rebellions of 1963-68.[8]

Yet, if it seems clear that there was a connection between Kitawalists and Lumumbist politics in the past, it is less clear today. It was on research trip to South Kivu in 2008 that I first heard stories about Kitawalist claims to Lumumba as a prophet. When I asked a local non-Kitawalist to explain this fascinating development, he told me, "*wanafanya wanationalist*" – they are acting like nationalists. His tone was dismissive, as if to imply that they were merely trying to be provocative, rabble-rousing. Their nationalist aspirations were not to be taken seriously. At the time, I had yet to encounter evidence of the past relationship between Kitawalists and Lumumba, and I found the response to be curious, particularly in light of the assertions by the local Kitawalists themselves that they were a definitively apolitical group: "*Hatufanyaki la politique. Tunaikataa*"; "We don't get involved in politics, we don't allow it."[9] Lumumba may be

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[7] Mwene-Batende1976, 93. As I explain in Section Two of this Study, the ban on Kitawala was only lifted gradually and in that, unevenly and mostly unofficially. Still, by 1959, the laws were largely unenforced.

[8] For a good brief summary of this rebellion, see Nzongola-Ntalaja, Georges. *The Congo From Leopold to Kabila : a People's History.* London: Zed Books, 2002.

[9] Anonymous, Interview with Author. Field notes. Uvira, South Kivu, DRC, August 2008. This particular claim is also in line with Watchtower ideology, which expressly denies the authority of this-worldly political power, claiming God as the only real authority. The nature of the relationship between Kitawala, as practiced in the Kivus and

arguably among the most political of Congolese icons, but by their account, these Kitawalists prayed to him not because of the politics he represented, but because he was powerful: the most powerful black man God had ever sent to this world.[10] And yet, as highlighted in the narrative that opens this chapter, Kitawalists imagine their own history to be deeply entwined with that of Lumumba and his nationalist politics. They quite literally gave him the power - transferred during a ritual of evocation - that he needed to secure Congolese Independence. Moreover, archival evidence suggests that they were, indeed, directly involved with Lumumbist politics at the height of his power.

At its core, this chapter is about understanding the tensions inherent in the acts of representation, narration, and interpretation highlighted in each of these accounts. It is about considering what the narratives people tell, the rumors they repeat, the beliefs they hold, the claims they make, and the reputations they garner within a community can teach us about the history of that community. While there have historically been some verifiable associations between Kitawalists and Lumumba/Lumumbist nationalist politics, I am less concerned in this chapter with discerning the Truth in *what* people say about the historical relationship between Lumumba and Kitawala than in discerning the truths in *how* they speak about it.[11] I have not, for example, combed the archives looking for proof that Lumumba met with Kitawalists in a ceremony of evocation before heading

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Orientale and Watchtower, as preached by Elliot Kamwana, is the subject of Part Two of this dissertation. On Kamwana's Watchtower, see Karen Fields 1985.

[10] Amani Simbi, Interview with Author. Field Notes. Uvira, South Kivu, DRC, May 2010. This was an oft-repeated explanation of Lumumba's importance among Kitawalists.

[11] I am drawing on Luise White here, who writes, "memories, experiences, and social facts are *how* [my emphasis] people talk, not *what* they talk about, and the material presented in an interview…is told with truths of various sorts, but may not be the truth." Luise White 2001, 295.

to the Roundtable discussions in Brussels – such proof almost certainly does not exist. Moreover, the usefulness of such empirical notions of "Truth" and "Falsity" in the analysis of oral accounts belongs to an older school of thought and has been the subject of serious critique for more than a decade.[12] Luise White, who has been at the forefront of this methodological revisionism, has argued forcefully that such distinctions "may not be useful to all texts" and that "the labeling of one thing as 'true' and another as 'fictive' or 'metaphorical' – all the usual polite academic terms for false – may eclipse all the intricate ways that people use social truths to talk about the past." If, instead, "we treat all versions of false stories as if they were true," she argues, "we get a glimpse into the world our informants described to us."[13] That is, we begin to see the truths that animate stories, memories, rumors, and claims that are either entirely or partially untrue or, at the very least, entirely unverifiable.

In the years following Lumumba's death, the Kitawalist affinity for Lumumba seemingly transformed from political allegiance to his nationalist agenda to the deification and religious worship of the man who became, for them, the quintessential prophet, martyr, and redeemer of the Congolese people – the Congolese Christ, the Prophet Lumumba. In this chapter, I propose that perhaps one of the central "truths" that we can begin to see if we look at Kitawalist discourse and practice over time –as well as the discourse and practice of those who have surrounded them - is that what on the surface looks like a transformation from political allegiance to religious worship might be something more complex. If we take Kitawalist claims that they do not practice politics seriously, then we must ask whether they understood their past affiliations with

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[12] For the strongest critiques, see: Luise White 2001; and Luise White 2000.
[13] Luise White 2001, 296.

Lumumba – and Lumumbist causes - through the lens of politics. If they did not necessarily see it as politics, what other lenses might they have viewed it through? In what follows, I would like to suggest that changes in Kitawalist thought might be more fruitfully understood as the reimaging and repurposing of intellectual and cultural tools related to practices of and beliefs about power: *puissance*. Moreover, I argue that the 'truths' that emerge out of the largely oral accounts presented in this chapter – 'truths' about the nature of power and how it can be wielded and accessed – help to reconcile the disparity between two Truths that seem irreconcilable: that Kitawalists do/did not understand themselves as participants in "la politique" and that they see/saw themselves as – and at some moments were - directly involved in Lumumba's political success and directly connected to his power.

Purveyors of *Puissance*

Beliefs about the prophetic character of Lumumba have developed differently across time and space among various Kitawalists communities. In his 1976 study of the Bulukela Kitawalists of Kisangani, Mwene-Batende reported that following the death of Lumumba, amidst rising disillusionment with the results of independence, the Bulukela followers withdrew from mainstream society. Forswearing the amenities of the "modern" world, they created their own commune on the outskirts of town.[14] Mwene-Batende describes a ceremony, in which the leader of the Bulukela (after whom the group was named) "executed himself", was entombed for thirty minutes, and upon his resurrection was spiritually and physically reborn. It was after this rebirth that Bulukela

[14] Mwene-Batende 1976, 96.

proclaimed that Lumumba was a diety, "the super-human leader of all the Blacks".[15] Henceforth, Lumumba became the most powerful figure in the Bulukela Kitawalist trinity, the subordinate two figures being Bulukela and his wife, Marie.[16] Mwene-Batende conveys virtually none of the details of this story of rebirth and deification, but it is a fascinating story that, when compared to stories told to me about Kitawalist beliefs about Lumumba in South Kivu and Northern Katanga, raises interesting questions about the ways in which the Bulukela were imaging the embodiment of power.

In South Kivu and Northern Katanga, Kitawalist ideas about Lumumba, and both the role that they played in his life and the role that he has played in their church since his death, center around the notion of *puissance*. Insofar as the term *puissance* is a useful analytical term, its utility emerges out of the manner in which Kitawalists themselves wield it. The French term for power, *puissance*, as used amongst Kitawalists, refers to what might, at the broadest level, be defined as spiritual power. Other terms for *puissance* frequently heard in Central Africa are *force*, *uwezo,* or *nguvu*. It is what Simon Bockie calls "the invisible powers" and what Wyatt MacGaffey calls *kindoki.*[17] It refers both to the kind of spiritual power often referred to as the "occult" or "witchcraft" in the literature – which tends to carry negative connotations – as well as the kind of spiritual powers understood to be positive or therapeutic.

Among Kitawalists the regular use of the word *puissance* – with these obvious dual connotations, or, perhaps more accurately, refusal to acknowledge a duality – lends itself to a similar use in English. The frequent choice of the French term on the part of

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[15] Mwene-Batende 1976, 96.
[16] Mwene-Batende's discussion of Bulukela Kitawalists' theology is fascinating, and though I do not recount all of the details here. See Mwene-Batende 1976, 96-104.
[17] MacGaffey 2000; Bockie 1993.

Kitawalists is interesting, as all discussions about the subject were held in Swahili and there are Swahili terms – *uwezo* or *nguvu*, for example – which tend to convey the same meaning. [18] And, indeed, the terms were frequently used interchangeably, as was the other French term for power, *pouvoir*. An example of the latter can be seen in the narrative that opens this chapter. Yet, as often as not, the term used was *puissance* and, moreover, as noted above, the utility of the term does not necessarily lie in the word itself – the choice of which could be dependent on a number of issues, such as the fact that interviews were conducted in Swahili, rather than Luba or Bembe languages, for example. The utility lies in the meaning with which it is invested, and among Kitawalists today, that meaning is as much about healing as it is about witchcraft, the occult, or in the case of Lumumba, political power.

Thus, the adoption of the term in this study is largely a functional choice, as it allows me to wield the term as Kitawalists do, investing it with their implied meanings, which challenge binary understandings of power – healing/occult, spiritual/political, traditional/Christian. When I asked one local Kitawalist leader what he thought about rumors among non-Kitawalists that they are "walozi", or witches, he told me "yote ni puissance, yote inatokea Mungu" –it's all power, it all comes from God[19]. He was less

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[18] It should be noted here that all interviews between Kitawalists and myself were conducted in Swahili, without a translator. In larger towns and cities in the region where I was working - such as Bukavu, Uvira, or Kalemie – Swahili tends to be the primary language of communication. This is not the case in most smaller villages, where local languages dominate. In Fizi, for example, it is far more likely for people to communicate in Bembe than Swahili. Swahili is still spoken by nearly all, however. The history of the use of Swahili in the region is an interesting topic in and of itself – one that begins with Swahili traders in the 19th century and has since been profoundly affected by the large numbers of Congolese in the region who spent significant amounts of time living in refugee camps in Tanzania during the recent wars.

[19] Kabanga Kamalondo10/20/10.

interested in denying their claims than in implying that the power that many other Congolese, whether from mainstream or charismatic churches, tend to label "witchcraft" or "satanic" – the *puissance* of the ancestors which is regularly evoked by Kitawalists today – comes from God, just like the healing power of Christian prayer. This is a conceptualization of the traditional/ancestral that is profoundly different from the "diabolization" of the traditional that Birgit Meyer has observed in Pentecostal charismatic churches.[20] Drawing on much older discourses about power, the Kitawalists overtly deny such a polarized definition of *puissance*. This is not to say that Kitawalists do not believe there are moral implications in the way one wields *puissance*, but rather that the lines between moral and immoral do not necessarily coincide with imagined lines between healing and occult, Christian and traditional.

Scholars of Equatorial Africa have long grappled with the semantics of *puissance*. Many scholars, such as Florence Bernault and Peter Geschiere, have chosen explicitly to use the terms "withcraft" and "sorcery" to describe such powers, a choice intended "to reflect contemporary African usages".[21] As Bernault readily acknowledges, however, "the remaining ethnocentricity of the terms tends to force multiple realities into a single and foreign category".[22] She notes,

> Equatorial Africans talked of the 'skills' or the 'force' possessed by individuals (words formed from the proto-bantu verb *-dog-), and discriminated between the ways such skills are used either for benevolent or malevolent (anti-social) goals.

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[20] Birgit Meyer 1999.
[21] Florence Bernault ,"Body, Power and Sacrifice in Equatorial Africa," *Journal of African History*, (47/2) 2006, 208. For Peter Geschiere's discussion, see, *The Modernity of Witchcraft: Politics and the Occult in Post-Colonial Africa*, Charlottesville: University of Virginia, 1997, 12-14.
[22] Bernault 2006, 208.

> Manianga, for instance, distinguished between *kindoki kia dia* (bad *kindoki*, literally 'eating *kindoki*') and *kindoki kia lunda* (protecting *kindoki*).[23]

Yet, Wyatt MacGaffey reminds us that "*kindoki* is a language of conflict and negotiation, not consensus."[24] It is important to acknowledge that this distinction between "eating" and "protecting" powers is fluid and open to subjective interpretation. There are rifts within communities and, perhaps more importantly, this discourse has been influenced by Christian ideas of the "satanic".[25] What might be understood as good *ndoki* – healing/protecting *ndoki* – within a given community, may be labeled bad *ndoki* – "satanic" *ndoki* - in another. Moreover, the same person who labels a kind of *ndoki* "satanic" in one context, may turn to that very same *ndoki* for healing in another.[26]

MacGaffey has written extensively on the nature and importance of *puissance*. He uses the Kikongo term *kindoki*, as his work is based in the Kongo regions of Western Congo. Leaning on the work of scholars such as Jan Vansina, who has effectively identified, using linguistic and archeological evidence, the existence of an equatorial Bantu political and social tradition that was shared across most of the equatorial region,[27] MacGaffey writes,

> "In Central Africa, at all social levels, the exercise of power in social relations is understood as *kindoki* (or a cognate term), conventionally but inadequately translated as 'witchcraft' or *sorcellerie. Kindoki* is necessary to all effective

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[23] Bernault 2006, 208. Here she is drawing on the work of Simon Bockie 1993, 47.
[24] MacGaffey 2000, 12
[25] For more on Christianity and its effects on ideas of the Devil and Evil in Africa, see Emma Wild-Wood, *Migration and Christian Identity in Congo (DRC),* Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2008 and Birgit Meyer 1999.
[26] The phenomenon will be discussed further in chapter 2 of the dissertation.
[27] Vansina, *Paths in the Rainforests : Toward a History of Political Tradition in Equatorial Africa.* Madison, Wis.: University of Wisconsin Press, c1990. This is, of course, the same tradition that Vansina argues died in the colonial era. MacGaffey does not subscribe to the 'death of tradition' argument, but rather sees kindoki as a useful form of political theory, both historically and today. MacGaffey 2000, 3-5.

> leadership and is a component of all exceptional success, though it is also an instrument of evil."[28]

MacGaffey's theorization of *kindoki* offers a highly useful way to think about *puissance* as articulated by Kitawalists. In particular, he captures something of the ambiguity of *puissance*. The same power that enables political leaders to be successful in their creation of healthy communities can destroy that health. But what is equally interesting in MacGaffey's analysis is his arguments about who and what can be invested with *puissance*. His discussion of *minkisi* – ritual power objects[29] - and chiefs (*mfumu*)[30] is particularly intriguing. He argues that, "although chiefs were human beings and *minkisi* were objects, they were very much alike in the way BaKongo thought of them and in the rituals that made them mediators of power."[31] Like healers (*nganga*) chiefs were "ritually qualified figures through whom occult powers of benefit to the community of their followers were controlled." Moreover, while western theorists might be "inclined to think of chiefs as 'political' (perhaps with 'religious' functions or attributes) and of *minkisi* as 'religious' or 'magical,' in Kongo thought they were similar, to the point that the chief himself could be both *nganga* and *nkisi*."[32]

Each of these figures – *mfumu, nganga, nkisi* – was ritually distinct, yet all of them, along with wrongdoers practicing malicious witchcraft, were empowered by

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[28] MacGaffey 2000, 2.
[29] MacGaffey defines *minkisi* (*nkisi* singular) as follows: Minkisi were (and are) ritual complexes intended to bring about improvements in the well-being of individuals and groups, curing disease, identifying and punishing wrongdoers, averting misfortune, and favoring fertility and prosperity. In the narrow sense, *nkisi* is the focal object in such a complex, often an elaborate composition with a wooden figure at its base.
[30] *Mfumu*, in MacGaffey's use means chief. Interestingly, in South Kivu today *mfumu* is the word, often used in mockery, to describe someone who dabbles in witchcraft as healing. As I will discuss in chapter 2, Kitawalists are frequently called *bafumu* (plural).
[31] Wyatt MacGaffey 2000, 12.
[32] MacGaffey, 2000, 12

puissance – to the point where the terms often bled together in use. *Puissance* was morally ambiguous until mobilized to specific purposes and even then the ability to define morality was subjective: those who won in competitions over influence defined themselves as legitimate arbiters of power, while "the loser was proved to be a 'witch.'"[33] As I illustrate below, this understanding of *puissance* provides a useful analytical entry point into a discussion of Kitawalist beliefs and narratives about Lumumba. Far from "confused" and "meaningless" mimicry of 'tradition', Kitawalist beliefs about and experiences of *puissance* strongly indicate purposeful acts of re-imagination.[34]

Narratives of Puissance

The Prophet Lumumba in Other Contexts

The use of the image and name of Patrice Lumumba in contexts that portray him as a prophet and/or Christ-like figure is by no means unique to Kitawala. It is, in fact, a recurring theme in much of Congolese popular thought and culture, and one which has been discussed and explored by several prominent scholars of the region. Looking at depictions of Lumumba in different regions of Congo, Bogumil Jewsiewicki illuminates how both Christian and local "cultural imaginations" offer the building blocks and "paradigm which enables the Lumumba of collective memory to be thought of as the

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[33] MacGaffey 2000,12

[34] Here, I am writing against Filip de Boeck, whose writings about followers of syncretic religious movements as confused victims of "mimesis" whose beliefs and practices border on "meaninglessness." I write extensively about this in the introduction to the dissertation. Filip de Boeck, "Beyond the Grave: History, Memory and Death in Postcolonial Congo/Zaire." In Richard Werbner, ed*, Memory and the Postcolony*, London: Zed Books, 1998, 23.

Moses of the Congolese people, as an Anamongo cultural hero and as Christ."[35] The Christly figure of Lumumba is also a theme in Johannes Fabian's study of Tshibumba Kanda Matululu's painted history of the DRC.[36] Filip De Boeck has discussed the beliefs of Bunda Dia Kongo, who also revere Lumumba as a prophet.[37] Katrien Pype has noted that today the International Association of Young Lumumbists (IAYL) use Christ metaphors when speaking about Lumumba. They believe that Lumumba's nationalist message needs to be consumed just as Christ's body.[38] Pype calls the IAYL a "political religion."

In perhaps one of the more interesting representations of Lumumba as a prophet, the followers of Wamalkia Ubembe – another prominent religious group in the Fizi region of South Kivu, whose history I discuss in depth in Chapter Six – place Lumumba among a handful of prophets blessed with the power of God and sent to do his varied works throughout the Congo. Along with Lumumba, other figures included among these prophets are Simon Kimbangu, Kadima Emile Ilunga (another early Kitawalist prophet who remains central to Kitawalist beliefs in Katanga) and Bakwalufu (the earliest prophet of Wamalkia Ubembe). The story that relates how this division of power took place is fascinating, and rife with representations of power – of how power can be hoarded, guarded, accessed, possessed and transferred. It is about the

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[35] Bogumil Jewsiewicki, *"*Figures des memoires congolaise de Lumumba: Moise, heros culturel, Jesus-Christ (Figures of Lumumba's Congolese Memories: Moses, cultural hero, Jesus Christ)" In Halen, Pierre and Janos Riesz eds, *Patrice Lumumba : Entre Dieu et Diable*. Montreal : L'Harmattan, 1997, 386.
[36] Johannes Fabian, *Remembering the Present : Painting and Popular History in Zaire.* Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, c1996.
[37] De Boeck, 1998, 34-39.
[38] Katrien Pype, "Lumumba and Kabila: Heroes for the Present? Visual Media, Memory and Politics in DR Congo Festive Year 2010" Paper presented at 54th Annual Meeting at African Studies Association, Nov. 2011, (Cited with author's permission).

transmutability of power, but also the means by which it can be wielded. It is about the very nature of power – the power of God, the power of the ancestors – and how it has been historically controlled. For these reasons, I offer it here in full, translated from the original Swahili:

The History of People Who Got the Power of God in the Congo[39]

> Father Mbuyi Charles was very close with an important [Belgian] priest named DeClerk Mbuyi Charles wanted to know from his friend DeClerk where he and the other [Belgian] priests went at midnight every Friday. So he asked, him, "Where do you go every Friday?" DeClerk responded that he must never ask him this question again. The second time he came, Mbuyi asked the same question. His friend answered him the same way he had the first time. The third time, DeClerk answered: "I suppose it is the will of God that I should tell you. After today, you and I will be killed. Go to the church, after the bell sounds for the morning meal at 10:00. You will find the door open. You must take the prayer book, leave, and bring everything you find there with you. "
>
> That day Mbuyi went to take the book and returned to tell Father DeClerk that he was ready. DeClerk told him, "I, myself, will give the mass on Thursday. You must prepare yourself to learn where it is that we go." When that hour came, DeClerk [took Mbuyi to the cemetery and] told him "Read 'Sala Saba.'[40]" When he read it, the door of a tomb opened and they entered. Mbuyi was shocked. It was the first time he had ever been there.

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[39] This title and the story that follows are direct translations from a document that was given to me by Mzee 24 Ngandu, one of the 24 elders of the Wamwalkia Ubembe, during my fieldwork. It was given to me on 12/3/10 in the town of Baraka, District of Fizi, Province of South Kivu. The document has no date or author listed and gives only the following information about its orgin: "We were given this history by the C.P.P. Coordinator party of UMA, in the zone of Fizi. It was sent by the Government of Kinshasa through Lubumubashi. The government of Kinshasa sent the document for the purpose of teaching people "who received the 'uwezo wa Mungu' (power of God) so that people would follow them." It is signed by Ebombo, an elder of Mahelo (the name of the Wamalkia mission outside of Baraka). It is also signed by Essai Nondo Meswa, the leader of the Mission. The only modifications I have made to the text are the deletion of unnecessary repetition and the bracketed insertion of extra information – provided by long interviews with the elders of Wamalkia - when it is necessary for comprehension. 24 Elders of Wamalkia Ubembe, Interview with Author. Digital recording. Baraka, South Kivu, 12/2/10 and 12/8/10.

[40] "Prayer number seven." As of right now, it is unclear which prayer he is referring to. I hope to uncover the answer with further research.

DeClerk told him: "Read the prayer again to open the mountain."[41] It was the prayer "Mountain of Sinai, Zion." As soon as he read it, the tomb opened again and he saw [the shades of] both blacks and a whites coming out of the tomb. The blacks had cloth over their faces and hands.

Mbuyi Charles asked: "What is this?"

DeClerk answered, "The meaning of the cloth is that you have eyes, but cannot see. Your hands are bound, you are bound." Then he asked Mbuyi, "What do you want?"

Mbuyi Charles answered, "I want that the blacks should be freed like the whites. Their hands must be freed." DeClerk told Mbuyi to read *Sala Saba* three times. Mbuyi read it. Then he watched as the cloth fell from the hands of the blacks and they were freed. Then he told him to close the mountain. Mbuyi closed it with *Sala Saba*.

Declerk told Mbuyi Charles: "Kneel and be blessed." Then he blessed him three times. He said, "When we get home, you must bless your younger brother[42] Kadima three times. Then you must give him the book and he must take it to Kongo[43]."

So they returned. When they arrived Mbuyi Charles blessed Kadima three times and told him that he must go to the head priest, give him the book and then go to see his family in Kongolese country. "When you arrive, you must use your power to bless seven people. I will stay here. If we all go we will be easily followed and killed." So Kadima fled. When he arrived in Kinshasa, he blessed: 1. Pepe 2. Ilunga-Kadima, 3. Lumumba; 4. Kimbangu; 5. Bakwalufu, 6:Olenga.[44]

Ilungu Kadima is the prophet of the church of Kitawala. There they divulged their secrets to each other and made themselves known (*wakafanya tshitanda*).[45] They heard that Mbuyi and DeClerk died for the

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[41] The narrative switches back a forth between the word *mlima*, for mountain, and *kaburi*, for tomb, but is referring to the same place.

[42] He says "ndugu yako" here, which can be a generic referent to a younger sibling or family member or a close friend.

[43] The land of the Kongo, ie. Kinshasa.

[44] The seventh of the blessed is not named here.

[45] *Tshitanda* most likely derives from the root –tanda, which in Kiluba means: "to admit, to denounce, to accuse, or to make known." E. Van Avermaet and Benoit Mbuya, *Dictionnaire Kiluba-Français*. Tervuren, 1954, 673. In this context, it likely corresponds to the definition that Van Avermaet and Mbuya offer for *–tanda bwanga*: "to reveal the secrets and taboos, etc. of a sect, to divulge them". As I read it, "to divulge themselves"

> book. When he had spread the message, Kadima scattered his followers, sending each to their traditional homes. Kadima went home to his family's rural lands. Before they fled, the group split up their work:
>
> 1: Lumumba was given the job of demanding freedom of the body.
>
> 2: Kadima was given the job of praying for freedom of the spirit (*roho*).
>
> 3: Ilunga-Kadima created a church to tell people the way of the God of black people.
>
> 4: Kimbangu told people to call down the spirit.[46]
>
> They did this work and it happened. Lumumba was the first to begin the work. He did his work.
>
> Then the others began to work. After Kadima died it was Bakwalufu who remained with his torch [the sign of Kadima's power]. Bakwalufu went to Kinshasa and began to bless people who might succeed him, but no one managed [to wield the power] until Bulange Alemasi, who was given the name "Baptism of the Spirit", Wahiseelelwa. Follow him and no other.

The imagery of power in this account is striking. When Mbuye Charles – who was a priest himself - sees that the white priests pray in the cemetary on certain days at midnight and he is not allowed to attend, he is certain that they are hoarding power. He asks his friend, DeClerck, to show him what happens at these evocations. After some reluctance, the priest shows him where they go: into the "mountain" by the cemetery, where the shades/spirits of black people are bound and the shades of white people freely

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here has a ritualistic connotation, as if they are announcing themselves not only to their communities, but to God, in their new, divided roles in keeping the power of God (taken from the whites by Mbuyi Charles). I read "they" as including not just Ilunga-Kadima the Kitawalists, but also the others who were named as "blessed".

[46] Conscious readers will note that only four of the seven blessed by Kadima are listed here. This was the nature of the original document. That the four listed are Lumumba, Kadima (of L'eglise de la Foi/Wamalkia), Ilunga Kadima (of Kitawala), and Kimbangu speaks volumes about the relative importance of these four people in perceived power complex – political and other - within Congolese history.

wield power.[47] DeClerck tells Mbuyi Charles to perform a prayer that effectively frees the black people and gives them access to the power – *puissance* - of God. Mbuyi Charles takes this puissance, and transfers it to his brother, Kadima, who runs with it to Kinshasa. Mbuyi Charles and DeClerck are murdered for their actions – presumably because they had effectively transferred the *puissance* of God, previously hoarded by the whites, to the Congolese people. Meanwhile, Mbuyi Charles blesses six prophets, transferring that *puissance* of God to each of them. Among these prophets are: Lumumba, whose task is to procure freedom of the body; Kadima Illunga (of Kitawala), whose job was to show people the way of the Black God, and Kimbangu, who was given the power to "call down the spirit" for people.

The Christly imagery of Lumumba as the "bodily" wielder of God's power – of God's *puissance* - in this story is also remarkable. And just like the story that opened this chapter, we see Lumumba represented as having accessed the *puissance* that he required for political success in a ritual blessing/transaction. I would argue that the confluence between the ideas present in these two stories is important for two reasons: 1) it suggests that the notion of *puissance* as I have articulated above is present in each of these religious communities and, moreover, that it animates their understanding of how a body politic and/or a religious body can be healed/protected/empowered and 2) it demonstrates that Wamalkia Ubembe imagine the ability to wield this *puissance* as essential not only to their own relevance in Congolese society, but also to the relevance of Kitawalists. Indeed, in each of these stories, *puissance* is central in a way that suggests that both groups are drawing on the same cultural tools, or *theories of power*, in

[47] The significance of mountains in imagery of power in Eastern Congo is a topic discussed in Chapter Two.

their articulation of the workings of *puissance*. Yet, as will become clearer in the next section, there is some difference in how they imagine the source of *puissance*. Both Kitawalists and Wamalkia Ubembe imagine God as the ultimate source of *puissance*, however whereas Wamalkia Ubembe understand *puissance* to have been taken away from the whites (by Mbuye Charles), Kitawalists imagine that *puissance* as being mediated through the ancestors.

The Prophet Lumumba within Kitawala

Today, among the Kitawalists who call themselves EDAC – Eglise de Dieu de nos Ancestres au Congo – in the zone of Fizi in South Kivu, Lumumba is an unequivocally important sacred figure. June 30, the date of Congolese Independence, is the most important day on their religious calendar, as it is understood that it was for Congolese Independence – for the Independence of all of Black Africa – that Lumumba made the ultimate sacrifice with his life.[48] In 2010, the celebration that marked the 50th Anniversary of Independence was a three-day affair that gathered followers from throughout the region to celebrate services dedicated to Lumumba. People sang songs to Lumumba, gave sermons about his life, wore robes with "Praise Prophet Lumumba" printed on the back, and built altars and made sacrifices in his name (See Image 1.1-1.2).

[48] Field Notes, Mboko, South Kivu, May 14, 2010.

Among these followers of EDAC in Fizi, there tends to be some slippage between the use of the words *prophet* and *savior*. Most often they use French term *prophet* discussing Lumumba in Swahili and, on rare occasion, the Swahili term *mukombozi* (savoir/redeemer). The Swahili term for prophet, *nabii,* is reserved for references to Old Testament prophets – Isaac or Jakob, for example – and those within the Kitawalist community who regularly have visions, particularly from the ancestors. In the case of Lumumba, however, it is perhaps less interesting to focus on the specific term being used than the meaning with which it is invested. Although they use the word prophet, EDAC followers tend to speak of Lumumba in a way that much more closely aligns with the word *savior* in Christian thought and, as mentioned above, sometimes even use the word *mukombozi,* though it is rare. The comparison between Lumumba and Jesus is explicit. When I asked the leaders of EDAC to explain the place of Lumumba in their system of belief, they told me that he was their prophet – the prophet of all 'black Africans' - in the same way that Jesus was the prophet of the whites (ie. Christians), Moses was the prophet of the Israelites, and Mohammed was the prophet of the Muslims. He was sent to Africans by God to fight for their freedom from oppression and it was with God's power that he was able to succeed, though like Jesus, he ultimately had to sacrifice himself.[49]

Interestingly, in many ways Jesus holds a place in EDAC thought that is much closer to the place he holds in Islam – as an important, though not the most important, prophetic figure. Lumumba, in this configuration, holds a place much closer to that of Muhammed, though unlike Mohammed, Lumumba martyred his life in a Christ-like

[49] Field Notes, Mboko, South Kivu, May 14, 2010.

drama of redemption, betrayal, and sacrifice. Given the influence of Swahili and the presence of Islam in the region, this is perhaps not a coincidence. If one were to imagine religious influences in the region as layers of sediment, the layer of Islam along the coast of Tanganyika in Fizi runs much deeper than that of Christianity. It is perhaps not surprising that when Kitawala arrived in the region in 1971, it would be interpreted at least partially through prior historical experience with and the discursive and sartorial symbols of Islam.

Among the Kitawalists further south in Kalemie in Northern Katanga – who call themselves, along with most other Kitawalists in Katanga, L'Eglise de Libration du Saint Esprit du Prophéte Kadima Emile Ilunga du Kitawala - Lumumba also holds a prominent, if less central role. Lumumba serves as a prophet for these Kitawalists, too, though to refer back to the analogy above, he holds a place much closer to that of Jesus among Muslims than that of Jesus among Christians. That is to say, he is not necessarily understood to be a *savior*. As such, the 30 June is not a significant holy day on their calendar and ceremonies in the church tend to revolve less overtly around Lumumba. Still, he is believed to be a significant prophetic figure in the church's history, along side Kadima Emile Ilunga, their founding prophet.[50] In fact, it was the head of the church in Kalemie, Kabanga Kamalondo, who most elaborately narrated to me a history of Lumumba's importance in the church. This is, of course, the history that opens this chapter. Coincidentally, I had first heard the story in an EDAC sermon at the Cinquantenaire celebration of the 30 June. As Kitawala in Fizi (which eventually

[50] The history and importance of Kadima Emile Ilunga is discussed in Chapter Three.

became EDAC) came from Katanga, the presence of the story in both places is not surprising. In both renderings, *puissance* was at the heart of the narrative.

As the reader will recall, according to this history, Lumumba was a Kitawalist. He became associated with the religion while living in Kisangani. Indeed, the *puissance* that Lumumba used to ask for independence came from Kitawala. When leaders of the Congolese nationalist parties convened at the Belgo-Congolese Round Table discussion of Congolese Independence in Brussels in 1960, Lumumba arrived late to the discussion. By official accounts of the history, Lumumba was held up because he had been incarcerated by the colonial government in Kisangani in November of 1959, officially on a conviction of fraud, but in reality for his nationalist activities. According to the Kitawalist narrative, however, that's not the whole story. Kabanga Kamalondo explained that Lumumba also stayed back in order to attain the *puissance* necessary to ask for independence. At that time, the prophet Kadima Emile Ilungu was living in Kinshasa and would have presumably done the "evocation" to instill Lumumba with the *puissance*. Thus, when Lumumba arrived to the Round Table, he was strengthened by the *puissance* of Kitawala, which he had brought with him from the Congo. Kabanga argues that without that *puissance*, Lumumba could not have succeeded in his nationalist endeavors. Similarly, when Lumumba gave his speeches on the radio – including his famous Independence Day Speech - his voice was purportedly carried throughout the land, emanating from soda and beer bottles, amplified by the *puissance* of Kitawala.[51]

[51] Kabanga Kamalondo, 10/19/10. This idea of Lumumba's speeches emanating from soda and beer bottles is interesting. Some commentators have suggested that this association of Lumumba with beer bottles might be related to the fact that Lumumba made his early career in the Brasserie. I am still looking for some other evidence to bring in here about inanimate objects acting as "antennae". It's an interesting prospect,

Still other stories about Lumumba address the very conundrum I raised in the introduction to this chapter about how Kitawalists can claim to be apolitical when Lumumba was a prominent politician. They explain that while Lumumba worked in the government, his true orientation was religious:

> You know, during the time of Independence, Lumumba was asking for total independence. He asked for freedom of the body (uhuru wa kimwili), then he asked for freedom of the spirit (uhuru wa kiroho). He also asked for economic freedom (uhuru wa uchumi). The children of the country should enjoy the fruits of their labor themselves. Now, when he went [to Belgium], he did not want to practice the politics of secrecy and deception (kuwa mfanya siasa wa kujificha). He said things openly. He went with traditional things (vitu vya asili), he went there with the religious things (vitu vya dini) his elders told him about. So we believe that we must spread the news of this church, for it is founded in his name and in his actions before his death he implored us to do so. Now we have gradually come to see him as our prophet and savior. Even though he worked as a minister in the government, his true orientation was toward spiritual leadership: religion.[52]

In the same interview, Lumumba was invoked to explain the relationship between Kitawala and EDAC:

> During the time of Lumumba, they called Lumumba Ekitawala, a person who wants to rule over himself (mtu ambaye anataka kujitawala). So the name was Kitawala. It stuck. They called themselves Kitawala. But you know to choose your own name is power. A person exercises the right to choose a name. In our language, we called the church the Church of Lumumba of Our Ancestors. In French we called it EDAC.[53]

As I highlight in Chapter Two, there is a much more elaborate history of the relationship between EDAC and the Kitawala of Katanga, but in this instance it is simply interesting to note that the name Kitawala itself is understood as a thing of power.

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however, since within several of the religions I have looked at, people describe spirit mediums as antennae. I'm still trying to figure out where to go with that information.

[52] Amani Simbi, Interview with Author, Digital Recording. Mboko, DRC, 6/17/10.

[53] Amani Simbi, 6/17/10

The Kitawalist affinity for Lumumba has been noted in other times and places as well. Following increasing efforts by the Mobutu government in the 1970s to control the proliferation of religious groups that "disrupt the public order," there are reports that communities of Kitawalists in Equatuer withdrew deep into the forest, where they lived isolated from the state.[54] The few reports of such communities indicated that they lived in their forest communities in "excellent health" under their own authority and that they showed a particular attraction to the portrait of Patrice Lumumba.[55] Indeed, they refused to accept any national currency other than the old twenty makuta notes that bore the likeness of Patrice Lumumba.[56] Elsewhere, political scientist Michael Schatzberg has hypothesized that "Kitawalist refusal to accept currency with Mobutu's portrait indicated a fear of exposing themselves to the magical powers of surveillance that the currency imparted to Mobutu."[57] This interpretation of Mobutu's portrait on the currency seems plausible given Mobutu's infamous reputation for mixing *puissance* and

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[54] Ordinance 71/012 of December 31, 1971. For the juridical text, see Jean-Pacifique Balaamo Mokelwa, *Eglise et etat en Republique du Congo: fondemonts juridiques et jurisprudence* (1876-2006), Montreal: L'Harmattan, 2006, 139. Under the law, all Protestant chuches were consolidated into a single organization, the Église du Christ au Zaïre. The Catholic church, the Greek Orthodox church, and Kimbanguist church (EJCSK) were also officially recognized, while 700 independent churches were denied civil status. Cited in Bennetta Jules-Rosette, "At the Threshold of the Millennium: Prophetic Movements and Independent Churches in Central and Southern Africa" *Archives des Sciences Sociales des Religions*, (99) Juillet-Septembre 1997, 153.

[55] Schatzberg 1988, 130.

[56] As of 2004, there Kitawalists are still living in the forests of Equateur (illegally). In a 2004 study of Bonobos in Salonga,National Park, researches encountered a 5000-7000 inhabitant village called Kitawala. At some point during the Bonobo research project, the researchers had to abandon the Bonobo survey because they were "threatened" by the Kitawalists. Takeshi Furuichi, Jo Myers Thompson, *The Bonobos: Behavior, Ecology, and Conservation*. Springer Science and Media LLC, 2008, 190-202.

[57] Schatzberg 2001,138.

state politics.[58] In light of the spiritual significance of Lumumba among communities of Kitawalists, however, it also seems possible that they understood the Lumumba currency itself to be invested with *puissance.* If we think back to MacGaffey's discussion of the ritual relationship between *mfumu* (political leaders) and minkisi (objects of power), this argument seemingly gains strength.[59]

Contextualizing Narratives of Puissance

Each of these examples of the incorporation of Lumumba into Kitawalist thought, practice, and history (and, conversely, the incorporation of Kitawala into Lumumba's history) inserts itself nicely into existing theoretical discussions about post-colonial Africa generally and Congo specifically. The deification of Lumumba by the followers of EDAC, for example, is hardly a phenomenon unique to that group. Bogumil Jewsiewicki has written of the "Christly Image of Lumumba as Redeemer of the People of Zaire" as rendered by the painter Tshibumba and the widespread popularity of it – and the vision of Lumumba as a Christ-like martyr it represents - throughout Congo.[60] He writes that such "representation of Lumumba results from an effort to think of the collective self as a part of humanity that matters."[61] The Congolese accept the Christly image of Lumumba as martyr, because it renders them

[58] Emmanuel Dungia, *Mobutu et l'argent du Zaire: les révelations d'un diplomate, ex-agent des services secrets*, Paris: L'Harmattan, 1993, 42-49.
[59] MacGaffey 2000, 12.
[60] Bogumil Jewsiewicki, "Corps Interdits: La représentation christique de Lumumba comme rédempteur du peuple zaïrois" *Cahiers d'Études Africaines*, (36:141/142) 1996, 113-142
[61] Bogumil Jewsiewicki, "Figures des memoires congolaise de Lumumba: Moise, heros culturel, Jesus-Christ". In Pierre Halen and Janos Riesz, *Patrice Lumumba Entre Dieu et Diable: Un heros africain dans ses images.* Montreal: L'Harmattan, 1997, 386.

historically visible. As Jewsiewicki puts it, "memory of Lumumba allows such a group to conceptualize itself as being, at a given time and in a given space, on a stage on which they have a central role to play."[62] Much of the Kitawalist discourse about Lumumba suggests that such an interpretation makes sense. Both the Kitawalists of Kivu and those of Katanga very literally see themselves as having played a role in Lumumba's struggle for Independence. Yet, this raises questions about whether and to what extent the very ritualized worship of Lumumba among followers of EDAC and the more generalized perception of Lumumba as a Christ-like martyr and redeemer are significantly different. It is one thing to accept a popular vision of Lumumba as a Christ-like image of martyrdom and redemption, it seems like quite another thing to imagine him as *the* martyr and redeemer and to pray for access to his *puissance* in a ritualized space.

The narrative of Kitawalist involvement in the history of Lumumba's rise to power as told by Kitawalists in Kalemie – as well as followers of EDAC in Fizi - lends itself to two related theoretical discussions. As scholars such as Luise White and Johannes Fabian have aptly demonstrated, the verifiable "truth" or chronological accuracy of a historical narrative is not always as important as the lived historical experience that such a discourses can reveal.[63] There is little evidence to suggest that Lumumba was actually involved with Kitawalists. By most official accounts, he was not a religious man. Yet, as Luise White argues, "the line between different kinds of truth is flexible. Historical facts…emerge from social truths, just as social truths

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[62] Jewsiewicki 1997, 386.
[63] Luise White 2000, and Johannes Fabian, *Remembering the Present: Painting and Popular History in Zaire*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996.

develop from readings of social facts."[64] The truth of this story lies somewhere beyond the verifiable (or unverifiable, as it were) fact that Lumumba was strengthened by the *puissance* of Kitawalists, for like the image of the deified Lumumba, this story is not unique to Kitawalists.

The very fact that stories about the origins of Lumumba's *puissance* at the Round Table exist in multiple places and among multiple religious groups rumored to be *puissant* lends them, like rumors about Kitawalists' nationalist aspirations, to the kind of treatment as formulaic stories that Luise White gives vampires stories. She argues that in hearing such stories historians are often most concerned with "which parts of the story are true and thus useful in historical reconstruction." As White points out, however, the tellers of these stories "seem engaged in problematizing what is true, and establishing how and with what evidence a story becomes true."[65] Part of what narrators of these stories – Kitawalist or not - seem to be arguing is that Lumumba could not have succeeded in his quest for independence without the *puissance* that quite literally came from the people. They are problematizing the truth of alternative independence narratives by making claims to the origins of the power that allowed Lumumba to overcome the hegemonic influence of his educated background as an evolué – a feat which, in the words of Kabanga Kamalondo, required a "miracle"[66] – and stand up for the rights of all Congolese and, ultimately, all Africans.

This discourse about *puissance* in the narrative of Kitawalist influence on Lumumba lends itself to another related theoretical discussion – that of the confluence

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[64] White 2000, 33-34
[65] White 2000, 33.
[66] Kabanga Kamalondo, 10/19/10.

of the political and the *puissant* alternately theorized as "witchcraft" or "the occult" - in Congolese history. Into this discussion one must insert the final example of Kitawalists in Equateur holding onto currency with the picture of Lumumba and refusing currency with the picture of Mobutu. What is interesting about these two examples is that they seem to come at the question of the relationship between the politically powerful and the source of their *puissance* from different directions. While Kitawalist claims about the origins of Lumumba's power suggest they see their own *puissance* – the *puissance* given to their ancestors by God - as central to the political history of Congo and the liberation of the Congolese people, the refusal of Mobutu currency suggests that they understood Mobutu's self-serving use of *puissance* as morally and politically reprehensible, not to mention dangerous to their prosperity.

Mobutu was, of course, not unaware of Kitawalist animosity toward his regime and, as rumor has it, was himself wary of their *puissance*, as well as that of the numerous other independent churches in newly independent Zaire. Over the course of my fieldwork I heard rumors both of Mobutu imprisoning Kitawalists "because he knew they had power" and of Mobutu actively seeking to acquiesce their power.[67] Upon learning the topic of my research, the mother of a friend told me that she had known of the Kitawalists when she lived in Maniema. They were *puissants*, she told me, and they had come in to trouble with Mobutu. She remembered that in the 1980's, Mobutu had come to Maniema with the purpose of gathering *puissance* – something he was rumored to do regularly in all of the provinces – and the Kitawalists were one of the groups he

[67] Kabanga Kamalondo, 10/19/10.

had tried to consult.[68] The fact that, in 1971, Mobutu passed an ordinance under which 700 independent churches were denied civil status - leaving only the Catholic Church, the Greek Orthodox Church, and a handful of Protestant Churches consolidated into a single organization, the Église du Christ au Zaïre, with legal rights to exist - lends some credence to these rumors.

Nor did Kitawalists make a secret of their animosity toward Mobutu and the Western influences he represented. There are numerous records of Kitawalists coming into conflict with local representatives of the Mobutu government for refusing to pay taxes and refusing to salute the flag of Zaire.[69] The communities of Equateur who withdrew into the forest are a prime example of this. In 1979, a Kitawalist group in Monono, in Katanga reacted to Mobutuist incursions into their community by attacking the state's administrative offices and killing two soldiers.[70]

Kitawalist animosity toward Mobutu's regime – and devotion to Lumumbist ideals - manifested early in his political career. Many Kitawalists in northern Katanga joined the rebels in the Mulelist uprising of 1963. The father of Kabanga Kamalondo, who was the founder of the Kitawalist church in Kalemie, was a commander in Laurent Kabila's army.[71] While Kabanga is quick to point out that Kitawalists were not necessarily involved in the rebellion as a group – "church is church and politics is

[68] Mama Marceline, Conversation with Author, Field Notes, Uvira, DRC, 05/10.
[69] Mwene Batende 1982.
[70] Schatzberg 1988, 130.
[71] Kabanga Kamalondo, 10/18/10

politics" - as individuals they joined the rebellion in large numbers, rumored in some cases to have provided *puissance* to the rebels.[72]

Interestingly enough, there are also examples to contradict Kabanga's assertion that Kitawalists did not join the rebellion as groups. In another part of Northern Katanga, Kitawalists allied with rebel forces in a concerted effort to "regenerate society and purify it of elements, foreign and national, of westernization."[73] Writing of these Kitawalists, Guy Bernad suggests that their objectives "diverged profoundly from those of the political leaders of the rebellion" and the Kitawalists soon entered into conflict with them because of it. Ultimately, the Kitawalist leaders were massacred by the rebels and their followers dispersed as a result. Bernard concludes that "the liaison, though temporary, of Kitawala and the rebels demonstrates well that political and prophetic protest can unite in the post-colonial situation."[74]

As the preceding discussion illustrates, the nature of this confluence between the political and the prophetic, the secular and the religious, is the very issue that must lie at the heart of any analysis of Kitawala in post-colonial Congo. Kitawala, it seems, is a prime example of Akyeampong's observation that power is always "rooted in the fusion of the secular and sacred worlds."[75] For, what has emerged here is a picture of Kitawala after Independence which, like the picture that emerged out of the colonial context, is profoundly political. At times it has seemed overtly so, while at other times it has

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[72] Kabanga Kamalondo, 10/19/10. Sermy Nsenga, Interview with Author, Digital Recording. Kalemie, DRC, 10/19/10.
[73] Guy Bernard,"La contestation et les eglises nationales au Congo." *Canadian Journal of African Studies*. 5.2 (1971): 155.
[74] Bernard 1971, 155.
[75] Emmanuel K Akyeampong, *Drink, Power, and Cultural Change: A Social History of Alcohol in Ghana, C. 1800 to Recent Times*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 1996, 167.

challenged notions of what it means to be political, drawing intangible and unverifiable elements of *puissance* into narratives of the politically and historically tangible. The entanglement of the political and the religious is such that it becomes problematic to relegate them to separate spheres. This is hardly an observation that emerges out of this work.[76] In her earlier work on Watchtower in colonial Zambia, Karen Fields makes precisely that point. Looking at how colonial policy makers were profoundly affected by fears about Watchtower beliefs, which in turn affected their crafting of colonial policy, she demonstrated how colonial policy thus profoundly affected the spread of Watchtower beliefs. Yet, what I want to argue here is not simply that the political and religious were inextricably entangled, but to suggest that the nature of that entanglement was about more than just how policy-makers were forced to take religion into account and thus affected religion.

Kitawalist narratives of *puissance* suggest that the history of Lumumba, his political efficacy as it were, was profoundly affected by *puissance*, indeed the necessary *puissance* came from Kitawala. Upon his death, that *puissance*, thenceforth associated with Lumumba's political success in bringing about Independence and the populist ethos he represented, became accessible to Kitawalists via prayer and evocation or, perhaps in the case of the twenty makuta mark, via physical representations of his person. In the Kitawalist view, then, what seems intangible then – *puissance* – has had a very tangible affect on Congolese history: it brought about independence. And it continues to have a very tangible presence in their lives, in the context of prayer and worship and the vision

[76] See Birgit Meyer's excellent survey on the subject, "Christianity in Africa: From African Independent to Pentacostal-Charismatic Churches". In *Annual Review of Anthropology*, Vol 3(2004), 463-467.

of communal healing that prayers answered by Lumumba must represent. In my observation, when Kitawalists pray to or evoke Lumumba's *puissance* it is always in the context of praying for communal well-being rather than individual well-being. Thus, acknowledging the assumed potency of *puissance* in the eyes of Kitawalists – and of Mobutu himself - moves the entanglement between religion and politics beyond the tangible into the realm of what Michael Schatzberg has called "an alternative understanding of political causality."[77] In this alternative understanding, *puissance*, and the wielders and evokers of that *puissance*, engage with the political on a level that, in a conventional understanding of historical causality, seems significant only insofar as it had material political consequences (in policy, for example), but that in the alternative understanding has, or has the potential to have, material manifestations in and of itself.

Complicating the Political: Toward a Discussion of Puissance and Healing

In the preceding discussion I have attempted to understand the significance of the emergence of Patrice Lumumba as the prophet of Kitawala. A fascinating development, it lends itself to understanding the nature of the entanglement between the political and religious, an entanglement which, in the case of Kitawala, revolves in many ways around *puissance*. But analysis of Kitawala's post-colonial history cannot stop at praying to Lumumba, for it is ultimately only a fraction of the picture. Furthermore, it is a fraction of the picture that is analytically enticing *because* of its political implications. It thus encourages us to view Kitawala through a political lens – a lens that, as later chapters illucidate, has undeniable roots in the religion's colonial history. As such,

[77] Schatzberg, 111-144.

Chapter Two will turn toward an alternate narrative of the development of Kitawala in the post-colonial Congo – a narrative that is also profoundly influenced by *puissance*, but in the form of healing on an individual level. I will argue that praying to Lumumba and challenging Mobutu are only one part of a complex story and, in fact, not necessarily the part of the story that Kitawalists themselves tend to emphasize. As I noted in the introduction, many Kitawalists state explicitly and emphatically that Kitawala is not political. This must be read as partially a function of the methodological context in which such information was discussed (i.e. a white American researcher asking about the very subject for which Kitawalists have most frequently persecuted by the government). But it must also be engaged as a sincere claim about Kitawalist beliefs and practices.

For most Kitawalists, it is the day to day teachings and practices of the religion, which focus much more prominently on healing, creating cooperative communities (for farming, for example), and remembering and respecting ancestors and ancestral practices that are most important. For each song that is sung at an EDAC service venerating Lumumba, two are sung calling on the aid and protection of wababu, milima, and mito (the ancestors, the mountains, and the rivers). More common than robes that read "Praise Prophet Lumumba" are robes that read "Fata Mungu wa Asili" - Follow the God of Tradition (Image 1.4) - or "Fata Mungu wa Mababu" - Follow the Ancestral God (Image 1.3). For each Kitawalist community that refused to pay taxes or stand for the Zaire flag, there were many more who preferred not to make trouble with the local government, even if they disagreed with them ideologically. For each woman or man who converted to Kitawala because they were attracted by the political ideology, many

more were attracted because they needed healing that they could not find anywhere else. Thus, Chapter Two will focus on the ways in which *puissance* is evoked and exercised in the context of individual healing. I will seek to understand the link between the *puissance* in the case of praying to Lumumba and *puissance* in the case of evoking both ancestors and God in context of healing ceremonies. In the course of this investigation, I will demonstrate not only that *puissance* has been at the center of this history, but that as the major ritual purveyors of *pussiance*, women have been important players in the post-colonial history of Kitawala. This will ultimately pave the way for rethinking the history of Kitawala in the colonial period.

Chapter Two

Praying for Puissance: Kitawalist Healing and Healers

Maman Kelema

Like the majority of the Bwari people who live along the shores of Lake Tanganyika in Fizi Territory, Maman Kalema was born Muslim. She joined Kitawala in 1996 and ultimately left the church in 2002 when, at the height of the war, she was forced to flee to Uvira where, to her knowledge, there was no Kitawalist church. Around the same time, most of the Kitawalist leaders and many of the followers in Fizi had fled to Tanzania and, as far as she knew, most of them had never returned. If this had not been the case, she asserted, she would still be a member of the church, for she believes that it is a good religion, a religion of truth.

When I first met Maman Kalema in her home in Uvira, she insisted that we would talk in a group made up exclusively of women. (Maman Kalema, myself, and her daughter). She started off by explaining that Kitawalists do not like to share their secrets. She had been told in the past that people would come looking for the secrets of Kitawala; that they would come searching for its power, its *puissance*. Those secrets, she told me, were naturally the domain of women.

When I asked Maman Kalema why she had joined Kitawala, she told me the following story: She had suffered a long, intense illness related to fertility. In her words, she "carried a fetus for 7 years" and, though she had gone to various healers - biomedical, Muslim, traditional - she could not find relief. She had heard that the Kitawalists healed people for free, so she decided to go to them. When she went to the Kitawalists, they brought her into a prayer chamber, where they prayed over her. They then sent her home with a powder, and told her to bathe with it. In order to procure its *puissance*, its healing power, the powder had also been prayed over. At long last, Maman Kalema recovered from her illness and she was able to bear a child – a daughter. After her illness was healed, she became a healer herself – a Mama of the prayer chamber with a reputation as an *mfumu.*[1]

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[1] *M(u)fumu* is commonly used as a synonym for *(mu)nganga* – healer - in the Swahili of South Kivu and Northern Katanga. In its usage, in contemporary Congo, *mfumu* tends of carry a connotation of witchcraft or the use of *mashetani* – evil spirits – in healing practices. Johannes Fabian has noted the usage of the word in the same manner in Lubumbashi. Johannes Fabian, *Ethnography as Commentary: Writing from the Virtual Archive (ebook)*. Duke University Press: 2008, Loc 891. Interestingly, *mfumu* is defined in Kiluba as "important person" and was historically a title given to a chief and his

> Today Maman Kalema continues to use the healing practices that she learned from the Kitawalists, though, as noted, she has no official affiliation with the church. She heals a number of illnesses. In particular, she helps women who have reproductive problems. But she also offers medicines to help people succeed, whether in a job interview or with a woman/man. She cited an example of a woman who had gone years without being married and was getting old. She took the medicine Maman Kalema prepared for her and soon enough men started to notice her and she was married shortly thereafter. In another incident, she presided over a healing ritual that brought prosperity and business success to a family.
>
> Maman Kalema denies accusations that Kitawalists work with *mashetani* (demonic powers/beings). She insists that they believe in the same bible as other Christians. They put God and the teachings of the bible first, but they disagree with those that say that the teachings of their ancestors were satanic, and they pray to their ancestors after God.[2]

Maman Kalema's personal history of faith and conversion and her individual experiences of malady[3], health, and healing, both within and beyond the Kitawalist community, provide a rich point of entry into the discussions at the heart

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councilors. E. Van Avermaet and Benoit Mbuya, 1954, 153-52. At the same time, David Schoenbrun (1998) in his work on early Great Lakes has suggested that *bafumu*(pl) came to "recognize highly versatile experts with ties to ancestral knowledge" that gave them "power over life, death, and nature." Schoenbrun1998, 110. This draws out the ambiguities in the exercise and conceptualization of 'creative' and 'instrumental' power – *puissance* -that I emphasized in the Introduction and in Chapter One (also drawing on Schoenbrun 1998, 12-15).

[2] Maman Kalema's story, as I have presented it here, is composed out of both my field notes from the first interview that I conducted with her and direct quotes from my second interview with her, which was recorded. I have rearranged some of her words for the sake of narrative ease and have chosen to not to indicate which moments (drawn from the recorded interview) I am quoting her directly and which are drawn from the initial, notated interview. In essence, these are all Maman Kalema's words, I am simply quoting them directly at times and paraphrasing at other times. Maman Kalema, Interview with Author, Field notes, Uvira, South Kivu, DRC, 4/18/2010. Mama Kalema, Interview with Author, Digital Recording, Uvira, South Kivu, DRC, 4/21/2010.

[3] Following Stacey Langwick, I use the term "malady" which, she argues, "holds biomedical and nonbiomedical discomforts, disabilities, and other undesirable states of being in the same frame." Stacey Langwick, *Bodies, Politics, and African Healing*. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2011, 11.

of this chapter. In her story, some of the major "ritual technologies" at work in Kitawalist healing emerge: in particular the use of prayer and powder.[4] How do those ritual technologies operate and what are the ontological assumptions that guide them? In addition, within her narrative one can begin to see the contours of the epistemological space that Kitawalist healers have inhabited in the therapeutic complex of eastern Congo in recent years: they are possessors and wielders of secret knowledge that makes them powerful (they have *nguvu*) and that has garnered them a reputation for their abilities to engage with (evil) spirits – "wazimu" or "*mashetani.*" Guided by these contours, it is possible to ask: why do people go to Kitawalist healers? Moreover, we can begin to see who those healers are: they are generally women, who are the arbiters of 'secret' Kitawalist knowledge and power. Knowing this, we can begin to ask new questions about gender in the history of Kitawala. Finally, we get a glimpse of the diversity that exists under the umbrella of Kitawala. Even as Maman Kalema insisted that there were no Kitawalists in Uvira, EDAC – a subset of Kitawala – was there and thriving. What is at stake in claims of what is and is not Kitawala?

Each of these questions engages partially with what must ultimately be a multifaceted inquiry about Kitawalist healing. When taken together, they raise larger questions about the dynamics of power that have operated in the past and continue today not only in Kitawalist communities, but also in the larger healing complex of eastern Congo. If in Chapter One I interrogated the many ways in

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[4] Steve Feierman, "Explanation and Uncertainty in the Medical World of the Ghaambo." *Bulletin of the History of Medicine,* 74(2), 2000: 326. Feierman's notion of "ritual technologies" will be explored more in depth later in this chapter.

which Kitawalist narratives about the Prophet Lumumba revolve around historically and culturally situated notions of power in the context of religion and politics, I now turn toward understanding how those same notions of power animate and inform Kitawalist healing practices and the ways in which Kitawalists themselves articulate, embody, and enact that power. At the same time, I ask how Kitawalist healing practices can broaden our understanding of healing in the post-colonial space while simultaneously challenging assumptions about what is particularly post-colonial about that space. This, in turn, lays the groundwork for thinking about how Kitawalist healing practices in the post-colonial might inform our reading of Kitawalist healing practices in the past.

Alternative (Im)materialities

As discussed in the Introduction, since the 1980s, scholars of health and healing have radically altered how we understand health and therapeutic practices in Africa, calling for serious engagement with the multiple and shifting ways in which Africans have sought to maintain and restore healthy communities and bodies. Recently, these schoalrs have pushed for deeper exploration of the interstices at which different therapeutic worlds – what Stacey Langwick calls "science and its others" - meet, at times coexisting and intermingling and at others strategically articulating distinction.[5] In her recent account of traditional healing in postcolonial Tanzania, Langwick argues that it is at these interstices that actors

[5] Langwick 2011, 17, Langwick writes,"I start from the position that science and its others (magic, witchcraft, religion) not only coexist but also exist inside one another. See also, Feierman 2000.

from these various and intertwined worlds engage in what she calls the "politics of ontology" – the "highly politicized and deeply intimate battle over who and what has the right to exist."[6] In the context of this battle, she argues, African healers and patients struggle to articulate and enact "alternative materialities", to determine "what objects are central to life and the relations that sustain them."[7]

Focusing on contemporary Tanzania, where the collapse of post-independence socialism and the forces of economic liberalization have led to a myriad of national policies focused on institutionalizing traditional medicine, Langwick notes that traditional healers are aware that efforts to institutionalize traditional medicine have largely, "reinforced hierarchies of knowledge instead of disrupting them."[8] Nonetheless, she argues, in their everyday practices those healers "suggest forms of integration, coordination, and engagement with biomedicine that disrupt" those very same hierarchies by challenging "the privileged position of science to articulate matter."[9] At times, Langwick argues, those challenges come in the form of claims to spaces outside of biomedicine, where there exist maladies that biomedicine cannot articulate and, therefore, cannot address. At other times, those challenges come when healers "use bits and pieces of clinical medicine to formulate new techniques for discerning the matter of maladies, of bodies, and of the range of entities that sustain and threaten life."[10]

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[6] Langwick 2011, 232.
[7] Langwick 2011, 232.
[8] Langwick 2011, 234.
[9] Langwick 2011, 234.
[10] Langwick 2011, 235

Ultimately, Langwick's study highlights the creative and often quite productive (if also power-laden) ways that that traditional healers in Tanzania engage with biomedicine (and vice-versa). Yet non-biomedical healing – traditional and otherwise - is a dynamic and diverse category and at its core Langwick's study is laregly focused on two kinds of healing: "*dawa za mitishamba*" (medicine of the bush/ herbal healing) – and biomedicine.[11] Of course, the comparison of all forms of healing in Tanzania would be an unwieldy project that would risk devolving into 'taxonomic games', but one might argue that in choosing to compare bio-medicine with herbal forms of traditional healing – the form with the most obvious material congruence with bio-medicine – Langwick in some ways falls into the very trap of making "a priori assumptions" about materiality that she wishes to avoid. [12] She is, by her own admittance, most intrigued "by the moments when biomedicine interpolates healers or healing and those when healers (mis)translate themselves into medical science."[13] She is looking for "interference" between those two categories, but in some ways her interests obfuscate other forms of interference – between non-biomedical forms of healing – that are at play in the therapeutic world.

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[11] She does spend a bit of time discussing Islamis *faraki* healing and acknowledges the role that 'God' has come to play in traditional healing practices, but such kinds of healing, that do not fit neatly into the category of 'traditional healing' are peripheral to her analysis: Langwick, 89-96, 106-109

[12] Meyer 2004, 253. Meyer draws the term "taxonomic games" from earlier critiques articulated by Fabian and Fernandez. Johannes Fabian, "Six Theses Regarding the Anthropology of African Religious Movements." In *Religion*, Vol.11, 1981, 109-26. JW Fernandez, "African Religious Movements." In *Annual Review of Anthropology*, Vol. 7, 1978, 195-234.

[13] Langwick 2011, 234.

I do not mean to push this critique too far, for I think that it is this very notion – the ontological (in)congruence of herbal healing with biomedicine and the forms of power that are at play in comparisons between the two – that Langwick so effectively critiques in her study. However, I do mean to imply that turning toward a comparison of healing practices like those of Kitawalists - which do not fit into neatly defined categories of "spirit healing", "Christian healing", or "traditional healing" – with the forms of traditional healing that Langwick highlights, can diversify the notion of "alternative materialities." In fact, I posit that one might just as easily argue for attention to alternative *im*materialities, wherein material manifestations of power find their origin, their driving force, in the immaterial. The notion that something exists only in the moments at which it materializes is itself an ontological assumption. Such a change in emphasis might more effectively break down the existential borders between spiritual and material, allowing for the assessment of the this-worldly "agency of spirits" without needing to assert that what ultimately matters is matter.[14]

Moreover, I think that focusing on the ways that conceptions of immaterial can shift over time – expanding its capacity to "interfere" with the material - can more effectively capture the ways in which Kitawalists – and other "spirit healers" and "Christian healers"- have, since the colonial era, re-imagined "traditional healing" in ways that are quite different than the herbal healers Langwick focuses on in her study. Langwick looks at healers whose "remedies stand in contrast to the forms of therapeutic intervention that are derived from biomedical research, which

[14] On the 'agency of spirits', see David Gordon, 2012. Athens: Ohion University Press, 2012.

examines plant materials for their efficacy against known pathogens," but who nevertheless (mis)recognize "themselves and their medicine in the discourse of medical science" and seek "to recast their medicine in light of biomedical concerns." Using the universalizing discourse of biomedicine, they strive to "make it possible for their treatments to travel differently and potentially farther."[15] However, as the discussion of Mama Kalema and other Kitawalist healers and patients that follow demonstrates, Kitawalists healers, it would seem, are more concerned with recognizing their medicine in discourses of traditional healing than in discourses of biomedicine. As any Kitawalist will tell you, theirs is a religion of tradition – *ya asili, ya bankambo* – and their healing is 'of tradition'.[16] Yet, they heal using mass-market talcum powder imported from Tanzania more frequently than local herbs and they draw heavily on Christian (historically, Watchtower) discourse and imagery.

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[15] Langwick 2011, 6.

[16] The translation of *asili* as tradition is imperfect, but justifiable. Looking at usage in Southern Tanzania, Langwick glosses the semantic field of *asili* as "derivation – transformation from one state to another, the process of reasoning out, explaining, or following a train of logic." She notes that it is "most often used in relation to medicine and efforts to scientifically investigate plants." She contrasts this with two other words that are frequently translated as tradition: *Jadi* and *kinyeji*. Jadi "captures development through generations" while *kinyeji* "implies the growth of (and the growth out of) a place." Kenyeji "reflects the importance of specificity and the acts of specifying that are at the root of some forms of healing." Langwick 2011, 88. The way that *asili* is used in eastern Congo, however, does not precisely match any of these definitions. In John Whitehead's 1928 dictionary of Kingwana (Congolese – especially Katangan - Swahili), asili is defined as "origin, source, aboriginal, rudiment.": John Whitehead, *Manuel De Kingwana: Le Dialecte Occidental De Swahili*. Le Lualaba, Congo Belge: La Mission de et à Wayika, 1928. When Kitawalists use it, they frequently qualify it with "ya bankambo", which Johannes Fabian notes refers to "'ancestors' generally, not specific relatives." Fabian 2008, Loc 1037. As such, I think a fair translation here is "of the ancestral tradition", though I use "tradition" as shorthand.

As this chapter moves forward, I would like to suggest that while the practitioners of these varied forms of "traditional" healing have, over the past century, drawn on the same "intellectual resources" (to borrow a term from Johannes Fabian) in their 'methods' and 'rituals', they have done so in historically and contextually contingent ways.[17] While some healers have increasingly recognized themselves in (but continued to distinguish themselves from) the universalizing discourse of biomedicine, others have increasingly recognized themselves in (but continued to distinguish themselves from) the universalizing discourse of Christianity. [18] Yet, both have likewise continued to draw on and often define themselves by intellectual resources that predate both of those "universalizing" discourses. It is this reality, perhaps more than anything, that disrupts the notion that such forms of healing are in essence postcolonial, even as they have been profoundly influenced by – and themselves influenced - both the colonial and postcolonial worlds. This is precisely why imagining the project of thinking through "the multiple, the fleeting, and the politics of those things that are not" as a "distinctly twenty-first-century issue" is a dangerous endeavor.[19]

In order to better articulate the argument I have just suggested, it is necessary to return now to Mama Kalema, who - along with other Kitawalist healers and healed that I met, interviewed and befriended within the various

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[17] Johannes Fabian 2008, Loc 1364.
[18] I use "universalizing" here to indicate that each of these discourses is defined, in part, by universalizing aspirations. I am, of course, aware that both are the products of specific historical contexts. Though I do not highlight it in this study, there it is also important to note the ways in which biomedicine has become an African practice. See: Claire Wendland, *A Heart for the Work*. Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2012.
[19] Langwick 2011, 235.

Kitawalist communities in South Kivu and Northern Katanga in 2010– can help us to better understand the nature of Kitawalist healing today. Their experiences of and thoughts about Kitawalist healing are mediated through their own contingent histories, but together they constitute a larger picture of the therapeutic niche Kitawalists have come to inhabit in the region in the postcolonial era. Moreover, as I will argue in Section Two of this dissertation, understanding Kitawalist healing practices in the postcolonial era – their "ritual technologies", the forms of diversity that have developed within their communities, the gender dynamics of their work, and the epistemological space they inhabit in the larger community – makes it possible to ask new questions about the internal dynamics of Kitawalist communities in the past. Furthermore, it makes it possible to ask questions about how the notions of power that are at the core of the "intellectual resources" that animate Kitawalist healing share conceptual roots with the notions of power that have animated Kitawalist thought and action in its most political moments.

The "Ritual Technologies" of Kitawalist Healing

As was the case when Maman Kalema sought healing, Kitawalists generally work with a minimal amount of materials, herbal and otherwise. Unlike Binti Dadi, the Konde *nganga wa mitishamba* Stacey Langwick worked with in Tanzania or Kahenga, the Luba *munganga wa miti*[20] interviewed by Johannes Fabian in

[20] Like *wanganga za mitishamba*, *Mungaga za miti* translates as "herbal healer." *Munganga,* of course shares the root *–nganga* and *miti* "refers to a tree but also to plant or vegetal matter in general." Fabian, Loc 824.

Lubumbashi in 1974, Kitawalists do not generally work with a wide array of "roots, bark, leaves, seeds, and flowers" that they have collected themselves in the "bush" and processed by pounding, grinding, mixing, boiling or grilling.[21] In general, Kitawalist healing today involves four elements: powder, candles, oil, and incense. The powder, as I mentioned above, is a mass-marketed variety of talcum powder that is imported from Tanzania (See image 2:1).[22] The candles, as well as the incense and oil, all derive from the *umpafu* tree (*Canarium schweinfurthii* or African Elemi), the significance of which I will discuss further below.

These three materials come together with the performance of "evocations" in "prayer chambers" to constitute what Steve Feierman has called the "ritual technology" of Kitawalists. Looking at herbal healing practices in Ghamaabo, Tanzania, Feierman argues that "when the healer addresses the herbs, the words and the herbs are both part of the treatment." For healers in Ghaambo, the words they use to address the herbs "are not mere decoration" for what is ultimately a chemical transaction. Instead, "they are essential for efficacy" and the "ritual

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[21] Fabian 2008, Loc 1309. Fabian's fascinating study, *Ethnography as Commentary* is an "experiment in ethnographic writing" (Loc. 19) based on the textual and contextual translation of a single interview with a healer, Kahenga Mukonkwa Michel, that he conducted in Lubumbashi in 1974. While his interview must be located in a different temporal space than my own interviews with Kitawalists, it is one of the only examples of an in-depth interview with an herbal healer in the region where Kitawalists have historically been present. Indeed, Kahenga is from the northern regions of Katanga where a good portion of my own interviews with Kitawalists took place. As part of Fabian's experiment in ethnography with "virtual archives", the entire text of the interview, in both Swahili and English, is available to read online: Johannes Fabian, "'Magic and Modernity': A Conversation with an Herbalist and Practitioner of Magic" *Archives of Popular Swahili*, Vol. 7, 8 July, 2005. (http://www.lpca.socsci.uva.nl/aps/vol7/kahengatext.html)

[22] Vestline talcum/baby powder. A brief internet search reveals that it is produced by Tanga Pharmaceutical and Plastics Ltd, in Tanga Tanzania.

transformation of the herbs is an indispensible part of the technology." It is incorrect, Feierman argues, "to treat the herbs as the real source of healing power, and the words as symbolic supplement."[23]

Though he is warning about direct comparisons between herbal healing and bio-medicine, Feierman's observations seem particularly important in the context of Kitawalist healing as well. Thinking back to Maman Kalema's experience with Kitawalist healing – she was taken into a prayer chamber along with the powder that would become her medicine, an "evocation" was performed, and she was sent home to bathe with the powder that ultimately healed her– it seems obvious that the "herb" that she was given was not the "real source of healing power". Talcum powder, after all, has very few medicinal properties. In some ways, it seems to suggest the opposite: that the real source of healing power was the words and that the powder was the symbolic supplement. The powder then was simply a signifier of the real power, which existed in the words and immaterial power (*nguvu*, *puissance*) that they evoke. This seems to imply ontics of a different nature, wherein what exists is the immaterial and the material is but a vessel.

Yet, a closer look at how Kitawalists describe the ritual technology of their healing suggests that we should not overemphasize the difference. Just as with the Ghaambo healing that Feierman observed, the technology of the immaterial –the words - and the technology of the 'herb' are "indissoluble". It is just more difficult, in the case of Kitawalist healing, to explain the technology of the 'herbal' in

[23] Feierman 2000, 326.

biomedical terms. However, that does not mean that there are no terms by which to explain it. In what follows, I present several extended excerpts from discussions that I had with Kitawalist leaders about healing within the church. I have reproduced the interviews at some length, because I think the details are important if we are to understand the subtleties of Kitawalist thoughts about their ritual technologies.

Shifting Notions of Materiality

These first excerpts come from two interviews that were conducted in Kalemie with the Kitawalists of L'Eglise du Liberation du Saint Espirit du Prophet Kadima Emile Ilunga du Kitawala. The discussion was led by Kabanga Kamalondo, the local Kitawalist leader whom I introduced in Chapter One, but was attended by other elders of the parish.[24] When I initially asked Kabanga to explain Kitawalist healing practices to me, he responded as follows:

[24] It is worth noting here that these interviews, as with all of the interviews featured in this study, were conducted in Swahili by myself and have likewise been translated from their original Swahili by myself. While Swahili is not the maternal language of any of the people I spoke with, it is regularly spoken in everyday interactions, particularly in larger towns and cities in the Kivus and in Northern Katanga. The dialect spoken in these regions is far closer to standard Tanzanian Swahili – Sanifu - than that spoken in other parts of Eastern Congo, though it is most certainly a dialect that borrows heavily from local languages and uses far less of the Arabic vocabulary used in coastal Swahili. Congolese in Lubumbashi regularly refer to the Swahili of these regions as "Swahili Bora" – Better/High Swahili - because it is so much closer to Standard Swahili than the Kingwana dialect of Swahili highlighted in the work of Johannes Fabian (*Language and Colonial Power: The Appropriation of Swahili in the Former Belgian Congo, 1880-1938.* Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991.) I suspect that reasons for this – and for the high level of fluency among people in this region – has much to do with the recent conflict, which forced many Congolese in this region into Tanzanian refugee camps for extended periods of time. I also suspect it is related to increased mobility related to trade in East Africa, but further linguistic research on this subject is necessary. In any case,

> The teaching left to us by Mwana Lesa and Ilunga was that Kitawala should not heal with just anything. It should heal with powder and candles. It is the whites (*wazungu*) who make this powder.[25] It is flowers from trees. God told us we will be healed by trees from the wilderness (*pori*)…These trees are an elder sibling to all of us (*mkubwa wetu*). The first born were the trees, then came the fish and animals, and then we are third. When God made man he said he was finished with his work. We were created in front of a tree. We do prayers, we do evocations in our church that we were taught by our ancestors. We invest the powder with that power (*pouvoir*). When someone becomes sick, they bring them to us and we blow the powder at them like this [demonstrates]. You blow it over the front of the body and it extracts the spirit (*pepo*) in his/her body. The powder fells the spirit (*inamuangukia*, literally: forces it to fall down) and the malady (*malali*) leaves. We take the oil (*mafuta*) - oil from the *umpafu* tree (*Canarium schweinfurthii*). We get a candle and we light it (burn it). Because a candle is *moto* (fire/heat), it is made from the resin of the tree.[26] The things we use to heal are trees (*miti*). We pray to Ilunga and through Jesus we heal. It began with Mwana Lesa in 1925.[27]

When I asked Kabanga whether there were different prayers for different diseases, he responded:

> There is a single prayer, but there are various cures. I told you that this powder is flowers, the candle is resin, and that the oil comes from *umpafu* tree. That is where the power (*pouvoir)* comes from, because it is our older sibling (*mkubwa yetu*). When you go there with "malali la kuzunguka kichwa" (illness that is circling your head), you have to say prayers and put the oil on your head, because it is apparent that is where the problem is located, and then you go into the prayer chamber. You tell God that you want to cure a certain malady (*malali*).[28]

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though the choice of Swahili as the language of expression was dictated in large part by my own limitations in local languages, the people I interviewed were entirely comfortable expressing themselves in Swahili and would clarify with local words or with French when articulating complex ideas.

[25] Shows me a bottle of Vestline talcum/baby powder.

[26] The term he uses here is *matunvi ya mti*. I have been unable to find reference to the term in a dictionary, but contextual information indicates that it means resin, since the resin of *umpafu* trees is used to make candles.

[27] Kabanga Kamalondo, 10/18/2010. I have chosen to remove most of the repetition from the original transcript for ease of reading.

[28] Kabanga Kamalondo, 10/18/2010.

At this point, Sermy Nsenga, a colleague at the University of Lubumbashi-Kalemie who accompanied me to several of my interviews, interjected. He seemed unconvinced by parts of Kabanga's answer to my question and insisted on the following clarification:

> So you are explaining where the power (*nguvu*) of your prayers comes from. You say it is the flowers that come from trees. But it is the prayer that is the power (*nguvu*). If you are going to explain how you heal, you need to explain that different prayers heal different diseases or she will think it is all the same.[29]

Following Sermy's interjection, we concluded discussion of healing for the day, but when we returned to the topic of Kitawalist ritual technologies another day, Kabanga added the following clarification:

> We go into a prayer chamber with you if you are sick. We call the ancestors, and the spirits descend upon us. If they tell us you should go to an herbal healer (*nganga)*, you go to an herbal healer. Or if we do not think it is witchcraft (*bulozi*), we may send you somewhere else.[30] We work with visions. That is to say, we work with shades. We pray to shades to ask for *puissance*. What is it mama, what is it? She says no, it is this. If we reach three days and there is no change, we call for the ancestors and they descend (banashuka). They say no, don't do that prayer, you must do this prayer, to this shade, and then you heal a person. It is not the Kitawalists, it is God who heals.

That same day, I spent some time speaking with women about healing in the church as well. I will address much of what I discussed with women in the section below, but the following excerpt from our conversation is particularly pertinent to the topic of ritual technologies. I asked them whether Kitawalists also use various healing materials – herbal, etc. - that the ancestors used. Two women, who did not give me their names, together gave me the following answer:

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[29] Sermy Nsenga, 10/18/2010.
[30] The implied meaning here is to biomedical doctors.

> Yes we use these things too. We use incense, we use nji[31], we also use "*pembe*" ('horns') ya ababu (like in the time of our ancestors) and *umpafu* oil. We also use incense from the *umpafu*, which we put in a form like a candle. You light it and it burns. It gives off light and scent. And *pembe*, it makes powder, which we also use when we are inside our secret prayer chamber. We use incense, *pembe*, and oil of *umpafu*. [32]

To be sure there is much to be learned from each of these explanations of Kitawalist ritual technologies and practices. Among the most interesting and recurrent themes is the nature of the materials themselves. Kabanga readily acknowledges that the powder that they use is not native to Congo. He says that it is made by whites (*wazungu)* – though it is, in fact, manufactured in and distributed from Tanzania. The provenance of the powder seems of little concern, however. It is rather what the powder is perceived to be made of that matters: according to Kabanga, it is "flowers from trees" (maua ya miti) – an understandable assumption, given the floral aroma of the talcum powder. On one level, classifying the powder as such allows for it to be incorporated into the same class as other herbs/*miti* that are used for healing. But, interestingly enough, it also allows for the powder to be perceived through Christian imagery. Kabanga repeatedly insists that the tree is our ancestor, our older sibling, our "*ndugu*." It preceded us in the creation of the world: "The first born were the trees, then came the fish and animals, and then we are third. When God made man he said he was finished with his work. We were

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[31] I do not have a translation for this word as of yet.

[32] The use of horns filled with various materials is widespread in the Great Lakes region. Indeed, in his colonial ethnography of Kitawala (discussed in Chapter Five) Jacques Gerard indicates that some of the Kitawalists he worked with kept such horns: Gerard 1969, 97-98. The term often appears as either -hembe or jjembe in bantu languages. One the deeper history of such horns, see: Neil Kodesh 2010, 160-63 and also Schoenbrun 1998, 253, no 85.

created in front of a tree."[33] This is an obvious reference to the order of creation established in the Bible. The tree came before us. It is, in essence, our ancestor and therefore possesses the potential to heal us.

Yet, the fact that Kabanga reads the creation story thusly itself seems to be mediated through local imagery and history. In much of eastern Congo, trees have historically been a rich source of imagery and power. Historian Gillian Mathys writes about the significance of trees in the area surrounding Lake Kivu, where even today they serve as an important marker of first-comer status. Looking at the historical significance of the border between Rwanda and Congo, Mathys notes that today Rwandanphones living in eastern Congo will point to their trees – specifically, fig trees and *Erythrine* - as proof of their claims to land and citizenship. The trees indicate the land that belonged to their ancestors, where their lineage heads first settled. They are revered in annual rituals, generally linked to a specific ancestor. [34] They are *puissants* because they serve as the vessel through which important ancestors can be addressed.

It is not difficult to see the confluence between these two images – that of the tree as predecessor in the creation story, and that of tree as ancestral marker and node of access to ancestral power. This confluence is only enriched when one thinks about the central role played by the tree of life and the tree of knowledge in Christian thought and imagery related to creation. As something which is simultaneously organic to this world but imbued with significant power and

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[33] Kabanga Kamalondo, 10/18/2012

[34] Gillian Mathys, University of Ghent, Belgium. Personal communication, January 2013. Gillian discusses this topic in her PhD thesis, still in progress.

knowledge that is beyond this world, the forms of power attributed to the tree of life - the knowledge of God – create a somatic overlap between the significance of trees in both readings, offering a prime example of the ways in which Kitawalists regularly read Christianity as 'tradition'.

Viewed through this lens, mass marketed powder is stripped of its commodity form and essentially incorporated into an imaginary that brings it much closer to other forms of herbal medicine, allowing for its incorporation into the Kitawalist notion of traditional. Of course, if we look at the statements given by my two female informants there is some difference in interpretation. They do not indentify the powder as a product of a tree, but rather as a product of *pembe* – horn/ivory. This, they say, is used like in "the time of their ancestors". However, once again the powder is not used for its actual material properties – the various minerals and chemicals that constitute talcum powder – but for material properties with which it is symbolically invested, allowing it to be incorporated into the notion of tradition in much the same way that Kabanga has incorporated it by viewing it as a product of trees.[35]

The other materials that constitute the matter of Kitawalist healing practices – the oil, incense, and candles of the *umpafu* have more straightforward connection to ancestral healing practices. *Umpafu* is a tree with a very deep historical

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[35] Historian of health and healing Neil Kodesh (personal communication) reminds me that "another widespread Bantu root –pemb carries the meaning 'shine, be white,' with derivative meanings 'white clay, kaolin,' a substance widely used in ritual practices in the region." I have seen references to kaolin in archival materials. As I discuss in Chapter 5, kaolin was one of the materials – along with the dirt of a termite hill - used by Kitawalists to fashion 'mannequins' meant to give converts the ability to 'see their dead parents'. (AA/GG 73.939, 1947). It is possible that this is what the women were referring to, rather than –*pembe* as 'horn'. More fieldwork is necessary to clarify.

relationship to healing. In English it is known as the African Elimi, bush candle tree, gum resin tree, or incense tree.[36] The resin is heavy and sticky and when it dries it becomes a whiteish solid that is highly flammable. This resin is frequently formed into "bush" candles. When burned, it both provides light and exudes a "lavender-like" aroma and is often used as incense. It also produces a fruit that can be pressed to produce oil. The oil and the fruit are both edible. Moreover, the tree has long been a source of medicine to treat a variety of afflictions. Historically it was exported to Europe for use in pharmaceuticals. It has healing properties that work against certain stomach ailments (dysentery, food poisoning, roundworms and other intestinal parasites) and can be used as a purgative or diuretic. It is thought to help with certain chest ailments (coughs, chest pains), and has been used to treat skin ailments (eczema, leprosy, ulcers). It can be use both internally and externally.[37]

Clearly, the *umpafu* has essential medicinal properties that render Kitawalist claims that it is "of their ancestors" likely "true" in an empirical way that claims that the powder is "of their ancestors" cannot be true, since talcum powder has been available to Kitawalists only since probably the mid-20th century.[38] Yet, in some ways this, perhaps, bolsters claims that the use of powder is "ancestral". There were indigenously produced powders available before commercially produced

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[36] "Canarium schweinfurthil" in *AgroForestry Tree Database* of the World Agroforestry Center at the International Center for Research in Agroforestry: http://www.worldagroforestrycentre.org/sea/products/afdbases/af/asp/SpeciesInfo.asp?SpID=1765

[37] "Canarium schweinfurthil", AgroForestry Tree Database.

[38] I don't have a date for when talcum powder first became widely available in Congo. I would guess that at the very earliest it would have been the late colonial period, but more research is needed to verify.

powder came into Congo and it is easy to see how – given the explanations cited above – the industrial powder could be easily substituted for the locally produced kinds of powder.[39] Furthermore, Kabanga's assertion that the use of powder in Kitawalist healing dates back to the time of Mwana Lesa suggests that powder was a major part of the Kitawalist ritual technology dating back to the earliest days of the movement in the 1920's, a time that surely predates the arrival of commercial talcum powder. This in turn suggests, as I have argued above, that Kitawalists have re-imagined the material of "traditional" healing by rendering the power, the essence, of the material increasingly immaterial by deemphasizing the inherent physical properties of the materials used to heal and emphasizing their symbolic properties. This is quite the opposite of those who have struggled to articulate the material of traditional healing in ways that resonate increasingly with bio-medicine.

Of course, it is difficult to pinpoint at what moment or why notions of (im)materiality might have begun to shift. As I detail in Chapter Five, at least as late as the 1947 there are accounts of using materials such as kaolin and termite hill dirt – both historically highly significant 'powders' used in healing practices in the region.[40] If I posit, then, that this process is something that has happened since the colonial era, one theory might be that it has something to do with the deterioration of natural resources in eastern Congo or, more recently, increased insecurity, which has perhaps made healing materials that were more widely available in the past more difficult to come by in the present. For example, the deterioration of the

[39] Such as *kaolin* discusses in footnote 36 or ash, which, as I discuss in Chapter 5 is mentioned in Kitawalist rituals during the colonial era.
[40] AA/GG 73.939

wildlife population, a result of hunger combined with unregulated hunting, would make it increasingly difficult to come by the "horns" necessary to produce powder (at least the kind the women cited above spoke of) locally. Kaolin, too, is not available everywhere and given the difficulties of mobility in contemporary Congo, this may make talcum powder a more easily acquired substitute. It might also be useful to consider the deterioration of the biomedical infrastructure in Congo, which – in comparison to Tanzania – is minimally functional. In the post-Colonial period, the Congolese government has done little to incentivize any standardization of traditional healing in the way that the Tanzanian government has done, giving healers less direct incentive or ability to situate themselves within biomedical practice.[41] To complicate this last claim, I offer the response that a leader of the EDAC branch of Kitawala in Fizi gave me when I asked which diseases Kitawalists heal:

> Illness in general. But there are different illnesses. There are illnesses that you can heal with herbs. You can make various herbs into pills. Then it gets complicated…you need someone who can make the pills and assign dosages. We don't have these resources. So we use herbs as God directs us. Then there are illnesses you heal by praying without even touching anything. We go into the mountains. We conduct healing ceremonies

[41] There have been programs to institutionalize traditional healing in Congo. In the 1980s, WHO encouraged African countries to develop such programs and Zaire was one of the countries that did. Joycelyn DeJong, "Traditional Medicine in Subsaharan Africa," Population and Human Resources Department, The World Bank, July 1991, *WPS* 735, 8. The subject has been little researched, but it seems to have been largely unsuccessful and left little legacy in the East, at least. The spread of Kimbanguists hospitals is an exception. Kimbanguists have hospitals that practice "traditional medicine" in most major cities in Congo, including Uvira. They define traditional medicine – herbal medicine – in terms that much more closely align with those by which the healers in Langwick's book define it. Kimbanguist Leadership, Interview with Author, Digital Recordning, Uvira, 4/16/2010.

> (*vifungu*).[42] There we do an animal offering: we build alters (*mazabao*), we sacrifice, we pray. "Please help us with this illness…whether it is infertility, you must help them this year." Whether it is any illness of flow/fertility (*fungu*), witchcraft/*puissance* (anga), it must not get inside them.[43] There are many illnesses, like cholera, which is so frequent. If it is cholera, we say that we block cholera from entering the body this year, and it is possible. Other illnesses - bothersome spirits (bazimu) - we do as usual, and it heals: epilepsy (kifafa). And I don't know what other illnesses. If it is an illness that we get, if you come to us, we will heal you. If we can't, we pray for *puissance* (nguvu). If they (the ancestors) bring us the help of herbs, we use herbs. If they tell us, "No, this person should go to the bio-medical hospital and you should go with them," that is what we do. We[44] help each other, that is how it works. Even when we were in the camps, we helped each other. If they could not help someone, they sent them to us. If we were unable to help someone, we would tell them this person needs blood or fluids or you should test them and give them what they need, and the person heals. But over here they do not understand us and they do not respond. We do not have any hospitals. If we had one, we would work together with our knowledge and biomedical knowledge, and things would progress. But where we come from (Fizi), there's nothing. We have no one to turn to that can help us. We are alone, we have no guardian (mlezi). We lack anyone to protect us (kutuleya).[45]

There are a number of interesting things to be discussed about this particular oral text and I will come back to it in later sections, but for the purposes of the present argument, I wouldsimply like to draw attention to the perceived dearth of viable health care options in the region. This man knows that herbs of

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[42] *Vifungu* derives from the root *–fung-*, which relates to flow/closure. The verb *kufunga*, for example, means to close/block and *–fungua* is to open/unlock. It is used in Eastern Congo to refer to ceremonies – evocations – in a religious/healing context.

[43] I translate illnesses of "fungu" here as illnesses of flow/blockage, including fertility issues. On the significance of blockage and flow in the conceptualization of health in the region, see Christopher Taylor, *Milk, Honey, and Money: Changing Concepts in Rwandan Healing.* Smithsonian Institution Press, 1992. Illnesses of "anga" is translated as witchcraft/puissance because it is the root of "*bwanga*", which in Kiluba – as well as numerous other Congolese languages – means, essentially, *puissance/pouvoir/force*. For an in depth linguistic discussion of *–bwanga*, see: Avermaet 1954, 24-27.

[44] Kitawalists and biomedical providers.

[45] Kibasomba-Wakilongo. Interview with Author. Digital recording. Uvira, South Kivu, 9/4/10.

various sorts can be made into pills and those pills can be assigned dosages, but he also knows that there are no resources for that kind of standardization of healing practices in the region. So, they rely increasingly on God and their ancestors to direct them in the use of herbs in contingent ways and depend, ultimately, on the less material aspects of healing. While Steve Feierman's notion of ritual technologies is useful for highlighting the inseparability of the 'words' used to activate medicines and the materials themselves, it is mostly useful for correcting notions that the 'healing' properties of medicines are inherent to the material, implying that they can be separated. But in the process I have described above – whereby the materials of healing are substitutable in substance so long as their ritual function is retained – it would seem that while it remains true that both the material and words are significant, they also need not be static and can be understood as more or less alterable, even as they continue to imagined through the same theories of power. Moreover, different groups can and do articulate and re-imagine those theories differently, in different contexts If in Tanzania Langwick has observed the "bio-medicalization of healing" – the ways in which bio-medicine interferes increasingly with notions of traditional healing – then what seems to be at work here is rather a "spiritualization of healing" – the ways in which the spiritual/immaterial aspects of healing (Christian and otherwise) have come to dominate the material aspects, or at the very least alter the (im)material aspects significantly.[46]

[46] I borrow the term "Spiritualization of healing" from Steve Feierman, who first suggested the term to me at the Congo Meets Berlin: New Directions in Congolese History workshop at the WIKO research institute in Berlin in May of 2011.

Prayer Chambers, Ancestors, and Accessing Puissance

I have spent some time focusing on the material aspects of Kitawalist ritual technologies and the ways in which they have been re-imagined in the post-colonial period, but I wouldlike to shift the focus back to other non-material parts of the ritual technology – the words and performance that are essential to the efficacy of that technology. Much has already been revealed about this aspect of Kitawalists ritual technology in the oral texts I have presented above. Recall Kabanga Kamalondo's account of how the major material element of their technology – the powder – comes to heal people:

> We do prayers, we do evocations in our church that we were taught by our ancestors. We invest the powder with that power (*pouvoir*). When someone becomes sick, they bring them to us and we blow the powder at them like this [demonstrates]. You blow it over the front of the body and it extracts the spirit (*pepo*) in his/her body.[47]

At the center of this healing is the "prayer chamber" in which "evocations" are performed as the Kitawalists call on the spirits of their ancestors for the *puissance* to heal. That *puissance* is then embodied by the powder, which is administered in various ways. Above, it is blown at the person; in Maman Kalema's case, she bathed with it. The candles, oils, and incense of the *umpafu* are used to facilitate that process by creating the appropriate atmosphere inside the prayer chambers. All of these things come together to address the ills of the patients. Of course, there is also some variation between sects of Kitawala. The leader from EDAC, the Bembe man of Fizi cited above, indicated that at times when they want to perform a healing ceremony, they go into the mountains, where they build an alter and make

[47] Kabanga Kamalondo, 10/18/10.

a sacrifice and call down the *puissance* of their ancestors. At other times, however, EDAC healing ceremonies also revolve around prayer chambers. One woman told me the following about EDAC healing:

> It comes from our ancestors and our mountains.[48] We have a prayer room. In this room the nguvu (puissance) of our ancestors and our mountains is shown to us and we use it to heal. [49]

Here the description of EDAC healing ceremonies is almost identical to that given by Kitawalists in Katanga. The major difference in this explanation is the invocation of the mountains as a central part of the process. The notion that mountains are sacred places, locations of *puissance,* is not necessarily unique to the Bembe followers of EDAC in Fizi. It was also alluded to briefly by one of my Kitawalists interviewees in Kalemie:

> This church is a church of this country. The mountains, the trees – they hear our prayers. When god hears our prayers, he answers them through our prayers. This is why people come running to be cured by us.[50]

Yet, in EDAC, the mountains do have a particularly strong significance. In fact, the emphasis that followers of EDAC put on mountains - the sacred homes to their own, Bembe, ancestors - is part of the reason for schism between the two churches. Oral traditions among the Bembe "trace an ancient origin in the Itombwe Mountains."[51] The mountains are, thus, understood to be the homes of particularly powerful ancestral spirits and feature heavily in the songs and ceremonies within the church. Explaining the reason

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[48] It is interesting to note that as soon as the topic of healing comes up, a woman takes over the position of informant.
[49] Mama Senwa, Interview with Author. Digital Recording. Kalonja, Fizi, South Kivu, 12/12/10. Mama Senwa is an alias that I have given this woman, whose real name was not given.
[50] Anonymous, Interview with Author, Digital Recording, Kitawala Mission 10 km, 11/11/10
[51] Daniel Beibyuck 1973, 71.

for the break between the Kitawalist church in Kalemie and EDAC, Kibasomba-Wakilongo, one of the leaders of EDAC, told me the following story:

> During that time [before the split], we called ourselves Kitawala. Now, during that time when Kitawala arrived, there was a lot of uncertainty about laws, and procedures. And we said 'no'. Those people have beliefs like their own ancestors. This religion of Kitawala is Congolese, it's true. They follow the religion of our ancestors. But when we were in Kitawala, if we prayed to even one of our ancestors, just like the whites (wazungu), they would tell us you must stop that, you are praying to "shetani" (demonic spirits). They only wanted you to pray to this person: Prophet Kadima Ilunga Mkaja. They told us no, you mustn't use the name of anyone but this prophet, Ilunga. We said no, everyone has the right and the freedom to pray to his own ancestors. Because I have my own blood of my ancestors, and they had my blood. And if I am going to pray to God, I am going to do it through them. We know this. So we said no, we must sever ourselves from them. We left that group and we began this religion.[52]

Kibasomba-Wakilongo's explanation of the reason for the split is one of several explanations – not necessarily contradictory, but of different emphasis – given for the split between EDAC and Kitawala. When I interviewed the leader of the Kitawalist church in Katanga - Ilunga Wesele Joseph, the grandson of the prophet Kadima Ilunga Emile- he suggested that the reason for the split between the two churches was more political. The leaders of EDAC did not want to be subject to the leadership of the Kitawalist church in Katanga. He seemed to imply that it was not necessarily ideological, but was rather a ploy to seize more organizational power within the church. The implication was that the move was, in part, related to the paying of tithes to the central organization of the church.

[52] Kibasomba-Wakilongo. 9/4/10.

EDAC, Ilunga argued, was ideologically and theologically no different than Kitawala.[53]

Yet, the story told by the leadership of EDAC was consistently related to the issues highlighted by Kibasomba-Wakilongo above: it was unequivocally about theology and praxis. There was a theological disagreement between these two groups of Kitawalists relating to orthopraxis in prayer. It was about more than a superficial power struggle within church leadership. Indeed, one might argue that it was a *puissance* struggle – a struggle over the very nature of *puissance*: about who should be able to access *puissance*, where they should access it, and from whom that *puissance* should be accessed. Kitawalists of Katanga did not approve of the way in which Kitawalists in Fizi were calling on their ancestors. In fact, they accused Kitawalists in Fizi of praying to *shetani*. Given the fact that the emphasis on ancestral mountain spirits during prayer is one of the major differences in praxis between the two sects of Kitawala, it is likely that the insistence among Kitawalists of Fizi that they would pray to these ancestral mountain spirits (and, as discussed in Chapter One, Lumumba) above the prophet Ilunga favored by Kitawalists of Katanga was at the heart of the disagreement between the two sects. I emphasize this disagreement here, because it is also about healing. It is a disagreement about which words/ancestors should render healing practices effective; it is about which words/ancestors should constitute the other imperative non-material side of the ritual technology. It is, essentially, a disagreement about who should serve as the intermediary between Kitawalists and God in the procurement of *puissance*.

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[53] Ilunga Wesele Joseph, Interview with Author, Digital Recording, Kitawala Mission approx. 10 k outside of Kalemie, Katanga, 11/11/10.

This disagreement highlights a fundamental issue in the history of Kitawala: it has always been defined as much by its heterodoxy as by its orthodoxy, as much by its heteropraxis as by its orthopraxis. In some ways, its orthodoxy is heterodoxy, and its orthopraxis is heteropraxis. If one of the central tenets of Kitawalist belief across Congo has been the notion that prayer to the ancestors is not antithetical to belief in God – that indeed, praying to the ancestors in order to access *puissance* is one of the most important spiritual tools God gave to the Congolese people (and to all Africans) – then of course Kitawala would be inherently and historically defined by diversity, for ancestors and modes of praying to ancestors have highly localized histories. Recall the words of Kibasomba-Wakilongo, "Everyone has the right and the freedom to pray to his own ancestors. Because I have my own blood of my ancestors, and they had my blood. And if I am going to pray to God, I am going to do it through them."

It is for this reason that I have taken such care to emphasize the nature and importance of healing among Kitawalists: it offers a glimpse at some of the contradictory forces that have historically been at the heart of the church, which Wyatt MacGaffey has argued was "not a church at all but a movement loosely identified by certain symbols and myths."[54] As a result of these forces, there are and have historically been multiple Kitawalas. Indeed, it is in some ways inherently problematic to think about *the* history of Kitawala. There are, rather, *histories* of Kitawala. However, these histories are not separate – they exist in dialogical relationship to one another. That dialogue has historically shared a language – a

[54] Wyatt MacGaffey, "Religion, Class, and Social Pluralism in Zaire," In*, Canadian Journal of African Studies*, 24:2, 1990, 262.

language of 'symbols and myths', as well as a language of cultural tools from which to draw in the articulation of ritual technologies. But, as the split between Kitawala and EDAC suggests, a shared language does not necessarily imply a shared interpretation. When that shared language emphasizes 'tradition' and 'ancestral practices' in broad terms on the ideological level, it is not surprising that it also facilitates debate and disagreement at the level of praxis.

In Section Two of this dissertation, I will return to this notion that there is tension within Kitawalist orthodoxy and praxis – a tension that is most apparent within the articulation of ritual technologies - and ask how it might help us to better understand the process by which Kitawala spread across Congo in the colonial era. But before returning to the colonial history of Kitawala in section two, I must first address the remaining questions raised by Maman Kalema's story, for they are equally important to consider in the process of rethinking the colonial history of Kitawala: Who are Kitawalist healers and what are the gender dynamics of Kitawalist healing? And, what is the therapeutic niche they have come to occupy? That is, what is it that they are curing?

Wamama in the Prayer Chambers: The Gender Dynamics of Kitawalist Healing

To those familiar with scholarship on charismatic churches in Africa, it will come as little surprise to learn that the bulk of healing within the Kitawalist church is done by women. Many scholars of religion and healing in Africa have noted the

prevalence of women in such roles, both in the past and present.[55] Cynthia Hoeler-Fatton writes that though women rarely occupy official leadership positions in the administrative hierarchies of these churches, they often command "ceremonial leadership," or "leadership entailing the use of mystical talents such as healing and mediumship during specified and limited occasions authorized by men."[56] Hoeler-Fatton notes that ceremonial leadership frequently includes work as midwives, healers and guardians who are "responsible for the spiritual protection of church members, not only during physical ordeals such as illness and childbirth but also during spiritually dangerous times such as infancy, death, or occasions when the soul of a person in trance leaves her or his body."[57] Moreover, women who do not hold such central roles as healers, midwives, and guardians "exert a great deal of influence over the shape and character of people's collective worship" by their singing, which creates "the atmosphere conducive to trancing." They are also frequently the "primary bearers of prophesies and heavenly messages."[58]

Evidence that women occupy 'ceremonial leadership' roles among Kitawalists is abundant. In the narrative that opens this chapter, Maman Kalema indicated as much. She said that women were the guardians of the secrets of

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[55] See, for example, Iris Berger 1981; Iris Berger, "Rebels or Status Seekers: Women as Spirit Mediums in East Africa" In Women in Africa: Studies in Economic and Social Change, ed. N. Hafkin and E. Bay. Palo Alto: Stanford University Press, 1976; Marie-Claude Dupré, "Les femmes mukisi des Téké Tsaayi rituel de possession et culte anti-sorcier (République Populaire du Congo)." Journal de la société des africanistes 44, no. 1 (1974); Phyllis M. Martin, *Catholic Women of Congo-Brazzaville: Mothers and Sisters in Troubled Times,* Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2009, 18-41.
[56] Cynthia Hoeler-Fatton, *Women of Spirit and Fire*. Oxford University Press, 1996, 99. Hoeler-Fatton draws the term "ceremonial leadership" from Benetta Jules-Rosette1979, 127.
[57] Hoeler-Fatton 1996, 100.
[58] Hoeler-Fatton 1996, 101

Kitawala, of their *puissance*, and for that reason, she insisted that we speak in a group composed entirely of women. She assumed that I knew this and that this was the reason that I, as a woman, had come to ask her about Kitawalist healing practices. And Maman Kalema was not the only one to assume that I had knowledge of the *puissance* of women. When I asked the leaders of EDAC about the role of women in the church, they made the same assumption. Observe the following conversation, which took place in meeting with a group of elders in the church of EDAC in the village of Kalonja, in Fizi:

> Me: Is it mostly women or men who do the healing?
>
> Mama Amisa: Men and women. We help each other. (*Awkward laughter at the question, coy tone in voice*.)
>
> Me: Because I've heard that most often it is women.
>
> (*Lots of laughter*.)
>
> Kibasomba-Wakilongo: Now you know there are difficult things, heavy things. There is milk and there is food. Food is for adults, those with *nguvu*.[59]
>
> Mama Amisa: And who carries the milk and makes the food? Most often it is the mamas.
>
> Me: Why is it the mamas?
>
> (*More laughter.)*
>
> Mama Amisa: It is, of course, the mamas who have all of the *nguvu*. You know this.

[59] "Kuna ya maziwa na chakula. Chakula ni kwa watu, wale wa nguvu." The implication here is there are things that helpers can do – ie. men – but that most of the ceremonial weight is carried by those with the *nguvu*: women.

> Kibasomba-Wakilongo: You know that if we look at the history of prophecy, the mamas have 80% of the *nguvu* of the heavens. The men have just 20%. You don't know that all *nguvu* is women?
>
> Mama Amisa: It is the mamas who give birth. Everything is the mamas. The babas (men) are just helpers.
>
> Kibasomba-Wakilongo: We don't have anything. It is the women.
>
> Mzee Aliko: It is the mamas who heal/take care (kutunza).
>
> Kibasomba-Wakilongo: Yes, that is how it is Mama Nicole. Is it not the same where you come from?[60]

Among a group of Kitawalists in a rural Kitawala mission 75km southwest of Kalemie, my questions evoked a similar reaction with a somewhat different explanation:

> Me: Is it mainly women who do this prayer healing?
>
> Sindano: (*Laughter.)* Yes. You know this.
>
> Me: Why women?
>
> Sindano: Because it was women who create original sin. So now they must work as the hand of God. We (men) are simply companions. [61]

In both of these exchanges, it is important to understand the role of laughter and assumption in the conversation. Like with Maman Kalema, it was assumed that I already knew about the *puissance* of women. In asking about it, I was thought to be performing a form of ignorance in order to coax the interviewees into speaking directly about things that are generally discussed through circumlocution:

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[60] Elders of EDAC, Interview with Author, Digital Voice Recording. Kalonja, South Kivu, 12/12/10. Mama Amisa and Mzee Aliko are pseudonyms.
[61] Shindano Masubi Aiubu, Interview with Author, Digital Recording. Kitawala Mission 75km (from Kalemie), Katanga, 11/10/10.

specifically, the *puissance* of women. This performance served as a source of amusement and elicited laughter of the sort one might share over an inside joke. I present it here in this somewhat ethnographic form because I think that the there are moments in the process of oral research when contextualization is important not only because it highlights the communicative nature of oral text production, but because it can reveal something beyond the language of the text. Laughter here reveals something about what is assumed to be common knowledge and practice among women and this, in turn, suggests that these assumptions are rooted in some historical depth.[62] After all, common sense is only common in the sense that it is historically and culturally constructed.

In other conversations, the historical depth of women's presence as "ceremonial leaders" among Kitawalists was addressed more explicitly. In conversation about the role of women in the Kitawalist church in Kalemie, I was told the following:

> Mama Kadima: Our work is to pray. We pray for the world first. The work inside the prayer chambers is the work of women, wamama. That's who is involved: we heal, we pray. That's our work.
>
> Me: Are there illnesses that women heal more and illnesses that men heal more? For example, do women more often heal maladies related to fertility?
>
> Mama Kadima: Yes.
>
> Me: And it is just women inside the prayer chamber?
>
> Mama Kadima: yes.
>
> Me: And are there illnesses that men heal?

[62] I root my approach here in Johannes Fabian's ideas about commentary and close (con)textual analysis as an important genre in the field of ethnography. Fabian 2008.

> Mama Kadima: It is generally women who heal.
>
> Me: Is there other work that women generally do?
>
> Mama Kadima: Just to pray.
>
> Me: Was it like this in the past?
>
> Mama Kadima: Yes. It was the work of wamama.
>
> Wamidi: During the time when the men were being arrested, the mamas were praying for them, that they would succeed.
>
> Kabanga Kamalondo: You recall that during the time of Jesus, it was the mamas who really knew his trials.[63]

Even more explicit was Kabanga Kamalondo's discussion of the role of women in the Kitawalist church during the era when Belgians were arresting Kitawalists:

> Those who were arrested were mostly men, because they were the ones who were in conflict with the Belgians. But the mamas, they were praying in the prayer chambers. When someone was arrested, the mamas came together to pray that they would find success. So they created that "*pouvoir*" within the prayer chambers. They were doing very powerful evocations (bya kifungo kali). They weren't wearing clothes, they were just praying in the prayer chambers. They were doing evocations so that we would defeat the Belgians. A man would go into the chamber, we would get the power to be victorious (*ushindi*) and we would go. When the Belgians came and saw the evocations, they thought, "We need to capture those people." The Belgians then had an evocation so that they would recognize us. Even as we were doing our evocations, so that they couldn't recognize us, they were recognizing us and arresting us. Because they had an evocation in order to recognize. And it was true, they were arresting us everywhere. And we thought why are they arresting us? They had this one "lamba", and they saw them with it. And they were just arresting us. Since the beginning women were in the church, until today. When the men were being slaughtered in the work camps at COLEGRE, they were there doing evocations. When the men were in Kisangani, the women did evocations and that guy[64] went into an evocation.[65]

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[63] Kitawala Church elders, Interview with Author, Digital Recording. Kalemie, DRC 10/19/2010.

[64] The referent here is unclear, though it is possible he is talking about Lumumba, given the context of the interview.

[65] Kiawala, Kalemie, 10/19/2010

Kabanga makes it clear that during the colonial period, when men were being arrested, imprisoned, and relegated to labor camps for their involvement with Kitawala, women, as the evokers and arbiters of *puissance*, were working outside of the gaze of colonial administrators to give men the ability to elude and ultimately defeat the Belgians. Building off of James C. Scott's ideas of "hidden transcripts" – "discourse that takes place offstage, beyond direct observation by powerholders" – I wouldlike to suggest that Kabanga's account of the role of women in the history of the Kitawalist church calls for attention also to what I would call "invisible transcripts."[66] In this articulation, invisibility works at multiple levels. The transcripts are invisible in the sense that they are transcripts of *puissance* – a form of power that is material only in the moments in which has been embodied, but whose presumed existence within a larger economy of power has continually shaped the way that people behave. They are also invisible in the sense their subject cannot be empirically proven to exist, now or in the past: even if accounts of women in prayer chambers existed in the archive, there is no way to prove that they were, in fact, providing men with the power to survive relegation to detention camps and to resist the Belgians. Such forms of aid are, in their very essence, invisible. Together, these two forms of invisibility work to cloud our ability as historians to see the importance of women as ceremonial authorities within the Kitawalist church historically, rendering them – and the forms of power they have wielded – invisible.

The oral accounts highlighted in this section certainly should not be read as direct evidence that women's roles as ceremonial authorities – which seem

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[66] James C. Scott, *Domination and Arts of Resistance: Hidden Transcripts.* New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1990, 2.

apparent today – were identical in the past. Nor can a few suggestions that women, praying in the prayer chambers, were the arbiters of *puissance* that supported men in their public altercations with the colonial government prove that it was so. However, what these oral accounts can and must do is push historians to look for the evidence of such invisible transcripts in the archive. Such evidence is inevitably fragmentary and difficult to find. Nonetheless, it can create what Luise White has called a "hologram" image of the past that, "when seen through a single, consistent illumination" can become "vivid and three-dimensional."[67] Oral evidence such as that presented here can and should serve as that illumination as, in Section Two, I turn back to the colonial history of Kitawala. But, before I do so, there is one final question that emerges out of Maman Kalema's account that must be addressed if we are to have a clear understanding of Kitawalist healing: what was the disease?

What was the Disease? Kitawalist Healing in the Therapeutic Complex

When Gwyn Prins wrote his survey of the present state of health and healing in African studies in 1989, one of the central questions he posed was: "But what was the disease?"[68] He warned against treating disease - and its causes and cures – as a universally understood categories and argued that it could no longer be assumed that health and healing practices in Africa could be understood independent of the political and economic contexts in which they existed. Nor, he insisted, could the African past or present be understood without serious

[67] Luise White 2000, 273.
[68] Gwyn Prins 1989, 165.

engagement with the multiple and shifting ways in which Africans have sought to maintain and restore healthy communities. Thus far, in this chapter I have written a great deal about Kitawalists healing practices – about the ritual technologies, about who is doing the healing, and about the notions of tradition and power – *puissance* – that animate them. But I have spent very little time interrogating the nature of the maladies that Kitawalist healers most frequently address. If we are to understand the epistemological space that Kitawalist healers occupy in the healing complex of Eastern Congo, that is the question to which we must now turn.

In order to answer this question, I begin once more with Maman Kalema. In the opening narrative, Maman Kalema reveals that she was initially drawn to Kitawala because of an illness of fertility: she had carried a fetus for seven years without bearing a child. Through a biomedical lens, it is difficult to imagine what this illness might be. Maman Kalema did not provide details about the illness beyond noting the extended presence of the fetus in her womb. It is possible, for example, that she may have suffered hyperprolactinemia, an endocrine problem that causes the production of excess prolactin in the pituitary gland, causing lactation and lack of menses. This would have given the impression of prolonged pregnancy, though it is difficult to know how she would have healed without biomedical intervention. Uterine fibroids, if large enough, can also make a woman appear pregnant.[69] Or she may have suffered something similar to the psychiactric condition pseudopregnancy, in which the signs of pregnancy are psychologically induced. However, reading African disease categories that do not map directly on

[69] Personal communication with Dr. Sara Champlin, MD, of Health Partners, Bloomington MN, 8/21/2012.

to biomedical disease categories through the language of psychology has a very sensitive imperial history. Westerners have a long history of deeming certain maladies – particularly those attributed to witchcraft – as psychologically induced, challenging the rationality of African etiological categories.[70]

Ultimately, none of these biomedical categories map particularly well onto Maman Kalema's affliction. However, if we think back to the disease categories offered by the leader of EDAC in Fizi, we can begin to see how Kitawalists might have categorized her disease. Kibasomba-Wakilongo stated that Kitawalist healers could cure several major categories of illness: "illness of flow/fertility (*fungu*)," illnesses of "witchcraft/*puissance* (anga)," illnesses such as cholera (those identified by John Janzen as "illnesses of God"), and illnesses of spirits (what Stacey Langwick calls "illnesses of mashetani").[71] These categories are not necessarily mutually exclusive, but can overlap. Illnesses of flow, for example, can be related to witchcraft or *mashetani*. It is in fact the category of 'illnesses of flow' that is most useful for thinking about Maman Kalema's affliction. Christopher Taylor has studied significance of blockage and flow in the conceptualization of health in Rwanda specifically, but the symbolic link between flow and health is common in much of Central Africa, including in Fizi.[72] Taylor notes that proper flow - of milk, of menses, of water (ie. rain) - in the region is closely related to notions of health, wealth, and fertility. Conversely, excessive flow or blockage are symbolically linked with malady, infertility, and death.

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[70] See, for example: Langwick 2011; Vaughan 1991.
[71] Kibasomba-Wakilongo, 9/4/10; John M. Janzen 1982; Langwick 2011, 157.
[72] Taylor 1992. See also W. de Mahieu, *Qui a Obstrue la Cascade.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985.

Maman Kalema's seven year pregnancy, though it has no obvious biomedical explanation, fits well into this category of illnesses of flow that Kibasomba-Wakilongo identifies as one of the diseases Kitawalist healers regularly address. One might also fit cholera into this category, for it is a disease of excessive flow. Kibasomba-Wakilongo says that, 'If it is cholera, we say block cholera from entering the body this year, and it is possible."[73] The healers, thus, create blockage in order to avert excessive flow.

Maman Kalema was hardly the only person to be drawn to Kitawalist healing to address of fertility issues. Kilanga Kamikunga, who was himself healed of a 'difficult pain in his head' reported:

> My wife had a problem with her female parts. She couldn't even walk. Again, the mamas took her into the prayer room. In the middle of the night, the illness peaked. So I saw that this was the true path. And through the teachings of the bible, of history, I saw that this was the religion of me, a black person, and I joined.[74]

Another woman came to Kitawala with a different problem related to reproduction and familial health, but more directly tied to the presence of malevolent spirits than excessive flow: child mortality. She said:

> I was attracted because I was having problems with child mortality. I was always burying. One day I was with my husband and my little baby and an elder said we should go to that Church over in Kaseka, that church of Kitawala. We were born Muslims. We asked ourselves: Kitawala, those people who wear white? But that child was infected. We said let's just go. We went and we thought, this religion is a problem. Is this a religion? But we were having such problems with fertility (tulifungishana sana). We search our souls. And God helped us and we had faith we'd give birth to a child, and God answered us. They told us just come here and be healed by these mamas and this problem of yours will end here. And our baby did not die, by the love of God, it was true. We went in there with those elders

[73] Kibasomba-Wakilongo, 9/4/10.
[74] Kilanga Kamikunga, Interview with Author, Digital Recording, Kalemie 10/19/2010.

> and the mamas began to pray, and God answered. And I thought, this is my life. So now I am here today and until I die. It is the life of my children. I had such troubles. Every year I was burying a child. But since I have converted to this religion, I thank God. It was life, wellness that brought me to this church. It is a church of wellness, of life.[75]

The woman's account is striking in its frank discussion of the horrific realities child mortality that plague eastern Congo today.[76] But it is also an account that vividly illustrates how people imagine Kitawala in the therapeutic economy. For many, the choice to turn to Kitawalists is not easy, as there are a myriad of rumors that circulate about "those people who wear white." Some turn to them when other therapeutic options do not work or are not accessible. Others turn to them only after the receive a vision from an ancestor, a dream. A final example will help to elucidate this point.

In an account of her own healing powers, Maman Kalema tells a story of a different kind of malady for which people turn to Kitawalists for healing, an illness of misfortune, caused by harmful *puissance*:

> One day I was called to Bujumbura by my brother and his wife who are very religious. They had called me there because they said that the father of our grandfather (babu) had used his *puissance* to come to them in their sleep. Grandfather said that he saw that they had no luck with their business and had fallen into poverty and that their children were suffering. He told them that they must come to get me in Congo and I must do my prayer healing. They came to retrieve me and we went to buy the necessary items: the things of our ancestors, the ones they liked to use. And then we ask the ancestors, ("*wale wazee wa mbele"*) to guide us. At noon, we went into the prayer chamber and I took the herbs. We were at the parcel of our

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[75] Anonymous, Interview with Author, Digital Recording, Kitawala, Kalemie, 10/19/2010. The woman did not give a name in the interview.

[76] The World Bank reports that in 2011 infant mortality rates in Congo were at 174/1000. By regional comparison, the infant mortality rate in Tanzania was 68, Uganda was 90. World Bank, "Mortality Rate, under 5 (per 1000 Births)", http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SH.DYN.MORT Accessed 6/11/13.

> great grandfather. I began to pray. I prayed and I prayed in order to get (kukamata) the *puissance,* to call down the spirits that had been plaguing them (kuwapiga wale watu). So they made a sacrifice and it was like a miracle (vitu vya ajabu), everything they touched succeeded, whether in Bujumbura or Nairobi.[77]

Maman Kalema's brother and family were plagued by malevolent spirits. It is unclear why – though it seems as if the malevolent spirits had been set on them by others. It was only through Maman Kalema's evocation of these spirits and their appeasement with sacrifice that Maman Kalema's brother and his family were able to be 'healed' and to procure the *puissance* to be successful.

The incident is interesting, not only because it is prime example of the point articulated above – the women work as spirit mediums within the Kitawalist church – but also because it highlights an interesting therapeutic specialty of Kitawalists. As I highlighted in the previous chapter, there are numerous rumors about Kitawalists. Some of those rumors revolve around their capacity to help people succeed – whether in love or business. On more than one occasion, the first question that I got after I told non-Kitawalists about my research was whether I was hoping to "find gold." Indeed, in South Kivu, where gold mining is a major industry, Kitawalists are rumored to be able to give people the *puissance* to mine successfully. These rumors are interesting not only because they shed light onto the economy of *puissance* in contemporary Congo, but because they bring texture to colonial accounts – discussed in Chapter Five – of people who claim that they joined Kitawala because it had a "powerful nkisi" and could make them attractive

[77] Maman Kalema, 4/21/2010.

to the opposite sex.[78] But these stories also highlight the moral ambiguity of Kitawalist healing, which is frequently regarded with suspicion. Indeed, on one occasion the story of Kitawalist's ability to empower people to find gold was accompanied by a cautionary tale. There was young man who did just that, I was told, and found much gold, only to end up dead in the mines. This was the danger, I was told, of working with *mashetani.*[79] Kitawalists are known to work with spirits – *wazimu, mashetani* – and this reputation makes them both appealing for those who are in need of their *puissance* and terrifying for those who question the morality of that *puissance*.

Thus, the answer to the question of 'what was the disease' is varied for each of these cases. Some of them are 'diseases of God' such as cholera. Others are diseases of flow. Still others are 'diseases of mashetatani' – child mortality, or poor luck. These diseases do not fit neatly into biomedical categories, as some seem implausible – 7 year pregnancy - and some seem less like diseases than general forms of misfortune created by the socioeconomic realities of contemporary Eastern Congo. But neither does Kitawala fit neatly into 'healing' categories of biomedical, traditional, or Christian.

Conclusion

Maman Kalema is but one Kitawalist woman with a singular story. But when her story is read in conjunction with those of the myriad of other Kitawalist

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[78] AA/GG 73.939, 1947.

[79] This story come from a chance conversation with a young man named Amisi in Kalemie. As the conversation was informal, I do not have his full name, nor was it recorded. The date was 11/5/10. Field notes.

healers and healed featured in this chapter, together they reveal a vivid picture not only of the nature and significance of healing within Kitawalists communities, but also of the nature and significance of Kitawalist healing in the broader therapeutic economy. Their stories push scholars to think about how and why notions of the material and immaterial may have shifted in the post-colonial context. But at the same time they challenge us to think beyond the post-colonial and, without resorting to characterizations of 'tradition' as static, look for ways in which Kitawalist healers today draw upon theories of power that are at once deeply rooted and contextually negotiated. Kitawalist engage in a broader discourse of traditionality in which different actors make varied claims to 'tradition'. Some, such as the healers featured in the work of Langwick, increasingly recognize themselves in, while continuing to distinguish themselves from, the universalizing discourse of biomedicine. Others, like the Kitawalists feature in this chapter, are less interested in recognizing their healing practices in biomedicine than they are in rooting them in 'tradition', but they do so via the universalizing discourse of Christianity.

Attention to Kitawalist healing practices in the post-colonial, thus, raises interesting questions about the process by which Kitawala have wielded *puissance* for purposes that are neither 'religious' nor 'political'. It also paves the way to more readily recognizing the significance of healing – and the theories of power it engages – in colonial history of Kitawala. In particular, this account of post-colonial Kitawalist healing raises vital questions about the gendered nature of power within Kitawalist communities today, allowing us to draw out the 'invisible

transcripts' of the important roles that women might have played in Kitawalist history in the past. It is toward these questions that this study now turns in Section Two.

Section Two

Chapter Three

Locating Genesis: On Narrating the Origins of Kitawala

The beliefs of EDAC [Kitawala] are traditional (*ya asili*). It was here. It began with our ancestors.
- Kibasomba-Wakilongo, Uvira, South Kivu, 2010[1]

In short, we can say that EDAC [Kitawala] began long ago. Since the time of the Belgians we have been with this church. The advocate of this church (*mtetezi*) was Mzee Lumumba. During that time, people asked him whether he had a religion. He said he had the religion of this country (*dini ya nchi*). When they began the struggle to send the Belgians back to their country, many of them said, "It looks like this guy wants to rule himself (*kujitawala binafsi*)."
- Ese Ebake, Mboko, South Kivu, 2010[2]

Arabs were the first to bring the words of God with Islam. Then they made us slaves. After that, the Europeans came. They came to throw out the Arabs. Then they enslaved us themselves. Then Lobati Ngoma came [with Kitawala] and he told us that we were being enslaved.
- Shindano Masubi Ayubu, Mission Kitawaliste de 75 km (from Kalemie), Katanga, 2010

Born in America in 1879, Watch Tower began to grow around 1918, gaining momentum in 1922 as their message was diffused around the world by radiobroadcast. In this way it came to South Africa, where its propaganda was seized on by those agents who would bring it to the Belgian Congo. The movement gained ground in Northern Rhodesia and provoked the Mwana Lesa affaire in 1925. In October of 1927, the first converts were discovered in Elizabethville.
- R. Philippart, "Contributions a l'etude du Kitawala," 1954[3]

Articulated in a foreign symbolic code, that of American Watch Tower, and largely inspired by the apocalypse, Kitawala constituted a powerful symbolic tool that played a considerable role in Zaire during the abrupt passage from lineage-based economic and social organization to capitalist forms of work force organization, and of the structuring and use of space as mining camps.
- Mwene Batende, *Mouvements Messianiques et Protestation Sociale*, 1982

How Do We Begin?

In the introduction to his influential study of power and the production of history, Michel-Rolph Trouillot interrogates the role of narrative in the writing of history. Breaking down the distinctions between 'positivist' approaches to history that emphasize

[1] Kibasomba-Wakilongo, 9/4/2010
[2] Ese Ebake, Interview with Author, Digital Recording, Mboko, South Kivu, 6/17/10.
[3] R. Philippart, "Contributions a l'etude du Kitawala," 1954. AA/AI: 4737.

process and materiality and 'constructivist' approaches to history that emphasize the importance of power in the production of knowledge about historical process, Trouillot argues that while the former "hides tropes of power behind a naïve epistemology," the latter "denies the autonomy of the sociohistorical process."[4] He suggests, instead, that historians must operate from a theory of the historical narrative that acknowledges "both the distinction and the overlap between process and narrative."[5] Moreover, such a theory must account for the reality that in the space where process and narrative overlap, there are power dynamics at play that often dictate which narratives are received as 'truth' and which narratives are received as 'fiction.'

In Section One of this dissertation, I sought to interrogate that ambiguous space and the power dynamics that have defined it, both today and in the past. In Chapter one, I looked for truth in untrue stories about Lumumba, suggesting that by focusing only on ways in which claiming Lumumba as prophet constitutes 'real' political discourse and action, we obscure a broader conversation Kitawalists are having about the nature of power – *puissance* – and how, from whom, and to what ends it can and should be accessed. Then, in Chapter Two, I looked for truth in 'untrue' claims that Kitawalists practice "traditional healing" (in which mass-produced talcum powder can be understood as herbal medicine), arguing that histories that interrogate "traditionality" must take account of the theories of power that have historically defined shifting and divergent notions of 'tradition,' for ignoring those theories obscures our ability to see how they shape our understanding of historical process and who is integral to it. I have, moreover,

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[4] Michel-Rolph Trouillot, *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History*. Boston: Beacon Press,1995, 5.
[5] Trouillot 1995, 22.

argued that we must not let our understanding of process in Kitawalist history be untethered from a discussion of the related power-laden processes that have produced our knowledge – and our existing narratives - about that history.

I begin Section Two by building on these ideas and asking how, when and where scholars can look (and in past have looked) for the origins of Kitawala. For this too is a question of power in the production of history– of who has previously had the power to narrate Kitawalist history (and to be heard), of what their motivations have been, of how those motives have shaped their interpretation of Kitawalist history, and of where they have found their sources. Trouillot asks, "At what point do we set the beginning of the past to be retrieved? How do we decide…which events to include and which to exclude?"[6] These are the questions at the center of this chapter. I ask them not because I think that any historical event or process has a single origin, but because, even the most nuanced analyses inevitably emphasize some origins over others. And, as Steve Feierman points out in an article about 'invisible histories' of health and healing in Africa, in the writing of African histories (and particularly colonial histories) scholars have long tended to privilege analyses of African actions that are rooted in Europe-centered macronarratives.[7] Meanwhile, 'Africa-based historical narratives' are often truncated, rendered invisible because they do not fit neatly into the 'truth regimes' of historical causality that tend to guide academic historical narratives.[8]

That this study has been, up to this point, an attempt addressing this issue by constructing such an Africa-based narrative of Kitawalist origins should be clear. Indeed,

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[6] Trouillot 1995.
[7] Steve Feierman, 1999.
[8] On 'Africa-based historical narratives' and 'truth regimes', see: Neil Kodesh, 2010, 23, 193.

the argument is inherent to the very organization of the study. By beginning with the post-colonial history of Kitawala and interrogating the theories of power – *puissance* - that animate contemporary Kitawalist thought and practice related to the Prophet Lumumba and prayer chambers, I am implicitly making two related arguments.

First, I am arguing that histories of Kitawala cannot and should not continue to rely solely on the colonial archive, which, though vibrant with the echoes of Kitawalist voices, is nonetheless a product of the power dynamics that produced it, reflecting the fears and concerns of the colonial government far more vividly than those of Kitawalists themselves. For these reasons, studies of Kitawala that have relied exclusively on the archive have continually failed to interrogate, beyond the surface level, its relevance to those who were attracted to it. We can see in the archive that Kitawalists were concerned with witchcraft and that it spread most rapidly in regions where the colonial economy had precipitated profound changes in the economic, political, and social order. This has led scholars such as John Higginson to suggest that in the face of such growing hardships, "African peasants saw the handiwork of witches everywhere" and that from their vantage point "eradicating witchcraft could be done more readily than managing capricious government officials, unscrupulous landlords, and bad weather."[9]

The implicit assumption here is that joining a religious movement like Kitawala was, in essence, easier than organizing 'real' political opposition to the colonial government and that its significance should be measured by its capacity for 'this-worldly' political action and/or success and the extent to which it addressed 'real' material inequalities. The problem with such an interpretation is that it reflects a tendency –

[9] John Higginson 1992, 61.

inherent in the archive itself and the assumptions of the colonial administrators who produced it – to assume a disconnect between, on the one hand, 'this-worldly'/'real' inequalities and imbalances and 'this-worldly'/'real' political solutions and, on the other hand 'other-worldly'/'invisible' inequalities and imbalances and 'other-worldly'/'invisible' solutions.[10] It dichotomizes 'real' power and the 'invisible' power in a manner that does not reflect the long intellectual history of *puissance* in central Africa, minimizing the significance of Kitawalist pursuits and imposing a theory of historical process that would not necessarily have been shared by Kitawalists themselves. In beginning at the end, with the post-colonial history of Kitawala based largely on oral accounts given by Kitawalists, I am explicitly searching for a theory of historical process that shifts the power to frame narrative back towards Kitawalists themselves.

The second, related argument I am implicitly making by beginning with Kitawala in the post-colonial context is that we should consider the narrative consequences of beginning the history of Kitawala with the introduction of Watchtower to Africa, or its initial formation in the United States. Watchtower's history in Africa is important, and in this chapter I explore its significance as one of several important nodes of origin that must be considered in narrating the history of Kitawala in the Congo. But it is neither the only nor necessarily the most important node of origin. That it is consistently narrated as such in histories of Kitawala exposes an inherent assumption about the direction from which ideas flowed in the colonial space. Higginson argues that one of the reasons that Watchtower was so successful in its early years in Nyasaland was because one of its

[10] The extent to which colonial authorities drew such lines is a subject that I will expand upon in Chapter Five when I look at the 'reeducation' initiatives imagined by the colonial government that were meant to 'depoliticize' Kitawala, leaving just its 'religious' aspects.

earliest missionaries in Africa, a American named Joseph Booth, had shown the earliest leaders of the African Watch Tower movement –Eliot Kamwana, Hanoc Sindano, Shinkala – that there was "justification for their disputes [with missions/the colonial state]…within the broad universe of Christian theology."[11] He argues, furthermore, that Watchtower became a politically potent religious movement because it emphasized "the idea of the unmitigated equality of peoples in Christ" and claimed that "all secular governments were creations of Satan."[12] It is undoubtedly true that these ideas were central and enduring parts of Kitawalist doctrine. Yet, when we write about the introduction of varied forms of Christianity to Africa we must be careful not to imply that such 'progressive' interpretations of Christian doctrine somehow pointed out inequalities hitherto unrealized or unarticulated, as if indigenous theories of power had no capacity to identify and critique the illegitimate exercise of power. Christianity in general, and Watchtower specifically, did not offer a new language through which to critique legitimacy so much as it bolstered and expanded an existing conversation, adding new evidence to prove an existing point: that those who 'ate' power (and its material benefits) to the detriment of the larger community were not legitimate leaders.

Nodes of Origin

Undoubtedly, the best histories weave together different nodes of origin such that readers might see, in a nuanced light, the confluence of diverse social, political, economic, and ideological influences that coalesce to create a given historical moment. Nonetheless, all narrators must choose a starting point and inevitably certain influences,

[11] Higginson 1992, 60
[12] Higginson 1992, 73

certain nodes of origin, are emphasized over others and such narrative choices have consequences. Above, I have already suggested what some of the consequences might be in emphasizing Watchtower as the origin of choice. As this chapter moves forward, I will elaborate on that argument, even as I highlight Watchtower's significance. But I will also look for other nodes of origin, highlighting their potential significance and the challenges they present. In essence, I will do the opposite of the model history I have just described: I will unweave the nodes of origin for the purpose of exposing how different macronarratives can shape the history of Kitawala. But I will do so with the purpose of exposing what the consequences of such narrative choices might be.

As the quotes that opened this chapter demonstrate, there are several different ways one might narrate the beginnings of Kitawala in the Congo. In the first quote, from Kibasomba-Wakilongo, the implication is clear: Kitawala began with the ancestors, with tradition. Here, the claim is that the history of Kitawala began in Congo and predates the colonial era. In the second quote, from Ese Ebake, Kitawala began with Lumumba - with Lumumba's push for the Congolese people *kujitawala*, to rule themselves. Here the implication is that Kitawala *really* began when Lumumba elevated the Kitawalists' rebuke of Belgian legitimacy to the (inter)national stage, embodying the power of the Congolese people to be their own authorities. In the third quote, from Shindano Masubi Ayubu, Kitawala began when one of its earliest prophets, Lobati Ngoma, brought it from Zambia, but its history only makes sense in light of the histories of Swahili-Arab and Belgian occupations. Here, the history begins with the enslavement of the Congolese people, who eventually found in Kitawala the promise of a *puissance* strong enough to throw off the colonial yoke. In the fourth quote, from R. Philippart, a colonial magistrate

in Stanleyville (Kisangani) writing in the 1950s, Kitawala began with the formation of Watchtower in the United States in 1879. The most conventional of the narratives, it ties the potency of Kitawala to the politically dissident ideas of Watchtower, tracing its origins outside of Congo and Africa. And in the final quote, from Mwene-Batende, the influence of Kitawala began with the rise of the colonial capitalist system and the decline of lineage-based political and social organization. Here, the story of Kitawala began with colonial exploitation and the breakdown of the existing social order, which left an ideological vacuum into which Kitawala could be inserted.

Taken together, the quotes illustrate what I argue constitute three different, though overlapping, approaches to narrating the origins of Kitawala. The first, which I would call the "Watchtower" narrative model, is by far the most common. This approach inevitably begins with the founding of Watchtower in America, and generally traces how Watchtower moved, from person to person, up through the Copper Belt into Congo, transforming gradually as it came under the influence of divergent leaders, in different contexts. This approach is useful, and it tends to offer a very clear narrative of the spread of a potent idea – the illegitimacy of this-worldly authority - into the colonial context, often with the aid of colonial authorities, whose very attempts at repression and containment almost invariably had the opposite effect.[13] Many early studies of Kitawala emphasize this narrative, particularly those commissioned by the colonial government including the study by Philippart cited above. But it is also the most frequent 'shorthand'

[13] Both Higginson 1992 and Fields 1985 use this approach to some extent, though each with their own nuance.

explanation of Kitawalist history in studies that are not immediately concerned with the subject.[14]

The second approach is what I would call the "materialist" narrative model and it tends to emphasize the economic conditions that facilitated the spread of Kitawala. This narrative is intimately connected to the "Watchtower" narrative, as they both tend to highlight the role of migratory labor and mining camp conditions in the spread of Kitawala. I separate the two, however, because the 'materialist' approach tends to emphasize the difficult economic conditions in Central Africa in the latter half of the 19th century and the first decades of the 20th century, beginning the story not with Watchtower's arrival to Africa and the intellectual history of its transfer from leader to leader, but with the rapid integration of the region into the colonial capitalist system. Mwene-Batende, for example, highlights the 'dual' colonization of Eastern Congo – first by the Swahili-Arab traders and then by the Belgians – as the root of the social upheaval in the Masisi-Lubutu region in 1944. He argues that the rapid integration of the region into the colonial economy radically altered material conditions in the region and facilitated the collapse of local lineage-based systems of authority, leaving room for the spread of Kitawala as an alternate organizational model.[15] If we look back to the words of Shindano Masubi Ayubu above, we can see that he, too, is talking about the oppressive extractive conditions - the "slavery" – of Arab and Belgian occupations, though, as I will discuss below, he articulates it differently than Mwene-Batende.

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[14] For examples of how this narrative serves as shorthand, see: Schatzberg 1988; Comhaire, Jean, "Sociétiés Secrètes et Movements Prophétiques au Congo Belge." In *African: Journal of the International African Institute*, (25:1) Jan 1955, 54-59; Georges Nzongole-Ntalaja, 2002, 50.

[15] Mwene-Batende 1982. Also, Higginson 1992.

The third approach to narrating Kitawalist history is what I would call the "tradition" narrative. In this model, Kitawala finds its roots in tradition, *asili*. It is the "religion of the blacks" and it began with *bankambo* – the ancestors.[16] As discussion of Kitawalist healing practices in Chapter 2 has already revealed, this is perhaps the most complicated of the narratives, for both theoretical and methodological reasons. One cannot trace the history of tradition in a neat archival trail of baptisms, arrests, and labor policies. In many ways, it requires a view of tradition that is more 'constructivist' than 'positivist'. It requires interrogation of the very nature of tradition: how do we define the contours of tradition? Is it material? Ideological? Embodied in a set of practices? How different can a movement/practice/discourse look before it is no longer traditional? Are the ways that people make, deny and dispute claims to tradition themselves part of the tradition? Can a tradition die? Of course, in Section One, I have already endeavored to construct a 'tradition' narrative in part, and I will continue to do so in Section Two, as well, for it is arguably the narrative that remains the least interrogated, the least understood, in the history of Kitawala. Indeed, thinking through how to construct a "tradition" narrative of Kitawalist history - a narrative that is deeply rooted in the region's past - is central to the discussion of both the 1944 uprising presented in Chapter Four and the 'moral projects' of Kitawalists in the late colonial era discussed in Chapter Five.

In this chapter, however, my project is different. If this history of Kitawala is going to demonstrate the imperative of critically constructing a 'tradition narrative' of Kitawala in a nuanced manner, then it must also demonstrate the strengths and

[16] Kabanga Kamalondo, 10/19/2010.

weaknesses of other narratives. Thus, in exhibiting the form, function, and prospective flaws of both the "Watchtower" narrative and the "materialist" narrative, this chapter is meant to illustrate how each of these alternative narratives, when taken on its own, in some ways both enriches and obscures our understanding of Kitawalist history.

The Watchtower Narrative

To begin the story as Watchtower narratives inevitably do: the African Watchtower Movement, out of which Kitawala emerged in the first decades of the 20th century, had its roots in the American Watchtower Bible and Tract Society, today more commonly known as Jehova's Witnesses. Founded in 1884, the American Watchtower Bible and Tract Society was a non-denominational society of Bible study groups led by a Pennsylvanian man by the name of Charles Taze Russel. Inspired by the messianic ideas of the Seventh Day Adventists, Russel preached the imminent return of Christ.[17] Russell taught that Watchtower adherents should oppose themselves to all hierarchy, both religious and governmental, because the world's institutions were the dominion of Satan. Because of this, Witnesses shunned political participation, often including the payment of taxes. They were, and still are, fundamentalists who believe(d) in the literal truth of the Bible, particularly the book of Revelations, and they believe(d) strongly in the immediacy of the apocalypse.

[17] For a more in depth discussion of the American roots of Watchtower, see Fields 1985, 92.

Most scholars have traced Watchtower's earliest success in Africa to the unusual charisma of an English evangelist named Joseph Booth.[18] To the extent that it was Joseph Booth who first brought Watchtower literature to Africa and who first convinced Russel that Watchtower should focus its missionary efforts on Africans, both in Africa and in the Diaspora, they are certainly correct. It was only after Russel met with Booth in 1906 that the Watchtower Society began pouring pulp literature into Africa - literature that would make it into the hands of numerous Kitawalist communities. Booth's 'unusualness' was rooted in his progressive interpretation of Christian theology in the colonial context: Booth explicitly tied biblical teachings about the importance of free will to support for free labor. For this reason, he made a name for himself as a public voice of support for African labor interests, which ultimately got him expelled from Nyasaland beginning in 1899.[19] He also garnered a reputation among other missionaries for eccentricity, particularly because he and his family chose to live outside of the mission structure, "choosing indigenous Africans, like [Joseph] Chelembwe[20] and [Eliot] Kamwana, for

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[18] See, for example, George Shepperson and Thomas Price's in depth account of Joseph Booth's early career in Nyasaland (Malawi) and South Africa: *Independent African*. Edinburgh: The University Press, 1958. Also, Karen Fields 1985, 99-127; and John Higginson 1992, 59.

[19] Very early in Booth's career, he made a name for himself when he wrote a what Higginson called "a broadside on behalf of a group of African workers who had organized a strike against several large farms run by the Presbyterian mission in Nyasaland." Higginson 1992, 59. See, also: See Shepperson and Price 1958, 397-400; Fields 1985, 105.

[20] John Chilembwe, who was a famous African evangelist in his own right and would ultimately the lead an important anti-colonial uprising in Malawi in 1915, became one of Booth's first converts while working as servant in his home beginning in 1892. In 1897, Chilembwe famously traveled with Booth to take a tour of Black Baptist churches in the Southern United States. Chilembwe was a student of Booths radical version 7th Day Aventism, rather than Watchtower, however, as he knew Booth before he had discovered Watchtower in 1906. For more on Chilembwe's history, see: Shepperson and Price 1958.

collaborators and friends."[21] Booth was, moreover, convinced that Africans must take the leading role in evangelizing the continent if it was to be successful. And it was a chance encounter with Booth in Cape Town in 1907 that would ultimately inspire the earliest leaders of the African Watchtower Movement – a group of Tonga migrant workers from Nyasaland – to go out, Watchtower literature in hand, and preach their own profoundly re-imagined Watchtower doctrine.

THE AFRICAN WATCHTOWER MOVEMENT

Of those early African Watchtower evangelists, by far the most influential was Elliot Kenan Kamwana, who - along with his two childhood friends Hanoc Sindano and Ngoma Shinkala (who had also been in Cape Town) – had, by 1909, baptized more than 9000 people in Nyasaland.[22] Indeed, it was in light of Kamwana's Watchtower revival that the movement first came into the scope of colonial musings and fears, quickly transforming into a dangerous specter that would haunt the imaginations of colonial authorities from Nyasaland to Belgian Congo[Map 3.1][23]. Kamwana's Watchtower doctrine was a unique blend of orthodox Watchtower ideas and potent ideas about labor reform, equality, and African liberation that had emerged out of his experience working as a migrant laborer in South Africa. Adrian Hastings argues that Kamwana's doctrine - while rooted in his training in South Africa with Booth - became "little more than an

[21] Higginson 1992, 60.
[22] Higginson 1992, 61.
[23] Maps can be found in Appendix 2.

expression of Ethiopianism," or pan-African liberation ideology.[24] Hastings writes of Kamwana that, "his years in South Africa may have injected into him attitudes deeper than Booth's Watchtower doctrines, which he was ostensibly preaching. It was, anyway, a fusion of the two which produced his own specific message."[25]

Kamwana baptized followers and preached Watchtower as an ideology of spiritual and cultural equality. In offering baptism and salvation to all Africans, Kamwana freed them from many of the barriers put in place by white missionaries. No longer did converts have to provide proof that they had undergone a "change of heart" by renouncing polygamy, ceasing alcohol consumption and dancing, renouncing belief in witchcraft, or adopting European language and habits of dress. Accusing the missionaries of withholding the truth of God's power from Africans, Kamwana articulated a theology that, on the one hand, undermined the missionary claims to a monopoly on the path to salvation and, thus, on social and political dominance, and, on the other hand, left room for the articulation of culturally relevant interpretations of Christian teachings, particularly about the nature of God's power and His plan for redistribution of power in this world.[26] Kamwana's influence was so feared by the colonial regime in Nyasaland, that, by the end of 1909, he found himself forcibly removed to South Africa. He was allowed to return to Nyasaland in 1910, but, in an effort to curb his influence, he was relegated to a remote district of the country where people did not speak his native language, Chitonga. Despite these efforts, Kamwana continued to spread his Watchtower doctrine until, in 1914, he was accused "preaching

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[24] Hastings, Adrian, *The Church in Africa 1450-1950*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994, 504.
[25] Hastings, 504.
[26] Fields, 117-123.

seditiously" of the impending departure of the British and was deported to the Seychelles, where he remained for twenty-three years. Upon his return to Nyasaland in 1937, he found the Watchtower communities that he left behind still thriving.[27]

INTO THE BELGIAN CONGO

From Nyasaland the movement spread rapidly along the rail lines into Northern Rhodesia, Southern Rhodesia, and the Belgian Congo. It was Kamwana's friend, Hanoc Sindano, who was at the forefront of the evangelization in Northeastern Rhodesia, particularly in the Luapula Valley, along the border with Katanga. There, in one of the most important labor catchments for both Katangan and Rhodesian mining operations, Sindano had, by 1917, established a strong Watchtower presence along the footpaths that laborers used to travel back and forth to the mines. He found a receptive audience, as, in the midst of wartime conscription, drought, and outbreaks of Spanish influenza, the region fell, to quote John Higginson, "below previous levels of subsistence and into the hands of Watchtower prophets and adepts."[28] At one point, in 1918, Sindano and his followers even succeeded in driving British magistrates and officers out of the eastern regions of Northern Rhodesia. The exploits of Sindano and his followers have been elaborated elsewhere, however, and need not be rehashed here, but for the purpose of pointing out that it was in the context of this Watchtower expansion and the arrest of Sindano that leadership effectively transferred to two emergent leaders in Zambia: Tomo Nyirenda and Jeremiah Gondwe.[29]

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[27] Robert I. Rotberg, *The Rise of Nationalism in Central Africa*. Harvard University Press, 1965, 68-69.
[28] Higginson, 62.
[29] On Sindano, see Karen Fields, 144

Higginson contrasts the two leaders. He writes that Gondwe, whose branch took the name *kitower*, "implored his followers to remove themselves from the industrial work sites and unbelieving chieftaincies, and to form new self sufficient rural communities." On the other hand, Nyirenda – whose branch took the name *kitawala* - "sought to woo existing villages away from colonial governments and to establish an alternative pole of political authority."[30] The distinction that Higginson draws – *kitower* as a passive movement geared toward withdrawal from existing political authority and *kitawala* as an aggressive movement geared toward replacing existing political authority – is in some ways apt, though I would argue that his implication that they constituted two different sub-movements, under different names, that emerged in Zambia is overstated. Rather, these varied interpretations of the Kitawalist mission tended to characterize Kitawala wherever it went, and it generally manifested somewhere on the continuum between the two tendencies, depending on the local leaders and context. As the movement took root in Congo, the Belgian authorities themselves noted that while some more 'benign' Kitawalists withdrew into their separate communities and continued live in peace with the government, other more 'dangerous' Kitawalists tended toward radical action against the existing political powers, both local and national.[31] As I will discuss in Chapter 5, it was this observation that, in the 1950s, would lead the Belgians to believe that they could perhaps de-politicize Kitawala through reeducation campaigns, drawing out the more 'benign' tendencies of the movement.

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[30] Higginson, 64

[31] The extent to which such distinctions between Kitawalist communities were real and or imagined by the Belgians is a subject further interrogated in Chapter 5.

In any case, it was Tomo Nyirenda who would emerge as the more infamous of the two leaders, when he assumed the title of Mwana Lesa - Lala for "Son of God" – and carried Kitawala across the countryside from the northern regions of Northern Rhodesia to southernmost regions of Katanga in the Belgian Congo. Between February and September of 1925 he visited villages across the region and left in his wake a spectacular trail of baptisms and witch-killings. Karen Fields estimates that in the early months of his leadership, some 17 people were drowned by Nyirenda and his followers in Zambia. Many of the victims were elderly women, but some were political rivals of those who had called him to their villages. As word of his powers of witch detection and baptism spread, he was invited to Congo by a chief named Mufumbi, who wanted Nyirenda to "cleanse" his villages.[32] Having run into some trouble in a Northern Rhodesian village when he was accused of killing an elderly woman whose family, insisting on her innocence, alerted the colonial authorities, Nyirenda accepted the invitation as a fortuitous exit. At Mufumbi's behest, Nyirenda killed witches in Katanga at an incredible scale: upwards of 174 people were killed over the course of two months, from June to July of 1925. Karen Fields notes that at one point, when Nyirenda questioned the scale of the violence and the attention it would draw, Mufumbi allegedly told him that "killing witches is permissible in the Congo."[33] Of course, it was certainly not permissible and by the end of July, the Belgians caught wind of his activities and had sent a patrol to arrest him.[34] He evaded the patrol and crossed back into Northern Rhodesia

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[32] Karen Fields, 170. Fields is citing an archival account. See footnote 39, 306.
[33] Karen Fields, 171. Again Fields is citing an archival source: a witness to the events in Katanga.
[34] Efraim Andersson, *Messianic Popular Movements In the Lower Congo.*Uppsala: Agent: Almqvist & Wiksells boktr, 1958, 248.

but was ultimately apprehended in November and sentenced, along with 14 other Kitawalists, to death by hanging in early 1926.

By the time Nyirenda crossed back into Northern Rhodesia, however, he had already planted the seeds of Kitawala's influence in Congo.[35] From this initial theater of influence in South Eastern Katanga, Kitawala spread across much of Eastern Congo and into parts of Western Congo before Independence in 1960 and, as highlighted in Section One, continued to grow in the post-colonial era [Map 3.2]. In the years from Nyirenda's arrival in 1925 to the Kitawalist uprising of 1944 in North Kivu – the subject of Chapter 4 –three major theaters of Kitawalist influence would emerge. These various theaters were at once intimately connected and historically distinct. The first was in Southern Katanga, concentrated in the mining regions from Mufimbi, to Elizabethville (Lubumbashi), to Jadotville (Likasi), in areas both urban and rural. The second was in Northern Katanga, from Baudoinville (Moba) to Albertville (Kalemie) to Manono to Kongolo. The third theater of influence was in the Kivu and Orientale provinces, particularly in the region from Masisi to Lubutu to Stanleyville (Kisangani).

THE SOUTHERN KATANGA THEATER

Lobati Ngoma and Mumbwa Napoleon Jacob 1925-1936

In Southern Katanga, the movement first took hold in the region of Mufimbi, in the villages south of Sakania near the Zambian border, where Nyirenda had been active

[35] There were Watchtower converts preaching in Congo before Nyirenda's arrival, as early as 1923 (Higginson 1992, 65), but it was not until the flourish of Kitawalist activity of Nyirenda's sojourn in Congo that the movement really gained momentum in the region.

in 1925. There, in the wake of Nyirenda's departure, it continued to amass a rural following as two men – both baptized by Nyirenda - emerged as important leaders: Lobati Ngoma (Kima) and Mumbwa Napoleon Jacob.[36] Under Mumbwa Napoleon Jacob's leadership, Kitawalists came to be known as "*Banapoleoni*" and the movement spread northward, rapidly amassing a following in Elizabethville and Jadotville and the surrounding villages and mining camps. Higginson argues that Kitawala's deepening influence in Katanga from about 1931-1936 was in many ways related to the series of boycotts and strikes that erupted in the region during the same period as a result of African protest to worsening labor conditions, which were exacerbated by the difficult financial times of the global Great Depression. Explaining the tendency of Belgian authorities to conflate the labor protestors and Kitawalists, Higginson suggests that they mistook "the tailings of the workers' moral conception of economic life… for membership in one of several Kitawala sects."[37] Seeing moralistic undertones in African claims that they were receiving 'unjust' prices for their labor, the Belgians assumed that subversive religious ideologies – namely Kitawala – must be behind their grievances. In making and acting on such assumptions (by arresting suspected Kitawalists), Higginson contends that the Belgians in many ways created the Kitawala outbreak they feared. Workers who had only been loosely aligned with millenarian groups prior to increasing police crackdowns in the 1930s turned to Kitawala because of the apparent ability of their

[36] 'Lobati Ngoma' is the name that he is remembered by in oral histories. Kabanga Kamalondo, Interview with Author, Digital Recording, Kalemie, DRC, 10/15/10; Shindano Masubi Aiubu, 11/10/10; Kibasomba-Wakilongo, 9/4/2010. 'Lobati Kima' is an alias and is the name that Higginson uses to refer to him: Higginson 1992, 68.
[37] Higginson 1992, 66.

networks "to elude the newly formed secret police."[38] Higginson is certainly correct in this assertion, though as I will argue later in this chapter, he does not interrogate the nature of the rumors circulating at the time about the Kitawalists' ability to elude capture, which highlighted not the efficacy of their networks, but the belief that they had the capacity – the *puissance* - to turn themselves into whites. The content of these rumors, I will argue, is important.

However, for the moment I leave that point in order to return to the question of leadership during this era, for understanding the (often forced) movement of Kitawalist leadership at this period in Kitawalist history is central to understanding how Kitawala moved into new theaters of influence. I have already noted the Mumbwa Napoleon Jacob emerged as one of two important leaders in this era, first in Sakania and then in Elizabethville. The other leader, Lobati Ngoma, was originally from Zambia, which is where he was baptized (probably by Nyirenda). He came to Congo with the purpose of preaching Kitawala. Higginson suggests that during this period of Kitawalist history in Congo, Lobati was second in leadership only to Mumbwa Napoleon Jacob.[39] In reality, Lobati's exact position in the leadership is unclear, which was true of most Kitawalist leaders at the time. Leadership in these early years was always shrouded in secrecy (they were being hunted by the Belgians), frequently in flux (leaders were arrested, new leaders emerged in their place), and often contested (different interpretations of doctrine, practice, and mission led to numerous branches, most with their own leaders). It is clear that both men were important, but in the church history given by Kitawalists in Katanga

[38] Higginson 1992, 67. The secret police were formed in 1932, in part to deal with what the Belgians saw as a proliferation of subversive sects.
[39] Higginson 1992.

today, it is Lobati Ngoma who is remembered as the most significant, for it is he who would ultimately baptize Kulu Mupenda (Serge) and Mutombo Stephano, both of whom would be significant in the spread of Kitawala to the other two theaters of influence.

Kadima Ilunga Emile 1929-1937

Perhaps more significantly, Kulu Mupenda would, in turn, baptize Kadima Emile Ilunga, who is, today, revered as the prophet of the Kitawalist church in Katanga .[40] Ilunga was a native of Manono in northern Katanga and had moved to Elizabethville in 1929 to take a position as a clerk [Image 3.1]. It was there that he met Mutombo Stephano, who first introduced him to Kitawala and to Kulu Mapenda, who ultimately baptized him. By the beginning of the Second World War, Ilunga and Mutombo had also emerged as important leaders in the region, with Stephano focusing his efforts among the laborers of the Union Miniere in Jodotville and Ilunga leading in the city, in Elizabethville. Both were ultimately arrested – Mutombo in 1936 and Ilunga in 1937. At the time of Ilunga's arrest, they discovered numerous letters between him and Mutombo, verifying the connection between the two leaders. They also found 30 pieces of

[40] This history of the Kitawalist church, centering Lobati Ngoma as perhaps the most significant leader in the church, from about 1925 until his arrest and expulsion from Congo in 1936, is drawn from a study of Kitawala that is kept at the home of Kabanga Kamalondo, the regional leader of the church located in Kalemie. That study - which I shall henceforth refer to as "Anonymous Kitawala Study"- is of unknown origin. It is clearly a study commissioned by the colonial government, sometime in the mid/late 1950s, but information about the author and the year of production has been lost. The first and last pages of the manuscript had gone missing before it was shown to me. All Kabanga Kamalondo knows of its origin is that it was written by "some Belgian". I am in possession of a copy of the manuscript, which I photographed in Kalemie in October of 2010. I hope that I will encounter a full copy of the study in the archive at some point in the future so that I might learn the name of the author, but for the moment it remains a mystery.

Watchtower literature hidden in the walls and a false table bottom at Ilungu's home, as well as letters to and from a Watchtower leader in Cape Town who urged Ilunga to "speak loudly and have no fear" and to "refuse slavery."[41] This, of course, indicates that at this point Kitawalists in Katanga were, to some extent, in communication with the larger global Watchtower community. However, the relationship between Kitawala and Watchtower would become an issue of contention when, in 1937, the Belgians officially barred Watchtower in any form from the colony and the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society sought to be disassociated with Kitawala, but that is a topic discussed in Chapter 5. After his arrest in 1937, Ilunga was relegated to a remote colony in Malongo, a site in western Katanga chosen because it was "isolated and little populated."[42] There he remained until he was implicated as the leader in one side of a major altercation between two Kitawalist factions in 1938 (discussed further below) and once more relegated, this time to Ekafera, a colony for "dangerous relegues" in Equateur.

Mutombo Stephan 192?-1936

As mentioned above, at the time of Mutombo Stephano's arrest in 1936 in Jodotville, he had begun to focus his proselytizing efforts in the mining camps of the Union Minier. Along with him, some 93 people were implicated and arrested for preaching such radical ideas as "equality of races" and "equality of salaries."[43] Fourteen of those arrested were non-Congolese and were exiled from the country. Seventy of them were relegated to their natal villages. And nine of them – the leaders, including

[41] Anonymous Kitawala Study, 144.
[42] Anonymous Kitawala Study, 166.
[43] Anonymous Kitawala Study, 166.

Mutombo, Illunga Jean, and Zilani Mwamba, and Ilunga Levi - were relegated to a camp in Boende, Equateur.[44] However, with a year of their relegation, the authorities in Boende were alarmed when Kitawala began to manifest in that region as well, clearly propagated by Mutombo et al. They decided to relegate them once more, this time to Lubutu in northern Kivu (today Maniema), to the newly installed "Arab chiefdom," thinking that the Muslim population there would be less susceptible Kitawala. Once again, they were very wrong and their actions precipitated the movement of Kitawala into Northern Kivu and Orientale.

Meanwhile, in the wake of the arrests of Mutombo and others in Jadotville, Kulu Mapenda and Lobati Ngoma judged it prudent to leave Lubumbashi, heading first back to Sakania. There, Lobati Ngoma was arrested toward the end of 1936 and exiled back to Northern Rhodesia. But Kulu Mapenda managed to escape and - apparently under orders from Lobati Ngoma - headed north, to Albertville (Kalemie). In some ways, Kulu's move was a turning point in Kitawala's history in Katanga, as the focus of Kitawalist proselytization shifted toward Northern Katanga, opening the second major theater of Kitawalist influence.[45] Of course, this did not mean that Kitawala disappeared in Southern Katanga. On the contrary, it continued to thrive in numerous communities and it continued be feared by the colonial authorities in the region, who continued to fail in their attempts to suppress it. When the Marmitte Mission[46] visited COLAGRE [Colonie Agriculturel pour les Relégués] in 1949, they found that it was home to some 215

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[44] It is worth adding a brief note here to highlight the fact that this was standard Belgian policy at this time. Foreign workers arrested by Belgian authorities

[45] Anonymous Kitawala Study, 169.

[46] The Marmitte Mission was a research mission sent out following World War II to survey the threat of "sects" and "secret societies". The Mission Marmitte is discussed more thoroughly in Chapter 6.

relegated Kitawalists and their families, composing a community of about 326 people. Over the course of the prison's existence, it would be host to some 5000 prisoners.[47]

Malonga and COLAGRE

Perhaps unsurprisingly, these relegations did not have the intended effect. Following the 1949 visit, the Marmitte Mission reported that there were "some 30 of the leaders in the camp who retained their spirit of fanaticism and saw in the creation of the COLAGRE the material realization of their 'Kitawala Church' and did not ever want to leave."[48] The report suggests that even the very nature of the buildings undermined their efforts, as the surveillance tower built on the grounds of the camp resembled the tower pictured on the front of Watchtower publications, further fueling the notion that the camp was destined to be Kitawalist colony. The report notes, moreover, that the relegated Kitawalists were poorly supervised and constantly in contact with their "emissaries from other parts of the colony."[49] Writing years later, in 1957, yet another researcher charged with surveying the threat of 'sects' and 'secret societies' – Paul Ernest Joset – would echo the original Mission's complaints of the failure of COLEGRE to reeducate the prisoners. He lamented that it was for this reason that they had not achieved the "the brilliant results" the British had found with Mau Mau in Kenya.[50]

Of course, this is not to suggest that the camps were not oppressive and a prime example of the violence of the Belgian state. At least one other report suggests that the

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[47] Paul Ernest Joset, "Nouvelle Politique a Appliquer vis-à-vis des mouvements politico-religieux", 6/15/1957, AA/AI 4736
[48] Mission Marmitte, 7/15/1949. AA/AI 4736, 4.
[49] Ibid.
[50] Joset, 15/6/1957, AA/AI 4736.

'villages' were "veritable concentration camps" where the prisoners faced "severe punishment."[51] Rather, the point is that the camps did not deter the spread of Kitawala or undermine its message – quite the opposite. Kitawalists continually saw in their repression the fulfillment of prophesies –biblical and otherwise – of persecution that would be followed by deliverance and, ultimately, the realization of Kitawalist dominance in this world.

THE NORTHERN KATANGA THEATER

As noted above, it was around the time that Kulu Mapenda arrived in Albertville that Kitawalist activity in Northern Katanga really began to pick up. Part of this acceleration was, of course, precipitated by the arrival and proselytizing of Kulu Mapenda himself. But he was certainly not the only important leader to emerge in the region, nor was he the only Kitawalist preacher sent to the region by the detained/exiled leaders of Southern Katanga. Like Lobati Ngoma, Mutombo Stephan had also charged converts with the mission of spreading the message of Kitawala north. Moreover, many of those who had been arrested for Kitawalist activity in Elizabethville and Jadotville had been exiled to their natal villages, a great number of which were in northern Katanga. The result was that Kitawala emerged under several different mantles of leadership in the region from about 1936 to 1941, at which point Kitawalist activity in the region ebbed somewhat in the wake of events in Manono.

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[51] Anonymous Kitawala Study, 166.

Albertville and Kulu Mapenda, 1936-37

Kulu Mapenda appears to have been a particularly savvy preacher. When he arrived in Kalemie in November of 1936, he found the climate unfavorable to his mission. In the years preceding, the region from Kalemie to Kongolo had been subject to some upheaval caused by a different movement called Kibangila, which colonial reports classified as a "hunt for witches" that inspired "abnormal and disquieting" infractions. The reports are likely sensationalized, but are nonetheless intriguing. In 1934, they described groups of "diviners" identifying sorcerers in villages across the countryside, from Albertville to Kongolo. People accused of witchcraft would be brought before a "veritable inquisitorial tribunal" of these diviners, who would force the accused to confess and relinquish their 'dawas' or face corporal torture.[52] In Kongolo, reports indicated that torture could be severe:

> The outstretched arms were separated by one meter, wrists tied to a tree branch or sticks, 1.5 m above ground. The feet were also separated by pegs fixed in the ground, the suspended body placed in the oblique position. If the tortured person did not confess, they were beat across the buttocks with a baton twelve times and if after that they persisted in their denial, the executioner would insert a baton into the anus if was a man and into the vagina if it was a woman. Several died this way.[53]

According to one report, as many as 164 men and 2469 women were designated as sorcerers by the diviners. Eighty-one of the men and 635 of the women were subjected to "arbitrary arrest and bodily torture."[54] Of those, seven died from the torture and twelve committed suicide after. Reports also indicate that upwards of 13000 francs were also paid to the diviners.

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[52] Anonymous Kitawala Study, 146-147
[53] Anonymous Kitawala Study 146
[54] Anonymous Kitawala Study, 146

Given the perceived severity of the movement, those involved were pursued and severely punished by the colonial police, and by the end of 1935, the fervor over Kibangila seemed to have subsided. Still, when Kulu Mapenda arrived at the end of 1936, the authorities both indigenous and Belgian in the region remained very mistrustful of any sort of innovation. So, for the first months after his arrival in Kalemie, Kulu laid low. He waited until the district chief, a man named Benze, left town for a number of weeks in mid-February of 1937. Kulu then immediately took advantage of his absence to declare himself a messenger of God and begin teaching and baptizing people into Kitawala, aided by several associates and reportedly "using an old bible as a talisman."[55] Within six weeks he amassed nearly 200 followers in Albertville. By the time Benze returned, Kulu had converted the chiefs of several villages around Albertville and had brought at least two of the men who had been relegated to their natal villages for Kitawalist activities in Jadotville into the movement. When Benze sent a policeman to arrest Kulu, he was attacked by Kulu's followers. Convinced that he was more powerful than Benze, Kulu went so far as to go to Benze himself and publically harass Benze in front of other notables. He was arrested shortly thereafter. In his home the authorities found long lists of converts that Kulu had kept and it was those lists that allowed colonial authorities to truly grasp the breadth of his influence. [56]

Kamina and Muyololo 1937-38

The same year, in 1937, another community of Kitawalists emerged in Kamina. This group was led by a man named Muyololo Kabila. He had been converted by

[55] Anonymous Kitawala Study, 150.
[56] Anonymous Kitawala study, 150

Mutombo Stephan, who had ventured to Kamina before he was arrested in Jadotville in 1936. At that time, Mutumbo baptized Muyololo, but he did not have significant time to teach him Kitawalist doctrine and had almost certainly intended to return to teach Muyololo more. However, due to his arrest he was unable to return. Because of this, Muyololo developed a somewhat distinct interpretation of Kitawala in which one of the central teachings was to "respect the ancestors."[57] Of course, we have seen in other chapters of this dissertation that Muyololo's core teaching about respecting the ancestors is central to most Kitawalist churches today, but this is among the few archival records that indicate the centrality of such teachings at this period.[58] Interestingly, when Muyololo was arrested, he was sent to the relegation camp Malonga and it was he who led the other faction of Kitawalists that got into an altercation with Kadima Ilunga Emile and his followers in the camp in 1938. There is no evidence indicating the reason for the fight, but given Ilunga's correspondence with Watchtower circles in South Africa, it seems possible that the altercation might have stemmed from disagreements about the need to adhere to more orthodox Watchtower teachings. Throughout Kitawala's history there has been tension between urban and literate Kitawalists who have tended to emphasize Kitawala's relationship to Watchtower (maintaining ties to Watchtower circles outside of Congo and utilizing Watchtower literature) and more rural Kitawalists, who

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[57] Anonymous Kitawala Study, 463.

[58] This is not to suggest that because there are few archival records highlighting the centrality of this teaching for earlier periods it was not a relatively standard part of Kitawalist doctrine since at least the time of Mwana Lesa. I am simply pointing out that this is one of the earliest accounts we have of a leader emphasizing teachings about the ancestors above other, more orthodox, Watchtower teachings. It represents a shift in the discourse of Kitawalist leaders as the movement reached beyond communication with Zambian and South African Watchtower circles and Watchtower literature became less accessible.

tend to emphasize Kitawala's independence from outside churches and the fact that it is an African church, rooted in tradition as much as biblical teachings. The altercation between Ilunga and Muyololo may very well have been an early manifestation of this tension and is interesting for that reason.

Tanganyika Province in 1938 -1942: The Manono Incident

The arrests of leaders like Muyololo and Kulu Mapenda did not stop the spread of Kitawala in the broader Tanganyika District (the district that encompasses most of Northern Katanga). The movement continued to proliferate, often under the leadership of miners who had been arrested in Jadotville and relegated to their home villages. One report, looking back on Kitawalist activity in 1938, suggested not only that there were many hundreds of Kitawala adherents, but that they were leading a "vertibable hunt for sorcerers" and during which nearly 700 Congolese "especially women" had been submitted to "arbitrary arrest" and "bodily torture" by these Kitawalists.[59] The report suggests that after a handful of "severe condemnations" and relegations, the "reign of terror" of the movement came to an end.[60] But even if visible Kitawalist activity slowed down in 1939-40 in the Tanganyika District, it was far from absent. The colonial government would come to grasp that fact very quickly when, in Manono in 1941, the most infamous manifestation of Kitawala in Northern Katanga would take place.

In 1940, a man named Edward Thomas, who had come to Congo from Cape Town, was arrested in Manono for spreading Kitawalist doctrine among the miners at Géomines. In the wake of his arrest, the Kitawalist community continued to grow,

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[59] "Note du Service des Affaires indigènes sur le Movement Kitwala," AA/AI 4737, 3.
[60] Ibid. 3.

unbeknownst to the authorities, who only realized its growing influence in 1941 when they intercepted a letter between leaders in Manono and those detained in the camp at Malonga. Upon discovering this link in September, they arrested a man named Kiwele Abusolome and two of his adepts. Following his arrest, a number of other "fanatics" came to the prison where they had been detained and demanded to be arrested with them, declaring that "they would also die for God" and threatening that if they were not arrested, they would call 100 more Kitawalists from the camps. 21 of them were arrested and sent to prison in Albertville. [61]

Then, on the morning of the 18th of November, apparently following the arrest of a former soldier-turned-Kitawalist preacher on November 14, a group of Kitawalist centered at Geomines decided to make a demonstration. Their plan, after freeing their imprisoned leader, was to march to Malonga where they would be free to practice their beliefs and freed of working for whites or for the colonial state. By midday, some 2000 Kitawalists had descended on the center of the town, surrounding the territorial adminstrator's office and "replacing the blue flag of Belgium with the black flag of Kitawala."[62] They were "baptizing openly" and "singing and wearing crowns of thorns" as they made a demonstration in front of their flag.[63] The guards in front of the office "panicked" and opened fire on the crowd, killing 14 of the demonstrators, who had made no violent provocation and were unarmed.[64] A number of arrests were then made and order was briefly restored.

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[61] Anonymous Kitawala Study, 170-71.
[62] "Manono; R. 2169 Suite du jugement du 6 Janvier 1942". Martin de Ryck Collection, University of Michigan. Cited in Higginson 1992, 71.
[63] Anonymous Kitawala Study, 171.
[64] Higginson 1992, 71

Order did not last, however, as a second group of Kitawalists arrived the next day, once again unarmed, and surrounded the office of the Territorial Administrator. "With an attitude of aggression, they mocked and injured the representatives of the state."[65] The soldiers of the GTV (Garde Territoriale Volontaire) – a volunteer corps of white settlers - arrived and a fight broke out. The soldiers managed to overcome the more aggressive demonstrators and put them in prison. Several more successive groups arrived, at least one of them throwing stones and attempting to take the weapons of the soldiers, but they too were arrested. At that point, there was also unrest in prison as the detained Kitawalists decided they would try to destroy the building by burning it. Ultimately, a platoon of government soldiers that had been sent from Elizabethville arrived to reestablish order by force and that was the end of the demonstrations.

All told, the unrest lasted for 6 days, resulting in 14 deaths and the arrests of 925 Kitawalists.[66] 103 of them were condemned and sent to prison in Elizabethville, with the most dangerous of them relegated to the detention camps. Interestingly, 28 women were condemned for their participation in the demonstrations and kept at the prison in Manono. The whites in Manono were reportedly "horrified to see their trusted servants show such hostility to the whites."[67] Trying to make sense of the events, the prosecution argued that the African mine workers, "simply could not resist these skillfully advanced doctrines because their primitive minds had been disheveled by modern industry."[68] Though

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[65] Anonymous Kitawala Study, 171.
[66] "Document concernent le movement "Kitawala" – AA/AI 4737. It is unclear who authored this brief report or which year it was produced, but it appears to have been produced at some point in the late 1940s.
[67] Anonymous Kitawala Study, 172.
[68] Edouard Bustin, *Lunda Under Belgian Rule: The Politics of Ethnicity*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1975.

crudely put, the notion behind this argument – that incorporation into the colonial capitalism system left Africans grasping for sense in a broken social context – is an idea that I will return to in discussing the "materialist" narrative of Kitawalist history.

Aftermath of Manono

The events in Manono created a heightened sense of paranoia among colonial administrators and they pursued reported Kitawalists ever more diligently, such that reports of Kitawalist activity diminished for several years leading up to events that would take place in Lubutu in 1944. This lulled the colonial authorities into a false sense that their policies were succeeding, and to some extent, in some places, they were.[69] In 1946, the AO report notes that, while there were new cells of Kitawalists in the territory of Mwanza led by some who had been involved in the events in Manono in 1941, Kitawala had fallen out of favor with many of the villagers and especially with the traditional authorities and elders who were irritated by it: it was a "source of complications and annoyance for everyone."[70] Interestingly, the report also suggests that at that time Kitawala had "found a favorable place among the educated youth with exorbitant pretentions." The authorities were able to trace a network of propaganda coming out of Kindu to Albertville and becoming popular among the evolués and specialists of the Company of CFL: "clerks, masons, machinists, nurses, telephone operators."[71]

THE KIVU/ORIENTALE THEATER

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[69] Anonymous Kitawala Study, 168.
[70] Etat d'Esprit des Populations, 1945, AA/AIMO 172, 5.
[71] AA/AIMO 172, 5.

Recall that in 1936 Mutombo Stephan and other leaders of the Kitawala movement in Katanga had been relegated from Jodotville, first to Equateur and then, ultimately, to the Arab Chiefdom in the northern Kivu in 1938, where it was hoped that the local population would be impervious to their ideas. However, shortly after their arrival, they were already secretly converting people in the mining camps around Lubutu, particularly among the Bakumu. Reports at the time indicate that because the relegated leaders were "unable to leave the camps themselves, they delegated their power to principle adepts they had taught. Under their counsel, the adepts organized a secret counsel."[72]

By 1940, the colonial authorities were reporting significant Kitawalist activity in the region around where the 1944 revolt would take place. Villagers were accused of having Kimbanguist bibles and arranging "clandestine ceremonies in the night."[73] Known local leaders of Kitawala were increasingly incarcerated, as suspicions about the spread of the movement ran high among colonial authorities. By September of 1942, a report by the C.N.Ki. noted "the rather profound ramifications of the Kitawala sect and its anti-European propaganda have been found in the diverse camps of the sector."[74] In October and November of 1942, 30 workers suspected of Kitawalist activity were arrested in the camps, while in Muhulu the military had to be called in to arrest another group of unruly Kitawalists. This precipitated a number of desertions by workers "who feared repression"

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[72] ML/II/a/1, 127. Cited in Lovens, 40.
[73] Lovens 1974, 40. The report of the Kimbanguist bibles here is interesting and shows how events related to the Kimbanguist movement in the western regions of the colony remained fresh in the thoughts and fears of Belgian colonial officials just as the Kitawalist movement in the southeast did the same.
[74] Lovens 1974, 41.

if they stayed in the camps.[75] In 1943, disturbances in the region of Kivu continued and by September of that year the movement had spread to Angumu, the mining site where both Bushiri Lungunda and Alleloya would first encounter Kitawala. Months later, in Februrary of 1944, Bushiri and Alleloya would emerge as the leaders of one of the most significant anti-colonial uprisings in Congolese history, which will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter Four.

The 'Materialist' Narrative

In many ways the contours of the 'materialist' narrative can be seen in the preceding section. It is clear there was an intimate connection between the mining industry and the spread of Kitawala into new communities– in Jadotville, in Elizabethville, in Manono, in Kamina and in Lubutu. All of these areas were mining centers and Kitawala amassed a large following among miners in the camps, most of whom were dislocated migrant workers. Indeed, the very infrastructure of the mining industry facilitated the spread of Kitawala, as in many places it was the railroads, roads, and footpaths built to move laborers from the villages to the mines that brought Kitawala into new spheres of influence or, at the very least, facilitated its growth when relegated leaders were forcibly dispersed into new regions by the colonial government. And it was not just mining regions – and regions that supplied labor to the mines - that were host to significant Kitawalist activities. As Likaka Osumaka has noted in his study of forced cotton production in rural Congo during the colonial period, Kitawala had a significant

[75] R.M. Oct. 1942, 14 and Nov. 1942, p.16. Cited in Lovens 1974, 41

presence in rural cotton-producing areas as well.[76] In an incident in 1938, exiled Kitawala leaders mobilized 200 converts in the cotton growing regions between Nyunzu and Kalemie in Northern Katanga. Likaka writes that "the promise of becoming 'equal to whites' and possessing wealth found fertile soil in the minds of cotton cultivators who wished to see the end of cotton production, or if it had to continue, wished to see prices rise."[77]

As Terence Ranger has noted, it is this reality that led early scholars of Watchtower to place the movement within a narrative of the development of "proto-proletarian consciousness."[78] Writing about Watchtower in the 1970s, Sholto Cross argued that the very configuration of Watchtower's "zone of impact" reflected "the basic process of proletarianisation."[79] He wrote,

> The vast majority of adherents of Watchtower were labour migrants…It was through labour migration that the ideology spread, and both in ideological content and associational form it was particularly suited to those whose lives alternated between the compound and the village…In discussing the Watchtower as a social movement, it will be argued that in the urban areas at least, it operated as a primitive labour movement.[80]

Pushing back against the idea that Watchtower was essentially anti-colonial, or nationalist, Cross argued that "the idea of the confrontation between the black man and the white man…common to all forms of Watchtower belief" most accurately reflected "the formation of social groups with common interests derived ultimately from their

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[76] Osumaka Likaka, *Rural Society and Cotton in Colonial Zaire*, Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1997, 126-130.
[77] Likaka 1997, 128.
[78] Terence Ranger 1986, 17
[79] Sholto Cross 1972, 1-2
[80] Sholto Cross 1972, 1-2.

common participation in industrialism."[81] This, of course, renders it part of a phenomenon larger than the colonial context: global capitalism.

Cross' interpretation – and that of the most prominent labor historian to follow him, John Higginson - has been rightly critiqued for depending "on the paranoic fears of colonial administrators" as evidence of an emerging class ideology.[82] Belgians readily observed the potential for insurrection among disgruntled migrant workers and cotton growers and their descriptions of Kitawala must be seen as a reflection of their fears as much as it was any accurate reflection of the intentions of Kitawalists. But it nonetheless remains obvious that the material circumstances of Kitawala's history mattered. It mattered for the infrastructural reasons I have highlighted above, but it also mattered because of the material realities – of scarcity, of disease mobility, of forced labor at the expense of subsistence activities, of physical displacement of able-bodied men (and women) - that colonial capitalism created. Those material realities in turn created social issues that were exacerbated by changing power relations – between men and women, elders and juniors, and peasants, 'middle figures,' and elites.[83]

Unfortunately, it is beyond of the scope of this dissertation to look at the relationship between the colonial economy and these varied material realities and social issues in all of the theaters of Kitawalist influence before 1944. The implantation of the extractive colonial economy unfolded differently, at different times, and at different paces in the varied 'Kitawalisé' regions, with some serving as mining regions, others as cotton producing regions, and others as labor catchments and producers of subsistence

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[81] Sholto Cross 1972, 3.
[82] Terence Ranger 1986, 17
[83] On 'middle figures', see: Nancy Hunt 1999.

crops that supplemented the mines. Moreover, the regions had different material and social realities before colonial capitalism took root. Instead, I would like to take a more targeted look at one particular region: the Kivu/Orientale theater, where the most infamous Kitawalist revolt would erupt in 1944. I choose to focus on the Kivu/Orientale theater both because it builds important context for understanding the uprising in the next chapter, and because it very nicely demonstrates how the particular material realities of that region – which remained under Arab-Swahili dominance until much later than other regions in Eastern Congo and was subject to significant colonial development in the interwar years - shaped the way that Kitawala was received and interpreted.

'DUAL COLONIZATION' AND INTERWAR DEVELOPMENT

In his study of the 1944 events, Congolese sociologist Mwene-Batende very meticulously reconstructs the political and economic context of the region touched by the revolt.[84] He argues that the Kumu – the ethnic group to which Bushiri Lungunda (the leader of the uprising) and vast majority of his followers belonged – had, particularly in the ten years preceding the uprising, suffered from the profound and rapid disruption of their "ancestral mode of production."[85] The Kumu, Mwene-Batende notes, had historically been a semi-nomadic group that subsisted largely on hunting in the forests with some seasonal cultivation. With the arrival of the Arab traders this had already begun to change, as the Kumu redirected their productive activity from a largely subsistence-based hunting economy to supplying the Arab-Swahili caravans with ivory

[84] Mwene-Batende, 1982, 94-98
[85] Ibid.

and food. The presence of Arab traders thus led to increased sedentarization in order to facilitate cultivation of enough food to both supply the caravans and account for the redirection of hunting labor toward trade rather than subsistence. Sedentarization also allowed for heightened protection of communities rendered increasingly vulnerable by the presence of the slave trade in the region.

Yet, even as he acknowledges that it constituted a form of 'dual colonization', Mwene-Batende suggests that the social effects of this reorientation toward trade with the Arab-Swahili, which took place largely in that latter half of the 19th century, paled in comparison to the profound transformation that came, beginning in the 1930s, with the rapid economic development of the region by the colonial government. Though Congo had been claimed by Leopold in 1885 and transferred into the control of the Belgian state in 1908, the remote region between Lubutu and Masisi remained comparatively unaffected by colonial exploitation until the 1930s. Even in the years that immediately preceded the uprising, European presence in the region was relatively superficial. When, in 1936 (just 8 years before the revolt), an engineer named Fournier arrived in the region between Bafwasende, Lubutu, and Walikale – which would be the principle region of the revolt - to start a mine for the Comité National du Kivu. (C.N. Ki.), he described the area as "unknown, not penetrated and little peopled." [86] Missionary presence - aside from one protestant Swedish Mission in Lubutu and a few chapel-schools in the villages closest to Lubutu - was notably absent from the region as well, even up until the time of the revolt. Reporting from the district of Masisi in 1944, the territorial administrator of Utunda,

[86] Lovens 1974, 28.

Bribosia, noted that for the most part, "the inhabitants have never seen a missionary, nor do they know what a doctor is."[87]

Then, in the midst of financial pressures of world depression and an increasing awareness of the mineral wealth that existed in the region - rich in gold, tin, rubber and cassiterite - the colonial government pressed for the rapid development of the region in the 1930s and 40s. Between 1938 and 1944, four major mines were opened in the region. And this rapid economic development had been preceded, only 5 years earlier in 1933, by the profound political and administrative reorganization of the region, which had upset the existing clan-based political power structures by transplanting and regrouping villages into more centralized – and therefore more easily administered – political formations and investing state appointed "chiefs" and "sultanis" with political power in the region. These "chiefs" and "sultanis" functioned as the local arm of colonial state, in particular as the implementers of colonial taxation laws, which were used to coerce men, who saw their ancestral hunting grounds rapidly transformed into mines, into working in the very same mines that were destroying their means of subsistence.[88]

For these reasons, Mwene-Batende is probably correct in his assertion that the effects that these rapid changes had on the wellbeing of the communities they touched should not be underestimated. The dislocation of male, able-bodied workers undoubtedly affected the gendered division of subsistence labor, and most likely led to a poorer diet

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[87] Bribosia's text was reproduced in "Rapport AIMO District Kivu 1944" by District Commisioner De Ryck, 3/22/45. AA/AIMO

[88] Mwene-Batende 1982, 99-112.

and, by proxy, poorer health.[89] It seemingly also had deleterious effects on processes of marriage and reproduction, as migratory young men delayed marriage or spent long periods away from their communities. It is significant that during the revolt Bushiri and his followers would target old men for using witchcraft and taking all of the wives as the young men were away working. It is also significant that infertile women were the other main target of witchcraft accusations and executions. Indeed, most of the witchcraft victims of the uprising were sterile women and old men who were accused by Bushiri of, among other things, "killing small children."[90] Even the regional colonial administrator De Koster lamented, in a report written in the wake of the revolt, that the people in the region had been "pushed to change in every way: recruitment of all natures, road work, culture, dislocation of customary groups, and displacement of villages" and they "could not digest it all because they had not been prepared."[91] In short, the onslaught of economic and political change in the region created grave social ills, with tangible, material effects.

UNFREE LABOR AND OTHER FORMS OF ENLSAVEMENT

Of course, this narrative highlighting the material realities of 'dual colonialism' and general labor exploitation as integral to Kitawala's appeal in the communities it

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[89] Steve Feierman, among others, has discussed the relationship between colonial labor regimes, women's labor, food production, malnutrition and health. See, Feierman's 1985 article, 99-101.
[90] "Comptes rendus d'audience", Iterbo, 8/7/1944., 159. Cited in Lovens 1974, 55.
[91] Dekoster, "Mesures proposées pour lutter contre le Kitawala." Report sent from Dekoster to GP Bertrand, 4/8/1944 31. Cited in Lovens 1974, 30-31.

influenced does not belong exclusively to scholars writing about the movement decades later. Recall the words of Sindano Masubi Ayubu from the introduction to this chapter:

> Arabs were the first to bring the words of God with Islam. Then they made us slaves. After that, the Europeans came. They came to throw out the Arabs. Then they enslaved us themselves. Then Lobati Ngoma came [with Kitawala] and he told us that we were being enslaved.

Enslavement in this context worked at two levels. On the one level, Sindano's words refer to the people of Congo having endured the cruelty and economic exploitation of unfree labor under both the Arab-Swahili and Belgian regimes, until the teachings of Kitawala highlighted the injustice of such exploitation and inspired people to push for change. On another level, Sindano's words must be read as a reference to a form of spiritual slavery, wherein people were ensnared by the false teachings of Islam and missionary Christianity until Kitawala exposed the falsity of their teachings and the ways in which those teachings were used to oppress the people of Congo by obscuring the *real* spiritual power of God, which was kept from them.

Interestingly, this same narrative – albeit in a somewhat different form - is reflected in a Kitawalist creation story that was collected by R. Philippart, an assistant administrator in Stanleyville in 1954 in the process of interrogating detained Kitawalist leaders. It is rather long, but rich, so I reproduce it here in an only slightly truncated form:

> In the beginning there was only God. Then there emerged a being called Mandjo who was neither God, nor angel, nor man, nor beast. [92] He was surrounded by wind and mist. A bird came and Mandjo sat on its back, and it batted its wings for hundreds of years until the wind and mist dissipated and the dust came together to form the world. Then Mandjo arrived on the earth. He was alone and

[92] Philippart notes that Ilunga Jean does not agree with this particular portion of the story, suggesting that Idjabo has misinterpreted the word Mandjo (Mwanzo) – the Swahili for 'the beginning' – as a person.

he was sad so he decided that since he was all-powerful (tout puissant) he would make a companion. So he formed a ball out of dirt and placed it on a plate on his bed. He slept and when he awoke the ball had turned into a child. That child was Mungu (God). When Mungu grew up, Mandjo returned to the mist and disappeared.

Mungu wandered the earth crying for his father in his loneliness. Mandjo spoke to him and told him that he must fashion a companion out of mud, as Mandjo had done. So Mungu fashioned a ball from mud, slept, and when he woke, there was a boy. He named him Zindekisa.[93] He was neither black nor white; he had no color. Mungu was amazed by his work and began again.

He formed another ball of mud, placed it on a plate, and slept. When he awoke, there was another boy. He named him Hebrahimu. He was neither black nor white; he had no color.

Mungu once more followed the same pattern. This time when he awoke, he found another boy and named him Ndembo Kanizari. Finally, he did it one last time and awoke to find a girl. He named her Losiya Mbafu because she had 29 ribs.[94] Then Mungu rested and waited –hundreds of years - for his children to grow up.

When the children were grown, Mungu asked Losiya Mbafu, "What would you like to do my only daughter?" She responded that she would like to be a companion to her brothers.

But the children had nothing with which to build a village. They had nothing to eat or drink. They complained, and Mungu assured them they would have all they needed. And indeed, in the rivers and the forests they had everything the needed: game, maize, potatoes, bananas, papayas.

One day Mungu got drunk on banana beer, and when he tried to stand he stumbled, his pants fell down, and his sexual parts were revealed. Zindikisa saw him in that state and laughed and mocked him. Ndembo Kanizari reprimanded his brother for mocking their father, helped him back into bed, and covered him.

When Mungu sobered up, he called Zendikisa and told him: "you have committed a great mistake by mocking your father, while your brother helped me. Wait for me here and I will come tomorrow."

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[93] Zindikisa is a rendering of the Swahili verb "to accompany/be a companion to someone."

[94] The name Losiya is interesting. Philippart suggests the obvious interpretation – that she represents Eve (Philippart, 16). But in Swahili, her name could be read as 'lozi ya mbafu', which translates to something like "ill-mannered/stupid witch."

The next day Losiya Mbafu wanted to hunt for food, but Zendikisa told her she must wait for their father. But Losiya Mbafu told him she would not be long and left. While she was hunting she encountered a snake and a snail who were having sexual relations. She asked them what they were doing and they told her they were sleeping together. “Have you not yet done this?” they asked her.

“Who would I do it with?” she asked. They told her to go to Zindekisa and do it with him. They told her that she and her brother would experience a very great joy and no longer need their father. Troubled by the conversation, Losiya went to Zindekisa and asked him to give her something to nourish her. He offered her food - papayas, bananas, corn - but she refused, telling him, “I want something that will give me a great joy.”

So Zindekisa went to Mungu recounted the story to him. Mungu told him, “Return home and do whatever she asks of you.” So he went and asked her what she wanted him to do. She told him about the serpent and the snail, explaining that this was the great nourishment she wanted, because it gave great joy.

So Zindekisa did what she told him and they both found great joy. But when they were doing it, Ndembo Kanizari saw them through a window and felt great anger. Too late, Mungu realized what he had said and went to the house, but when he arrived, he saw they were already doing it. He could only be content, because he had given them authorization.

Ndembo Kanizari was very angry, however, and told Mungu that it was not the first time they had committed such an act; they had done it before without authorization. Mungu became very angry and promised to punish them.

The next day, Mungu proposed to give a color to the skin of each of his children. He called his children and told them they would go into the rainbow and return with the color they desired. But since Ndembo Kanizari had not laughed when he was drunk, Mungu allowed him to choose first, along with Losiya Mbafu. Then Hebrahimu would go through, because he had “done nothing good, nor nothing bad” to Mungu. Then Zendikisa would go last because he had mocked Mungu and had had relations with his sister before asking permission. And because it was Ndembo Kanizari who had alerted Mungu to this fact, he would have Losiya Mbafu and she would be the same color as him.

So Losiya Mbafu and Ndembo Kanizari went through the rainbow and after a long time they mixed a bunch of colors and came out white, like the whites today. When Hebrihimu went in, there remained only light brown and black. He chose light brown. Zendikisa was left with black.

Surveying Losiya Mbafu and Ndembo Kanizari, Mungu ask Zendikisa, “Do you know who they are?” To which Zendikisa responded, “They are Mzungu and Madame.” Mungu told him, “Losiya is pregnant with your child, but

the child will be white. His name will be Jesus and one day he will know he is your child and come to save you."

Mungu then divided the world among them, giving Europe to Ndembo Kanizari, Congo to Zendikisa, and Zanzibar to Hebrihimu. Finding himself alone, Zindekisa asked Mungu for a companion and Mungu said he would give him a companion of the same color. So he called Losiya Mbafu, took her 29th rib, and used it to make a wife for Zindekisa.

Together Zindekisa and his wife made children. At Mungu's behest he named the first child (a boy) - Mukumu, the second child (a boy) Mulengola, the third child (a girl) Mukongo, and the fourth child (a boy) Amerique. In total he had twelve children. All of his sons then had children with his daughter.

The first of the children to die was Mukumu, who went to Mungu and was given white skin and sent to Ndembo Kanizari. Then the daughter, Mukongo, died and was also given white skin and sent to Ndembo Kanizari. The same happened with each of Zendikisa's children.

Of Zindekisa's children, the most clever of all was Amerique. He knew how to make many things: the best shoes, the prettiest fabrics, autos, machines, phones…everything.

Ndembo Kanizari learned of Amerique's intelligence and became angry. He did not want Amerique to have children who were even more intelligent than their father. So, he came during the night, he woke Amerique, and took him away, forcing him to work as his slave. And the children of Zindekisa were sad, because they were left with nothing but their spears, their arrows and the poisons that they had invented to kill the beasts in the forests.

Then Hebrihimu came to find Zindekisa, to ask if he could have a bit of poison to kill the beasts. Being good and kind, Zendikisa gave it to him. But in the process of killing the beasts in the forest, Hebrehimu killed a great number of Zindekisa's children, who were then transformed into savage beasts in the forest. They had nothing and they no longer recognized their father Mungu, they no longer knew anything.

So, Mungu, pitied his child Zendikisa and understood that the difficulties he faced had been caused by his brothers, Ndembo Kanizari and Hebrihimu. He sent Lute Martin (Martin Luther) to teach the children to know their father and the true religion. But he tricked the children and taught them lies: Protestantism.

So Mungu sent "Father Ignace" but he was no more just and he also taught lies: Catholicism. All those who listened to him became slaves of Hebrahimu. In order to recognize them, he cut off their ears.

> So Mungu again sent "Papa wa Roma" to teach the real religion. He was on his way to do so when he encountered Ndembo Kanizari. Ndembo Kanizari asked him what he was doing, and Papa wa Roma told him, "I have been sent to teach the children of Zindekisa the true religion and Mungu gave me this book (the Bible) so that I would not forget." Ndembo Kanizari took the book and sent Papa wa Roma back, telling him that the children of Zendikisa did not need it." He told Papa wa Roma to tell Mungu that he had done what was asked of him and that the children of Zindekisa now had the true religion.
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> Papa wa Roma did what he said, but Mungu knew it was a lie and that the book was with Ndembo Kanizari. Mungu punished Papa wa Roma, forcing him to spend eternity between heaven and earth. He is the moon.
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> Finally, Mungu sent Zendikisa's own son, Jesus, whom he had made with Losiya, but the children of Ndembo Kanizari killed him. But before he died, he had time to teach the true religion: Kitawala. And Simon Kibangu [sic] who was an apostle of Jesus managed to escape and came to Congo to teach the true religion. Now the children of Ndembo Kanizari can no longer prevent the teaching of the true religion. They kill the adepts of Simon and send others to Lubutu as relegues, but the true religion continues to be taught.[95]

THE GENESIS OF UNFREE LABOR

Obviously, there is much to interpret in this story (which clearly draws from the the biblical story of Ham), but for the purposes of the present discussion, I would simply like to focus on the theme of unfree labor and stolen resources. As with Sindano Masubi Ayubu's brief explanation above, this story represents a pervasive theme in Kitawalist discourse and teachings: that the Congolese have been robbed of their labor and their resources and given false religions in return. In the genesis story, we initially see this theft when the jealous Ndembo Kanizari enslaves the most clever of Zindekisa's children, Amerique.[96] Of course, this must be read as an allusion to the trans-Atlantic slave trade and the long history of the extraction of people from Congo - their labor and their clever

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[95] R. Philippart, "Contributions á l'étude du Kitawala", 1954, AA/ AI 4737, 7-12

[96] One might argue that the initial theft actual comes when Ndembo Kanizari lies to Mungu about the relationship between Losiya Mbafu and Zindekisa, effectively stealing both Losiya and the unborn child, Jesus, from him.

ideas stolen by the whites [Ndembo] in a scheme to enrich themselves and leave the Congolese in Africa impoverished. The theft then comes again in the form of Hebrihimu's greed. Hebrehimu – representing the Arab-Swahili traders – initially comes under friendly pretenses, asking the kind and generous Zindekisa to lend him some poison that he might hunt in the forests. But he quickly takes over the hunting and depletes the resources, reducing Zindekisa's people to a life of poverty, a life as "beasts." The whites then come back as missionaries. They have been sent by Mungu (God), but they do not do what they are told to do by Mungu – instead they tell the Congolese lies and keep the true religion for themselves. It is only when a prophet of Jesus – represented in this story as Simon Kimbangu, interestingly – comes with Kitawala that they can no longer keep the secrets of true religion from the Congolese, though they try to do so by arresting them and relegating them.[97]

Of course, this is not so far off from the realities of the economic history of the region. In particular, one can see the resonation with Mwene-Batende's account of Swahili-Arabs initially building friendly trading relations with the locals until they gradually came to dominate trade in the region, depleting the forest of its resources and disrupting previous forms of subsistence production and social organization. The point is that Kitawalists themselves recognized and talked about their material circumstances, highlighting the role of unfree labor and extraction in their understanding of the roots of

[97] The relationship between Kimbanguism and Kitawala is an interesting subject, as the two religious movements share much in common historically and often informed each other, as adepts of the two movements were frequently in conversation, particularly since they often ended up in the same relegation camps. It is a mistake to over-emphasize the connection between the two histories, however, as they diverge as often as they come together. For a study comparing the two histories, see: Ngoy, Kyungu W. N. J. M. *Étude Comparative de deux mouvements politico-religieux: le Kimbanguisme et le Kitawala (1921-1960)*, Thesis (doctoral)--Institut supérieur pédagogique de Lubumbashi, 2001.

their social ills. Moreover, they told stories of the origins of Kitawala that did not begin in America or with Kamwana in South Africa, but in Congo, where centuries of the extraction of the Atlantic trade, followed by decades of the extraction of the Swahili-Arab trade, and then the colonial capitalist system provide the necessary background story to Kitawala's significance in the region. But neither was this history of material extraction the whole of the story. This is why analyses like that of Sholto Cross, who would see in the history of Kitawala a history of proletarianization, fall short. Kitawalists were, indeed, aware of and talking about labor relations and extraction – at times more overtly, at times more metaphorically. But the language that they used to talk about it is as significant as the fact that they were talking about it, and, as I will argue in the next chapter when I discuss the "tradition" narrative in relation to the 1944 uprising, that language found its history in Congolese theories of power as much as in the Bible and Watchtower literature or in global labor movements.

Conclusion

Each of the narratives I have highlighted in this chapter brings something invaluable to our understanding of Kitawalist history. The "materialist narrative", as I have just highlighted, brings much that is useful to our understanding of material realities that informed the movement and, in many ways, facilitated it. But, as I suggest at the end of the section, when we focus too narrowly on the "material" history of the movement, it can obscure the significance of the language – the metaphors – through which material realities are interpreted and experienced. With the Watchtower narrative, we can see networks through which Kitawalist ideas moved and the timeline of their movement. We

can see also the important role that the colonial state played, in Malawi, Zambia and Congo, in dispersing Watchtower/Kitawalist ideas through their policies toward labor migration and relegation. And perhaps most significantly, we can see the networks – almost like baptismal genealogies- that connected varied Kitawalist leaders and we can begin to discern different schools of Kitawalist thought, which, as the case of the fight that broke out between to Kitwalist factions in the relegation camp at Malonga demonstrates, did not always agree on teachings or doctrines. Indeed, inasmuch as we can see the connections between different Kitawalist communities, we can also begin to see the processes by which they became highly diversified in different regions, in different contexts and in different times. In short, the strength of the Watchtower narrative is its capacity to highlight connections within what was a highly decentralized movement, and to search for core ideas that transferred between and connected disparate communities.

The danger in this narrative, however, is in its tendency to better highlight the movement of ideas between communities than their actual reception and articulation within different communities at different historical moments. In always looking for the presence of Watchtower ideas – for example, the notion that this-worldly institutions were the domain of Satan – we risk emphasizing the capacity of "outside" ideas and discourses to inspire collective action over the capacity of local ideas and discourses to incorporate and utilize ideas from outside. We risk seeing networks, but not the content of those networks.

Let me give a brief example of what I mean by the 'content' of the networks. Above I noted John Higginson's argument that Kitawala took off in Southern Katanga in

the 1930s because the Kitawalists garnered a reputation for their capacity to elude colonial authorities with their secretive networks. He is undoubtedly correct that rumors of the Kitawalists' ability to elude Belgians at the very moment when they were trying to crack down on dissident workers contributed to the spread of movement in the region. However, his discussion does not really interrogate the nature of the rumors that were circulating about Kitawalists. He notes that it was the efficacy of their networks that drew workers into the movement, but does not develop an understanding of how or why people imagined those networks to be effective, beyond noting that at some point Kitawalists in Northern Katanga introduced an office within their church hierarchy known as the "*portier*" (doorkeeper), whose job was to "giver shelter and anonymity" to adepts who were passing through, "arrange the time and place of baptisms" and provide a "an alternate channel of communication."[98] Such organizational developments are certainly important, but when Kitawalists today discuss the ability of their colonial predecessors to evade Belgian authorities, they do not speak in terms of the efficacy of their networks. Rather, what people emphasize is the fact that Kitawalists were rumored to have the ability to "turn into whites" or "make themselves invisible to whites."[99] This is how Kabanga Kamalondo, the contemporary head of the Kitawalist church in Kalemie, tells the history:

> Kitawalists were hunted intensely by the Belgians. So when it was evening, they would signal people to go to a place into the wilderness. One by one, they went along the road and they met up there. There they did their ceremonies and their evocations and then they returned. They had to do it at night to avoid being caught, which is what happened in 1925, when they killed Mwana Lesa. It became necessary for the Kitawalists to start doing experiments to turn a black

[98] Higginson 1992, 69
[99] Shindano Masubi Aiubu,11/10/10. Sermy Nsenga, 10/19/10.

> person into a white person. They started do this and they passed among the whites. They even ate together with the whites. The whites needed to figure out who was doing this. They knew it was the Kitawalists.[100]

Seeing networks is important, but so too is understanding how people imagined connections within those networks. Tracing baptismal genealogies is important because it allows us to see the connections between different leaders, but so too is thinking about the significance of baptism in local contexts. Most existing literature on Kitawala emphasizes baptism within the movement as a form of 'purification', but it seems equally plausible to imagine it as a means of accessing or transferring *puissance*. Thinking about it in this way opens up a pathway to seeing Kitawala as part of a different narrative – a narrative rooted in local theories of power and histories of healing movements. It is to that narrative I turn, once more, in the next chapter as I discuss the most infamous of all moments in Kitawala's history: the Lobutu-Masisi uprising of 1944.

[100] Kabanga Kamalondo, 10/19/10

Chapter Four

Mukombozi and the Monganga:
The Violence of Healing in the Kitawalist Uprising of 1944

In February of 1944, a revolt erupted in the region of Kivu, district of Masisi, in the village of Magoa, in the eastern-most part of what is today the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The revolt was led by a man named Bushiri Lungunda, who professed himself to be the son of God, charged with the mission of redeeming his African people and relieving them of white rule and oppression. He claimed that his messianic doctrine, a variant of Kitawala, had come to him in a vision in December of 1943. As he slept a nine-day-long slumber, he was transported by a white airplane to America, where God revealed to him that he was Yesu Mukombozi (Jesus the Redeemer) and that he must "complete the work of the first Jesus" and save the earth.[1] Shortly thereafter, Bushiri began preaching his message and baptizing his earliest followers into the movement. It is these followers who accompanied Bushiri when, on the eve of February 16, they arrested a local colonial agent named De Schryver at Magoa and forced him to march along wearing nothing but a loin cloth and carrying vines of rubber around his neck. De Schryver's arrest set into motion the events of the revolt, which lasted for more than a month and resulted in the arrests of two more Europeans, five local agents of the state, and numerous African men and women accused of witchcraft, many of whom were executed. "Mukombozi" and his followers reportedly had plans to capture the 300 whites living in the area and then to attack the city of Costermansville (Bukavu). Before the

[1]Comptes rendus d'audience", Iterbo, 8/7/1944, p.213. Cited in Lovens 1974. 46.

revolt was forcefully repressed by the colonial army in mid-March, it had involved upwards of 10,000 men, women, and children and resulted in hundreds of deaths.[2]

Bushiri's uprising – by far one of the largest in Congo's history - was an event notable, among other aspects, for the form, function, and level of violence that characterized it. Much of that violence was perpetrated by the colonial state, which reacted with a fear that manifested in massacre and violent excess.[3] But the violence of the uprising was not limited to acts perpetrated by or against the colonial government, for Bushiri's movement was internally quite violent as well. It is unclear how many villagers in the region were arrested and beaten by Bushiri's band for practicing witchcraft, but a single testimony – that of Alleloya, Bushiri's right hand - documents a minimum of 60 arrests.[4] Those arrested were whipped – with a *chicotte* – and more than half of them died in captivity. The majority of those arrested were women, many of whom were subjected, in addition to whipping, to sexual violence and public displays of humiliation. In one village, Eliba, five male elders were arrested and forced to have sex with five

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[2] Numbers are debatable. The estimate 10,000 is somewhere in the middle of the range given by Lovens, who estimates the number of "insurgents" to be somewhere between 4,426 (1,885 men) and 15,000 (4,700 men), based on desertion reports from C.N.Ki. posts in the region and reports collected from witnesses after the revolt. For an in-depth discussion of the matter see, Lovens, 1974, 23.

[3] In a single village, Djembe, colonial soldiers, determined to free two kidnapped Belgian mining managers, shot into an unarmed crowd of Kitawalists, killing 53 men, women, and children and injuring many more. They reportedly shot into the crowd because the Kitawalists were dancing and singing like "fanatics" and had "blocked the road." See: "Déposition de Monsieur De Schryver," 1944 AA/AI 4737.

[4] See "P.V. d'arrestation: Mpunzu Mikaeli," 4/30/44. AA/AI 4737.
Given the breadth of the uprising, these are likely only a fraction of the total number of witchcraft arrests and deaths. I have no account of the number of people arrested in the other major theaters of the revolt. This is simply an account of the number of people arrested and punished by the core group in the Masisi theater of the uprising.

women, also captives, in the public square.[5] In another village, Taweza, three women were whipped and then hung by their arms from a tree, where they were left to die. There is also at least one eyewitness account of female captives being raped.[6]

Such images of atrocity evoke critical questions about the imaginaries and choreographies of violence at play in that historical moment, and yet the nature and role of violence in the uprising has never really been a subject of historical inquiry.[7] Given the location of the uprising – the region between Masisi and Lubutu –such oversight is somewhat troubling. Those familiar with the contemporary conflict in Eastern Congo will know that the same area has consistently been at the heart of the ongoing conflict in the region. An area rich in productive tin and gold mines, it was and is the scene of fierce competition between various armed groups over the right to control those resources. It has thus been the scene of some of the most spectacular and devastating incidences of violence in the conflict, including the mass rape of 179 women in 2010.[8]

This geographic overlap brings to mind questions about place and memory, exposing potential threads that might tie such a past to the present. In an article about red rubber, violence, and historical repetition, Nancy Hunt has argued for the "the importance of rewriting the standard Congo atrocity narrative in relation to urgent politics of the

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[5] It is not stated explicitly in either of the testimonies that mention this incident that the victims had been arrested for witchcraft, but it is almost certainly the case.
[6] "Deposition de Monsieur De Schryver". AA/AI 4737
[7] The uprising itself has been the subject of two very good studies, though neither of them is particularly concerned with the nature of violence: Lovens 1974; Mwene-Batende 1982.
[8] For a brief analysis of this incident, see: Jason Stearns, 'Mass Rape in Walikale. What Happened?' *Congo Siasa Blog*, 2010. http://congosiasa.blogspot.com/2010/08/mass-rape-in-walikale-what-happened.html, accessed 2/6/13.

present."[9] Bearing in mind Hunt's warning that "tethering to the present" must not be about "continuity or causality," but about the ways in which certain modalities of violence are reproduced and somatized over time, in this chapter I would like to argue the importance of just such a rewrite of the history of the Kitawalist uprising of 1944.[10] However, this rewrite must not simply be about tethering to the present, but also about tethering to the past, to the imaginaries and modalities of violence that preceded the uprising in the region. In this sense, it must be about locating the uprising, and the forms of violence and healing that characterized it, within the 'tradition narrative' that is at heart of this study. It must engage with the complex notions of tradition – the theories of *puissance* – outlined in previous chapters.

Arguing for attention to deep histories of violence and vulnerability in central and eastern Africa, David Schoenbrun writes that, "histories of violence in Africa that take seriously the challenge of specifying the contexts for potential acts of violence must depict the theories of action that frame imaginary violence, the ever-present double of 'real' violence."[11] The centrality of witchcraft discourse in the uprising – of discourse related to the moral and immoral use of disembodied spiritual power (*puissance/force/nguvu*) - and the imaginaries and choreographies of violence that accompanied that discourse must be understood not as tangential to the larger anti-colonial political struggle of Bushiri and his followers, but central to that struggle and the way it manifested in that historical moment.

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[9] Hunt 2008, 224,
[10] Hunt 2008: 243
[11] Schoenbrun 2006, 743.

Bushiri's uprising was clearly an overt challenge to the legitimacy of colonial rule. But, more broadly, it was a challenge to what Bushiri and his followers perceived as a dangerously imbalanced economy of power (embodied/disembodied, political/spiritual) in the region, which posed a grave threat to social health. That it was 'perceived' imbalance is a key qualification here. The notion that the onslaught of 'modernity' caused 'imbalance' in African societies is a classical colonial trope that has long been critiqued by historians for implying that there existed a point in time when societies were 'balanced'. However, thinking about the perception of 'imbalance' at a given moment in time is not the same as claiming that 'imbalance' was necessarily real. As this chapter will illuminate, much about known discourse of Bushiri and his followers indicates they perceived and experienced 'imbalance'. Yet, it is also clear from the longer history that the theories of moral action used to address imbalance are deeply rooted, strongly contesting the notion that a time of 'balance' ever existed. Yet as demonstrated by the 'materialist narrative' outlined in Chapter Three, it is difficult to deny that certain moments in time are, indeed, materially defined by more upheaval than other moments, which is in many cases what renders violence in those moments contingent.

The fact that the 'moral action' - the healing - that Bushiri and his followers offered took the form of violence – and violence not just against the state and its agents, but also against those (often quite vulnerable) individuals who were presumed to be possessors and (immoral) wielders of disembodied power (witches) – raises important questions. In particular, it pushes us to interrogate the fraught relationship between healing and violence, as well as power and vulnerability, in the history of the Kitawala,

and of the broader region. It challenges scholars to see beyond analytical dichotomies that represent violence as either destructive or productive, legitimate or illegitimate.

Bushiri's uprising has been construed as both. Of course the Belgians saw it as destructive violence, but so, too, did many within the communities the uprising touched. One account describes the mothers of the victims of Bushiri's witchcraft accusations cursing and spitting at him as, in the aftermath of the revolt, he was paraded through villages to prove he had been captured.[12] Yet, in the larger narrative of resistance against the violent and oppressive colonial state and the illness and discord it inflicted, the uprising seems geared toward productive and legitimate ends, toward ending oppressive and extractive colonial economic practices and reinstating self-rule.

It is only in breaking down such dichotomies and highlighting the ambiguous nature of violence that we begin to see how the relative morality of violent acts committed by Bushiri's band was a contentious and negotiated subject within the Congolese communities it most directly affected. Moreover – and this is a central argument of this chapter– we begin to see how this ambiguity of violence was mirrored in the theories of power (*puissance/nguvu/force*) through which it was articulated. For, like violence, power in Central Africa has long been imagined in dualistic terms – destructive/productive, eating/healing – that have rendered its legitimacy a subject of contention and ambiguity. It is in tethering the history of such notions of power and violence to the deeper past – to the 'tradition narrative' - in the region that we can begin to more fruitfully interrogate how they were reproduced and reimagined in the colonial context, allowing us, in turn, to more critically tether them to the present.

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[12] Lovens 1974, 116.

The Monganga's Testimony

The arguments I have just articulated hinge on the understanding that the violence of Bushiri's uprising was predicated on what I have termed an 'imbalance in the economy of power (embodied/disembodied, political/spiritual)' in the region. Building on the theories of power – *puissance*- articulate in previous chapters, I am arguing that it was this perceived imbalance in *puissance* that inspired and ultimately shaped the uprising, allowing for its rapid spread and rendering Bushiri's claims to the *puissance* necessary to correct that imbalance – the *puissance* of God, which he embodied as Yesu Mukombozi – at once persuasive and contentious.

To clarify this argument, I turn now to the evidence that can better contextualize these claims and further elucidate the nature of the uprising. In particular, I would like to highlight the testimony of Bushiri's second in command, Alleloya, who was a reputed healer, or *monganga*. He was a specialist of an herbal medicine (*dawa*) he called *mataifa* ('nation' or 'people' in Swahili) and he and another healer, Albert, were the most powerful figures in the uprising, next to Bushiri. Alleyloya's testimony after his arrest is a particularly rich source for understanding the nature of the uprising, though it was framed by the circumstance that produced it in some obvious ways. Alleloya had been arrested and was charged with inciting an uprising, and the testimony was his chance to explain his involvement. It is apparent as one reads the source that he was downplaying his own role, insisting he was naught but a humble healer, unconnected to the violence. Nonetheless, the testimony paints a vivid picture of the uprising from the perspective of

one of its leaders. For that reason, I reproduce it at some length here, narrated in the first person, as it was in the interrogation record, though I have edited it for clarity.[13] I have chosen to interrupt my analysis to present Alleloya's testimony in this narrative form because of the immediacy it lends to the events of the revolt, rendering the violence that characterized it and the notions of power that animated it real and palpable.[14]

Alleloya's Testimony:

> I had worked for years collecting rubber at Angumu. Sometime before the uprising, I became ill, close to death, and God came to me in a dream. In the dream, God gave me the name Alleloya. He then showed me the medicine of *mataifa*, and ordained me to heal the people with the *dawa* produced from the juice of the *mataifa* plant found in the forest. From that day, I took the name Alleloya, stopped collecting rubber and stayed at my home village in Musimia. Whenever there was a sick child, I was called on to help him/her with my *dawa*. In this way, I earned a reputation as a healer.
>
> Around this time, I had also been initiated into Kitawala. For several months before Bushiri's arrival, two men named Nziaka and Ndele had been moving through the area, initiating people into Kitawala. It was Ndele who initiated me, though he was ultimately arrested and beaten by Bushiri.
>
> Before Bushiri came to Wenga, I did not know him. I had seen him when we both worked at Angumu, but we had never spoken. When we first heard news of his arrival, all we knew was that there was a man coming to Hunde from Wenga, preaching that the days of working rubber were over. When Bushiri arrived, someone told him that I practiced the craft of *monganga* in the region and that I could heal the people with my *dawa*, *mataifa*. So Bushiri called on me to be his

[13] I have cut out some of the repetition and rearranged and truncated some passages for clarity, but have otherwise kept the testimony largely in tact. Interested researchers will find the original French transcript here: "P.V. d'arrestation: Mpunzu Mikaeli," 4/30/44. AA/AI 4737.

[14] John Thornton makes a similar choice in: *The Kongolese Saint Anthony: Dona Beatriz Kimpa Vita and Antonian Movement, 1684-1706*. Cambridge, U.K: Cambridge University Press, 1998. Johannes Fabian has argued for the importance centering archival and ethnographic texts in many of his works, but particularly in his most recent work on *Ethnography as Commentary* (Fabian 2008, Loc 144).

healer. I just prepared my *dawa* and I did not beat anyone, but because I was the *monganga*, I was considered as one of the leaders of the movement.
When Bushiri called on me, I went to him. Then I was called back to my village, so I left Bushiri's band briefly, but he soon called me back. By the time I returned, I found that a local clerk with the rubber collection company, Honore, had been imprisoned and whipped by Bushiri and his followers. They had burned all of his files, but they kept his rubber meter. [Note: There were rumors about Bushiri having a meter, with which he could detect witchcraft. It was said that the meter was in his arm.][15]

Bushiri decreed that people were no longer to collect rubber. Instead, they should cultivate crops (particularly tobacco). They could sell their crops to him or to his friend, "Merika"[America]. He said he would destroy the areas inhabited by the whites and take them as his own. His goals were to make war with the Europeans, forbid rubber collection, to kill the locals who worked with the whites, and kill the Wanianga and the Bakusu, who had to be "exterminated" because they "practiced abortion".[16] To execute this plan, Bushiri began by imprisoning people accused of witchcraft.

During the uprising, Bushiri took all of the women in region that pleased him. Their husbands said nothing because they were afraid of being killed and there was no question of *dote* (brideprice). Bushiri said that he would take 1000 wives to demonstrate that he was the absolute master of the land. He promised each of his adepts 100 wives. He also decreed that it was necessary for each wife to have 10 children. If a woman was not pregnant within three months of marrying, she would be killed. If her husband remarried and there were still no children, he would be killed.

It was at Magoa that Bushiri's men arrested "Bwana Mzuri" (De Schryver). The band arrested and punished many people. One man was imprisoned for trying to hide his mother, who had been accused of witchcraft. He was whipped 12 times. The wife of one follower was imprisoned for making difficulties for her husband. She was whipped 20 times. Another man who worked as a policeman for the Belgians, Musafiri, was arrested and beaten. Bwana Mzuri was forced to participate in the beating. Musafiri died after receiving more than 600 lashes with the whip. Before he died he told Bushiri, "You can kill me, but the state will avenge me." Bushiri told the other prisoners who had worked for the Belgians - Honore, Leon, and Albert - to renounce the state, but they refused, repeating Musafiri's words.

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[15] Bushiri's "metre" arm emerges in a number of the interrogation records from his followers. See, for example, "Katshaka Kichuana, Audience du 13 julliet," cited in Lovens 1974: 63.

[16] The bulk of those involved in the uprising were Bakumu, though there were other ethnic groups involved as well, including the Banianga.

As we moved between villages, we encountered a number of local notables. Some of them joined us, but others were arrested. We arrested Buhini, successor to the chief of Eliba and he was whipped to death.

In Wenga, five men were arrested for witchcraft. They fled to the forest, so Bushiri put their wives in prison and they were whipped 100 times. At least three of them died. In Abunambao, Bushiri arrested four more women and some of them also died after receiving 100 lashes.

On our way to Maliba, some twenty more people were arrested, many of whom were beaten and killed. An *mfumu* was denounced and killed. It was also near Maliba that the rubber clerk Honore was ultimately beaten to death.

At Taweza, many more were arrested and beaten. Three women were whipped then tied to a tree, with their arms up. Their limbs were broken and they were left to die. At least a dozen people died at Taweza. When Bushiri classified someone as a sorcerer, their children would say nothing. They just let it happen.

Bushiri sent out a series of letters. He sent letters to the villages ahead of us to tell them to prepare to receive him. But, he also sent a letter to Bribosia, telling him that he would arrest and imprison him, that he alone was master of the land, and that the rule of the whites was over. Bushiri made Bwana Mzuri watch as he cursed the whites. He showed us on his skull where he had a large cross and told us that all of the lands in the four directions of this cross were his and he would not tolerate anyone against him. He said that once he had imprisoned the three white officials in the region, Bribosia, Reiles, and Kiesel, all of the other whites would flee. He would install himself in a place called Bulambo, near the river Bilulu. He would build a road that would allow people to conduct trade there.

When we arrived in Eliba, the same torture as Taweza was applied to another woman, but she did not die. For fun, Bushiri made five elders have sex with five women in the public square of the village of Eliba. They were then whipped. The rest of the victims were whipped to death or killed with blows to the nape of the neck.

It was in Eliba that we learned that the whites were coming. Bushiri told us to throw down our spears, as he would fight the Europeans himself with his words, which he said would be sufficient to kill them all. We went to river and sang the "mataifa" and the "alleloya". The whites did not come that day and we believed that our songs had made it so that the whites could not cross the river.

Then news reached us that Bwana Mzuri had been returned to the whites and Katshaka had been arrested by them. We asked Bushiri why he did not take the battle to the whites. He told us that he could not take the battle to the whites, because all of the villagers would flee. If they were in the way they would also be killed by his words, which were addressed to the whites. But then the whites came

> and we all fled into the forest, including Bushiri. I took refuge in the forest outside my village in Musimia. The state police camped out in my village. They told everyone that they were only there to arrest me, so I turned myself in.

The Prophet and the Healers: Tethering to the Past

There is much to analyze within Alleloya's testimony. It raises questions about the prevalence of forms of violence that both critiqued and mirrored colonial violence, reflecting that violence back on colonial agents, but also directing it toward those deemed dangerous within their own communities. This, in turn, points to the question of women, who emerge at once as powerful wielders of dangerous *puissance,* assumed to be the source of "invisible" violence (witches) and vulnerable victims of the movement's violence. But before returning to those questions, I would like to return to the proposition that this Kitawalist uprising was an effort to address the imbalance in the economy of *puissance.* In making this argument, I am placing Bushiri's movement within long history of other movements in Central Africa that have struggled to address imbalances of *puissance* within distressed communities, those that have come to be understood as healing movements/associations. These are movements/associations - the Nybingi cult, *kubandwa*, *lemba*, *ryangombe* - that historically emerged in central and eastern Africa to address ills both bodily and social, as well as to protect communities from such ills.[17]

Literature on these movements has revealed much that can be of use in thinking about Bushiri and his followers specifically, and Kitawala more broadly, as part of this

[17] On Nyabingi, see: Feierman 1999. On *kubandwa* see: Iris Berger 1981; Kodesh 2012; Schoenbrun 1998. On *lemba*, see: Janzen 1982. For work on healing practices more specific to the region, see Wauthier de Mahieu's work on *esomba* spirit mediumship and initiation among the Komo (ie. Kumu, the ethnic group to which Bushiri belonged).

longer history. In particular, it has highlighted the role that 'public healing' has played in the maintaining and restoring of healthy communities. As Neil Kodesh notes in his recent work about the centrality of *kubandwa* mediumship in processes of state formation in early Bugandan history, "the semantic histories of words for medicine, different sorts of spirits, and healing techniques" for much of central Africa reveal that "historical actors thought about health and prosperity together."[18] Thus, public healers, as those charged with creating and maintaining prosperity – or, a balance in the economy of *puissance*, as I argue above – were profoundly political leaders, though they did not imagine or articulate their roles in language that can translated directly into secular-political or purely 'religious' roles without obscuring part of their significance. Moreover, it is precisely this connection between prosperity and health that historically made new healing associations – often in the form of what Janzen calls 'cults of affliction', claiming access to new kinds of spirits, or new means of accessing older spirits – one of the primary means through which people sought to wield creative power to address imbalances in the economy of *puissance,* in many cases opposing themselves to existing instrumental powers.[19]

There is ample evidence in Alleloya's testimony to suggest that Bushiri's uprising in particular, and Kitawala more broadly, must be understood in the context of such movements and associations. Certainly, the most obvious evidence is the centrality of

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[18] Neil Kodesh, 2010, 20. Kodesh is writing specifically of the Great Lakes region, but he is building off of the work of scholar such as Steve Feierman, who has noted that 'the number of words for 'healer' in many Bantu languages of eastern, souther, or central African were used with equal validity for those who worked to make individual bodies whole and those who treated the body politic." Feierman 1999, 187.

[19] Janzen's work on Lemba (1982) and Feierman's work on Nyabingi (1999) supports this assertion, as does Schoenbrun's work on 'instrumental' and 'creative' power (1998) discussed in the introduction.

Alleloya himself in the movement. We know he was a reputed healer who claimed he had been given the knowledge of a medicine called *mataifa* by God in a dream. It is difficult to know what the medicine was composed of, as Alleloya simply states that it came from the '*mataifa* plant', which could be found in the forest, but it is not clear what sort of plant it was or whether it had any biomedical healing properties. In any case, the name of the medicine is perhaps what is most interesting. *Mataifa* means 'nation' or 'people' in Swahili. Thus, it seems plausible to read the name of the medicine as a sign that it was, indeed, geared toward curing social ills, the ills of a whole people manifest in the bodies of various individuals, many of whom, Alleloya indicates, were children.[20] It is also unclear whether knowledge of this medicine was specific to Alleloya and the region he lived in, or whether it was a medicine more broadly associated with Kitawala.[21] What is clear is that Kitawalists across Congo historically garnered reputations for healing. The prevalence of '*dawas*' within Kitawalist communities can be seen in colonial reports about Kitawala from its earliest manifestations in Katanga. And, as demonstrated in Chapter Five, they continued to be central to Kitawala in the late colonial period and, as demonstrated in Chapter Two, in the post-colonial period.

While there are few records detailing the concerns of Bushiri's followers, it is clear that healing was a significant part of the movement, as it was Alleloya's reputation as a skilled healer that brought Bushiri to his village in the first place and earned him a

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[20] John Janzen's work on the healing cult *lemba* would seem to support such a reading. Janzen notes that *lemba*, the medicine for which the cult was named, is derived from the word *lembakisa*, "to calm". Since one of the main purposes of the cult was to cure conflict within the community, particularly between the sexes, then name of the medicine, he argues, was symbolic of the larger purpose of the movement. Reading *mataifa* similarly, as indicative of the larger purpose of the movement, then, seems a fair interpretation. Janzen 1982,

[21] Recall that Bushiri was called by a similar dream.

position of power. Though Alleloya represents his role as largely passive in the movement – Bushiri 'called him to the movement', he 'just prepared his medicine' – there is evidence to support the assertion that he was far more central to the movement than he lets on. Note the following exchange between Alleloya and his interrogator, M. Kiesel, which came at the end of testimony recounted above:

> Kiesel: Before you joined Bushiri, he had not committed any extravagance, though he had been there [Wenga] for several days. It was only when you arrived that the '*dance macabre*' began. So it was you who called Bushiri into the region or at the very least you knew from the deserters from Semiba that he would arrive soon. There were many places he could have gone to find adepts, but he came directly to you. Explain.
>
> Alleloya: All we knew was that there was a man coming to Hunde from Wenga who saidthat the days of working rubber were done.

Kiesel's question suggests that in the process of their investigation, the colonial authorities had acquired information placing Alleloya in a far more central role than he indicates in his testimony. The accuracy of their information is, of course, suspect, but so too is Alleloya's evasive response, as he had every reason to minimize his role. In any case, Alleloya does acknowledge earlier that "it was because [he] was the *monganga* that he was considered one of the leaders of the movement." What he seems to be denying in this exchange is that he had any formative or functional leadership role, beyond serving as the *monganga*.

Whatever the precise role of Alleloya was in the movement vis-à-vis leadership, it seems clear that he had a reputation for being *puissant* and that Bushiri sought him out – along with Albert, the other healer ("*mfumu*") who helped lead the uprising - so that he might bring that *puissance* into his movement, both strengthening and legitimating it. As

historians such as David Schoenbrun have demonstrated, this process - whereby leaders (political/religious/healing) have historically sought to legitimate their own *puissance* by creating alliance with or, alternatively, opposing themselves to other *puissant* figures – has a very deep history in the region.[22] The centrality of the two healers in the leadership of Bushiri's movement must be read as part of that history. But so too must the fact that the movement was directly opposed to the other figures presumed to be immorally wielding *puissance*: witches and the colonial state. Let me first elaborate on the latter of these two categories.

The Colonial State: Hoarders of *Puissance* and the Roots of Social Ills

The idea that the Europeans possessed an inordinate amount of *puissance* and that the resultant imbalance of *puissance* in the region was the root of social strife was central to the doctrine Bushiri preached and the cure that his rebellion was intended to provide: the redistribution of that *puissance* back to the Congolese people.[23] Asked to explain the core of his doctrine during an interrogation, Bushiri highlighted the following three points:

1) It is necessary to love God.

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[22] On this phenomenon, see: Schoenbrun 1998, 108-113, See also Steve Feierman 1995: 74.

[23] It is important to recall that the image of the Belgians immorally hoarding *puissance* – namely, the *puissance* of the Christian God – and using it enrich themselves at the expensive of the Congolese people during the colonial era was not unique to the Kitawalists, as demonstrated in the founding narrative of the Wamalkia wa Ubembe in Chapter One.

2) It is necessary to fight the Europeans and kill them because it is they who hold all the *puissance*.
3) It is necessary to give the *puissance* to the blacks.[24]

This hoarding of *puissance* had material symptoms and was neither experienced nor articulated as an exclusively "invisible" form of violence perpetrated by the Europeans. The material grievances of Bushiri and his followers are obvious in the sources. European *puissance* manifested as economic and political dominance and redistribution of *puissance* quite clearly meant the reversal of that dominance. One of the central claims Bushiri made was that he would end the coercive rubber collection in the region and return the people to other forms of cultivation deemed more productive. He suggested, for example, cultivating tobacco and selling it to "Merika" – or America – which was perceived within Kitawalist teachings as an ally to the Congolese in their struggle against European dominance. Recall, as well, from Alleloya's testimony that Bushiri promised his followers that once they had rid themselves of the Europeans, he would create a capital and "build a road that would allow people to conduct trade there." In his interrogation, Bushiri directly claims that one of the goals of his movement was the redistribution of European property to himself and his followers: "my people and I will take the autos, the trucks, the houses, the wealth, and the women of the Europeans."[25]

To argue that Bushiri's uprising was about an imbalance in the economy of *puissance* in the region is not to suggest that it was merely about redistributing 'invisible' forms of spiritual power from the Belgians, who were hoarding it, to the Congolese, who suffered from this 'invisible' greed. Bushiri and his followers, and all of the people in the

[24] "Procès-verbal d' interrogatoire du prévenu Bushiri, Iterbo, 23 mars, 1944" Cited in: Lovens 1974,149.
[25] "Procès-verbal..." Cited in: Lovens 1974, 149.

region, quite obviously suffered from material forms of violence and social upheaval inflicted on them by the colonial state. As discussed in Chapter Three, this is made abundantly clear in the work of the Congolese scholar Mwene-Batende. The rapid incorporation of the region into the colonial economy did create real hardships in people's lives and those hardships manifested in forms of vulnerability – to disease, to hunger, to infertility. It is significant that Bushiri and his followers were targeting old men for using witchcraft and taking all of the wives as the young men were away working. It is also significant that infertile women were the other main target of witchcraft accusations and executions. Indeed, most of the witchcraft victims of the uprising were sterile women and old men who were accused by Bushiri of, among other things, "killing small children."[26] While it is undoubtedly true that the colonial state offered new and important opportunities for many Congolese, it is also true that, for many more, the onslaught of economic and political change in the region had created grave social ills, with tangible, material effects.

Yesu Mukombozi in the Economy of *Puissance*

Yet, the social ills experienced by the people in the region were neither imagined nor articulated in exclusively material, or this-worldly, terms. The uprising was as much a reaction to the 'imaginary' violence inflicted by the state (the hoarding of *puissance* and the use of it for illegitimate purposes of political and material accumulation) as it was a

[26] "Comptes rendus d'audience", Iterbo, 8/7/1944., 159. Cited in Lovens 1974, 55.

reaction to the 'real' violence inflicted by the state (forced relocation, forced/coerced labor, economic exploitation). Only by acknowledging the "realness" of that "imaginary" violence for those who acted against it can we begin to contemplate the "theories of action" that guided them.[27] In emphasizing *puissance* as central to those theories, I am drawing on a language that can encapsulate both the material and the imaginary aspects of that violence, bringing them together into the same frame of reference, acknowledging their intimate connection. Calling it an "economy" of *puissance* emphasizes the fact that the field of *puissance* was broad and there were a myriad of actors perceived to be operating within that field, each making claims to legitimacy or illegitimacy, or sometimes being accused of operating within that field independent of their own claims (as with people accused of witchcraft).

Bushiri was just one actor in that economy, but he was offering access to a particularly potent form of *puissance*: as Yesu Mukombozi, he laid claim to the *puissance* of the Christian God. And his claims to that *puissance* – bolstered by the allegiance of the *puissant* healer figures of Alleloya and Albert - clearly had currency, given the rapidity with which he amassed followers. When the territorial administrator Bribosia visited one of the Catholic missions in the region at the beginning of the uprising, the priests running the mission at Mutongo told him there were rumors of a "*mufalme ngufu* (*puissant* king/leader) with 400 warriors." A group of school children were forthcoming in their assessment of Bushiri:

[27] I borrow the terms "theories of power" and "theories of action" from: David Schoenbrun 2008, 173.

> He is really the son of God. He is all-*puissant*. He has the gift of omnipresence. He has a black head, a steel chest, and white legs. He baptizes his followers and is a friend to the missions. He draws his *force* from himself and his followers and he wants to relieve the poor blacks from rubber collection. He doesn't want to kill the whites, but just to arrest them.[28]

The Father Superior informed Bribosia, furthermore, that he had encountered "much trouble convincing his flock that Catholicism and Kitawala [were] not compatible."[29] This final point suggests that the Father Superior's "flock" saw Kitawala – and Bushiri's movement in particular - as but one potentially potent source of *puissance* in the larger economy, not necessarily incompatible and perhaps even complimentary to others (namely, Catholicism).

Thus, Bushiri tethered his claims of *puissance* to the past not through a bounded set of ancestral practices and beliefs, but through the evocation of a dynamic theory of power. And that dynamic theory of power allowed for innovation, for the embodiment of *puissance* from a relatively new source that had proven formidable – the Christian God – in order to correct the imbalance in the community. And when Bushiri entered into the economy of *puissance* claiming he embodied that power as Yesu Mukombozi and that he could correct the imbalance at the root of their social ills, people believed him and they followed him –whether it was out of fear (because he threatened to kill all those who did not follow him) or out of genuine desire for the social healing (the vanquishing of witches and the overturning of the colonial order) he promised and the hope that he could provide it. Ultimately, as the children Bribosia spoke with so wisely observed, he drew his power – "his *force*" – from those who followed him. One of Bushiri's captains

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[28] Bribosia 1944, 2-3, AA/AI 4737.
[29] Ibid.

reportedly echoed this sentiment: "Bushiri was powerful because he was followed."[30] His claims to *puissance* were rendered true because people believed his claims and followed him. But they followed him because he drew on theories of power, or *puissance*, that they recognized at a time when colonial imposition left them feeling vulnerable. Thus, Bushiri's 'imaginary' *puissance* and his 'real' *puissance* were one and the same. But there was a darker side to Bushiri's *puissance*, the violent side of his healing, which remains to be interrogated.

Wives and Witches? Women, *Puissance*, and Vulnerability

As Alleloya's testimony makes clear, the brunt of the physical violence of Bushiri's uprising was borne by those accused of witchcraft and those who represented the state. Of those who were accused of witchcraft, the majority were women – though men were also accused. As noted above, the accused tended to be old men charged with immoral accumulation – 'eating' the resources of the community (particularly of wives) - and sterile women who were charged with harming others out of jealousy, usually by killing their children or hindering their ability to reproduce. As in most of Africa, there is a deep relationship between communal prosperity/health and fertility in Central Africa and issues related to infertility – high child mortality (often due to malnutrition, which, as noted above, was exacerbated by colonial situation), sterility, and generally poor maternal health– had caused palpable problems within communities in the region of the revolt. Women, thus, often found themselves in a precarious position. They were often assumed

[30] Chef Kahombo Mbokani, Audience du 4 Julliet. Cited in Lovens 1974, 62.

to be potent wielders of *puissance* at the precise moment that they were most vulnerable. When witchcraft is thought to be prevalent in communities – which, for the reasons outlined above, is increasingly common in times of deprivation and social upheaval – this fraught relationship between *puissance* and vulnerability is exacerbated. This was the case with Bushiri's uprising, and it is true in Eastern Congo, as in much of Africa, today.[31]

Yet, I would like to caution against seeing women only as victims of the uprising. Looking at the archival evidence, this presents a challenge. In Alleloya's testimony, we can see women emerging only as victims of witchcraft accusations, wives of men accused of witchcraft who are punished in the place of their husbands, and women who are coerced into marrying Bushiri and his followers. Bushiri, Alleyloya reports, planned to marry 1000 wives and give each of his followers 100 wives, and over the course of the revolt, we are told, he seized numerous women for himself and his followers. De Schryver reported that Bushiri had a "harem of some 20 women."[32] De Schryver also reported at least one rape of a woman who was taken captive and Alleloya himself reported the incident of the five men and women forced to have sex in the public square. There is also Alleloya's report of the women – accused witches - who were whipped and had their limbs broken and then were tied to trees and left to die. In short, the imagery of women as passive figures and victims in the archive is strong.

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[31] Reports of witchcraft accusations and violence are commonplace in Eastern Congo today, as in many parts of Africa. In March of 2013 – the NGO SOS Femmes en Danger reported that three women from a single family in Uvira, South Kivu, were publically burned to death for witchcraft. Personal communication, Amisi Mas, Field Director of SOS FED, 3/14/13.

[32] "Deposition de Monsieur De Schryver," 4, AA/AI 4737.

Nonetheless, one must try to read against the archival grain. The numbers that Maurice Lovens presented in his study of the uprising suggest that anywhere from one half to two thirds of those involved in the uprising were women and children (Lovens 1974: 23). In the wake of the massacre at Djembe, noted above, 120 women and children were arrested along with the 160 men arrested. They were integral to the "singing and dancing" that so frightened the colonial soldiers that they opened fire on the unarmed crowd. In short, women were there and they were not there by force. They were purposefully participating in the movement. It is, therefore, unreasonable to assume that they were all coerced into joining or somehow passive victims of the movement. This raises the question of what their role might have been within the movement. There is little evidence in the archives of the revolt that can definitively answer that question, but there is some oral evidence, collected during my fieldwork in 2010, that is suggestive.

Thinking back to Chapter Two, we know that in contemporary Kitawalists churches, women hold a central role in what Benetta Jules-Rosette has called "ceremonial leadership."[33] They are the "mamas of the prayer chambers" and it is they who lead prayer ceremonies in which God and the ancestors are evoked in order to heal people. Recall the words of two elders of EDAC in Fizi:

> Kibasomba-Wakilongo: You know that if we look at the history of prophecy, the mamas have 80% of the *nguvu* (*puissance*) of the heavens. The men have just 20%. You don't know that all *nguvu* is women?
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> Mama Amisa: It is the mamas who give birth. Everything is the mamas. The babas (men) are just helpers. [34]

[33] Jules-Rosette 1979, 127-144. See, also, Hoeler-Fatton 1996, 99.
[34] Elders of EDAC, 12/12/10.

Recall, also, the assertions of Kabanga Kamalondo explained the significance of women in the history of the church as follows:

> Those who were arrested were mostly men, because they were the ones who were in conflict with the Belgians. But the mamas, they were praying in the prayer chambers. When someone was arrested, the mamas came together to pray that they would find success. So they created that "*pouvoir*" within the prayer chambers. They were doing very powerful evocations. They were doing evocations so that we would defeat the Belgians. A man would go into the chamber, he would get the power to be victorious (*ushindi*) and he would go. Since the beginning women were in the church, until today. When the men were dying in the prison camps, the women were there doing evocations for them.[35]

As Kabanga Kamalondo explains it, women, as those who ritualistically evoked the *puissance* that allowed men to resist the Belgians, held an indispensible role in the church. But it was the kind of role that was fulfilled in the secrecy of a prayer chamber, not in the public space of a revolt. It is arguably possible that the women who followed Bushiri exercised a similar function. Moreover, if they did, it should not be entirely surprising that they are not in the archives, for this is how 'invisible transcripts' work. Indeed, such forms of power would undoubtedly have been invisible to colonial officials. Even the Belgian researchers sent to study Kitawala in the wake of the revolt would not necessarily have seen such roles.[36] For as Maman Kalema once told me, "such knowledge is the domain of women."[37]

The purpose here is not to "prove" that women held such roles as ceremonial leaders in Bushiri's uprising, but to problematize the archive, which represents them largely as victims, and to suggest that they might have been

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[35] Kabanga Kamalondo,10/19/2010.
[36] See: Gérard 1969; Philippart 1954. AA/AI 4737
[37] Maman Kalema, 4/18/2010.

something more. Such assertions are based not only on the oral evidence presented above, but on the significant body of research that highlights the important role of women as wielders of "creative power" in healing movements and independent churches in African history.[38] We know that Bushiri claimed to draw on the *puissance* of God in order to correct the imbalance in the economy of *puissance* caused by both the colonial state and by the witches presumed to be sewing harm within the communities. But we also know that he drew *puissance* from his followers as well. It is arguable, then, that just as some men were deemed moral wielders of *puissance* and drawn into the movement by Bushiri (the healers Alleloya and Albert, for example) while others were deemed immoral and became the victims of the movement's violence, some women may have been drawn into the movement as moral wielders of *puissance* that could strengthen Bushiri and his followers by performing evocations in prayer chambers, while other women deemed immoral wielders of *puissance* were violently punished.

Juxtaposing this discussion of women as healers and wielders of creative *puissance* with that of women as wielders of immoral power and victims of witchcraft accusations highlights the ambiguous and duplicitous nature of *puissance*. Indeed, it underscores the reasons why one must think about Bushiri's uprising not in terms of an anti-colonial/political movement, a healing movement, or even a prophetic movement, but as a movement concerned with restoring a balance in *puissance*. It is all of those things – prophetic, anti-colonial/political, healing - but it is more than each of those things alone. It is particularly important

[38] Iris Berger 1981; Hoelher-Fatton 1996; Jules-Rosette 1979, David Schoenbrun 1998.

when tethering movements like Bushiri's to the past to not only recognize the language of healing at work, but to move beyond thinking of that language in terms of "healing," as it can have a tendency to create a positive moral valance that obscures the violent side of such movements, just as thinking of them exclusively in anti-colonial/political terms obscures their healing side. But perhaps most importantly, it obscures how ambiguous, volatile and contested the theories of *puissance* that Bushiri and his followers drew on could be.

Tethering to the Present: Choreographies of Violence and Theories of Power

Thinking back to Alleloya's testimony, I would like to conclude by considering the choreographies of violence that were at play in the uprising, returning the questions of memory, somatization, and reproduction that were raised in the introduction. One of the most striking aspects of the violence as described by Alleloya and other witnesses is the extent to which it both reproduced and overtly critiqued colonial forms of violence. The prevalence of whipping with the *chicotte* – one of the most wretched icons of colonial dominance – is striking. As is the fact that Bushiri claimed that he could detect witches and other *puissant* deviants with a meter in his arm – an instrument of colonial domination, used by its agents to weigh and process any number of things, including rubber. Bushiri used it to 'test' the morality of people. Also notable is the image of De Schryver, the embodiment of the colonial state, stripped naked and forced to porter rubber,

bearing a humiliation that had long been borne by Congo's colonial subjects. The choreographies of each of these forms of violence were written by the colonial state long before Bushiri and his followers performed them, and their use during the uprising was a mirror held up to the colonial government, who largely failed to recognize in it the reflection of their own brutality, the choreography that they had written.[39] One recalls Jean Paul Sartre's words in his preface to Fanon's *The Wretched of the Earth*: "For it is not first of all *their* violence, it is ours, on the rebound, that grows and tears them apart"[40]

It is undoubtedly true that the choreography and the context of the violence performed by Bushiri and his followers was in many ways a reflection of the violence created by the colonial state. But if, as Nancy Hunt argues, "it is no longer tenable to imagine that one can write an urgent, effective history about violence and ruination…without tethering it to the present," the question remains of how and with what it can be tethered.[41] One might attempt to tether the history of Bushiri's uprising to the present by looking for the reproduction of choreographies of violence first performed by the colonial state. Looking at the ways in which violence against women emerged in Bushiri's uprising – rape, torture, forced public performance of sexual acts – it is possible to see that such choreographies were a repetition of modes of violence condoned and perpetrated by the colonial state and

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[39] I am, of course, drawing here on Michael Taussig's notion of the "colonial mirror." Michael Taussig 'Culture of Terror, Space of Death: Roger Casement's Putamoyo Report and the Explanation of Torture' *Comparative Studies in Society and History* (26:3) Jul. 1984, 494.

[40] Jean-Paul Sartre, 'Preface' in F. Fanon (2005), *The Wretched of the Earth,* by Grove Press, 1961, lii.

[41] Hunt 2008, 243.

its agents. Hunt very clearly outlines the prevalence of such forms of violence in Leopold's Congo, a history she quite rightly suggests has been too long silenced.[42] And it seems fair to suggest that the repetitions of such forms of violence in the present might, indeed, be tethered to the colonial past, where they were first choreographed by the colonial state, only to be mirrored by Bushiri and his followers, then again in the contemporary conflict.

But if we are going to tether violence in the colonial era to the present, then we must also consider ways in which much older imaginaries of violence and power can be tethered both to the colonial context and to the present. One must not give currency to "essentializing notions of Africa's past as one soaked in blood" by suggesting that Central Africa has a 'culture of violence'.[43] But neither did Central Africa have a history devoid of violence before colonialism. As this chapter has endeavored to demonstrate, the imaginaries through which violence was articulated prior to colonial occupation did not disappear with the colonial era and nor should we assume they have disappeared since.

In the region of the 1944 Kitawalist uprising, as in most of central and eastern Africa, violence, and its relative legitimacy, has historically been imagined and articulated through the ambiguous and contested language of *puissance*. In that language, violence can be healing, and healing can be violent, particularly when imbalance in the economy of *puissance* has resulted in grave social ills. In a contemporary context where Mai-Mai soldiers make claims to potent *puissance* in

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[42] This is the crux of Hunt's article, which is about the silence surrounding sexual violence condoned by the colonial state and its repetition in the present. Nancy Hunt 2008.

[43] David Schoenbrun 2006, 742.

the form of various *dawa*, one cannot help but recall the image of Bushiri's claim to the *mataifa* medicine of Alleloya. In the image of contemporary armed groups perpetrating violent acts in the name of protecting particular segments of the population, one cannot help but recall Bushiri and his men, claiming to protect the Kumu from the Wanianga, the Bakusu, the Europeans. In the image of a population experiencing grave social ills, but fearful and unconvinced of the legitimacy of emergent leaders perpetrating violence in the name of their protection, one can see the image of mothers of daughters murdered as witches spitting in the face of a captive Bushiri.

These are points that I pick up once more, in Chapter Six, when I expand the discussion of the economy of *puissance* beyond Kitawala in an effort to demonstrate how it can help us to understand the deeper history of what is often understood to be 'religious transformation' in the context of the contemporary conflict. But, before doing so, it is first necessary to look to the history of Kitawala in the late colonial era, illuminating how, in the midst of debate amongst colonial authorities about the nature of Kitawala, the extent of its threat to colonial project (the legitimacy of which was increasingly questioned both in the colony and the metropole), and how it could most effectively be combated, Kitawalists continued to pursue individual therapies, building - and disputing the definition of - communities in diverse circumstances, and sometimes, particularly in the later years, calling on the *puissance* of Kitawala in pursuit of ends that were frequently construed as nationalist.

Chapter Five:

After the Revolt: Kitawala Until Independence

In the aftermath of the 1944 uprising, the colonial government was reeling to make sense of what had been, in their estimation, a disaster. They had know there was significant activity in the region surrounding Lubutu, where Kitawalists preachers had been active since arrival of Mutombo Stephan and the other relégués from Katanga in 1941. In 1942 alone, they had relegated 308 Kitawalists from the region.[1] Nonetheless, they had the impression that their policies were keeping Kitawala in check and the local agents had very little inkling that an uprising the size of that which was led by Bushiri was possible. It was really only after the fact that they came to grasp the extent to which they had underestimated the continued influence of Kitawala in the region in the year leading up to the uprising, when many Congolese – including Bushiri and Alleloya – had been baptized into the movement. They had, of course, feared that Kitawala would lead to such unrest since its earliest manifestations in Congo, but they seemed to believe– despite significant evidence to the contrary - that their policies of relegation ("cutting the movement off at its head") were working to suppress its spread, or at the very least its capacity to cause significant unrest. Long periods of time would pass in *kitawalisé* regions in which the most significant reports would be that there had been some activity, spies were sent in, and the leaders were arrested, dispersing the 'cell' in question. Like the events in Manono, Bushiri's uprising had shocked them, and they would spend the next decade and a half trying to better grasp the nature of Kitawala and develop policies to address it. But even as the colonial government scrambled

[1] "Politique contre les movements indigènes subversifs: Mission Marmitte 1948-1950," 3/30/1950, 14. AA/AI 4736.

to more effectively address the 'Kitawala problem', the movement continued to spread and develop into new theaters of influence in the years following the revolt, particularly in the districts, both urban and rural, surrounding Stanleyville (Kisangani).

There are, thus, two related narratives to be written about the years following Bushiri's uprising in this, the final chapter of the colonial era history of Kitawala. There is the story of how the movement became a near obsession for Belgian administrators, who fretted endlessly about how to deal with the 'Kitawala problem,' and yet, for all their fretting, managed to implement very little in the way of meaningful policy reform, as their grand ideas met the budgetary and political constraints of a post-WWII metropole.[2] One can see the administration cautiously (and amid much debate) reexamining and beginning to move away from their long-standing (if also poorly articulated and haphazardly applied) policies of suppression, relegation, and containment – the efficacy of which had been called into serious question by Bushiri's uprising and the continued spread of Kitawala in the face of, and sometimes as a result of, such policies. In place, they seemed to be moving toward policies geared at rehabilitation (in the style of British Mau Mau reeducation camps), propaganda, and what Fred Cooper has called "the development idea" (i.e. making good on the development promises of empire: education, economic-development, and political participation).[3] The other story is that of the Kitawalists themselves: of how and why the movement continued to spread, of what it might have meant to those who joined, of people who abandoned the movement and had disagreements within it, and of the experiences of

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[2] On the difficulties of funding 'development' geared colonial projects in the post-WWII years, Frederick Cooper writes: "If empire on the cheap ceased to be politically possible, governments at home would have to ask whether taxpayers were willing to pay the costs of making imperial incorporation meaningful…" Frederick Cooper, *Colonialism In Question : Theory, Knowledge, History*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005, 187.

[3] Fred Cooper 2005, 187.

those who found themselves relegated to remote agricultural colonies and the kinds of communities they built in such circumstances.

Up to this point, the musings, motivations, and imaginings of colonial authorities in Congo have remained somewhat marginal to the history of Kitawala recounted in this dissertation. They have been portrayed largely as appendages of the colonial state, the intricacies of which have been alluded to, but not deeply analyzed. Of course, the school of 'new colonial studies' that has emerged over the past couple of decades has made it abundantly clear that the colonial state cannot be treated as one monolithic side of a colonizer/colonized binary. Rather, it was itself rife with tensions, plagued by inconsistency and its own fragility, profoundly shaped by the colonial realities it sought to control, subject to internal divisions and political constraints, and regularly operating in the context of multiple misunderstandings, misreadings, and misrepresetations even as it worked to methodically and rigorously produce knowledge about the colonized world.[4] A cursory glance at the colonial archives quite obviously suggests that the history of the Belgian colonial state's relationship with Kitawala lends itself to this 'new colonial studies' sort of analysis, for it was a history riddled with such forms of tensions, fears, and misunderstandings.

That this kind of analysis is relegated to an ancillary position in a single chapter of this particular study reflects a conscious effort to center Kitawalists - not the colonial state - in their own history. Nonetheless, it is both necessary and useful to look at the history behind changing colonial policies toward Kitawala in the post-1944 uprising years, for it lays

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[4] For examples of the New Colonial Studies: Cooper 2005; Frederick Cooper and Ann L. Stoler. *Tensions of Empire: Colonial Cultures in a Bourgeois World*. Berkeley, Calif: University of California Press, 1997; Hunt 1999; Patrick Harries, *Butterflies & Barbarians: Swiss Missionaries & Systems of Knowledge in South-East Africa*. Oxford: James Currey, 2007.

important foundations for thinking about the experiences of Kitawalists during those years. Moreover, it underscores the similarities between Belgian plans to 'develop' the undesirable characteristics out of Kitawala in the 1950s and the more recent attempts, discussed in the introduction, by UNICEF in the 2010s to change Kitawalist behavior related to polio vaccination. Obviously, it would be difficult to argue against the relative social benefit of universal polio vaccination and eradication, which is not the point in drawing the comparison. The point, rather, is to think about the colonial heritage of modern development policies and to interrogate the position of Kitawalists as the focus of such policies in these two distinct historical moments.

The second part of this chapter makes clear that the effort to center the story around Kitawalists themselves has not ceased, as it is ultimately experiences within Kitawalist communities in the late colonial period that are the central focus of the chapter. In particular, I am concerned with thinking beyond the question that has most commonly framed this period in Kitawalist history: whether and to what extent Kitawalists became nationalists in these years. Building on the work of previous chapters, I argue that rather than reproducing colonial debates about whether Kitawala was political (ie. nationalist) or purely religious, it is more fruitful to look for the varied and contextually situated ways in which Kitawalists mobilized discourses and practices of *puissance* in the twilight years of Belgian rule. At times this tied them directly into what might clearly qualify as nationalist activities, but as I will argue below, there are limits to thinking of them as such.

The State of Paranoia

If Kitawala had been a specter before Bushiri's uprising, in the years following it became a veritable colonial paranoia, as administrators and district agents feared that

Kitawalists would join forces with other religious movements – in particular Kimbanguism, Ngounzism, and Islam – and would 'devolve' into communism or nationalism.[5] In a 1957 memo about Kitawala-related policy, the Governor General warned that if proper steps were not taken to prevent it, the varied 'secret sects' would unite into "a single vast nationalist movement."[6] He went on to explain that, "If today 'Kimbanguism' and 'Kitawala' are a serious threat, tomorrow the unions and cultural associations will constitute a greater threat, if we do not manage to counterbalance their action with the elites and keep the masses with us."[7] The Kitawalists of today could and would (and in some cases, it was believed, already had) become the nationalists of tomorrow if their communities were left under-developed and they remained uneducated, little aware of the many 'improvements' the colonial government had brought them in the past and would continue to bring them. [8]

Yet even as the colonial paranoia about Kitawala seemed to escalate in the years following Bushiri's uprising, their sense that they could and must do something to alter the situation grew. The immediate reaction was draconian: a colony-wide ban on Kitawala and Watchtower in 1948. This was compounded with what would ultimately become one of their major strategies in the struggle to control the spread of Kitawala: the use of commissioned studies. Born of an increasing awareness of the profound "confusion about subversive movements" throughout the colony, these research missions became a cornerstone in discussions of policy related to Kitawala in the 1950s.[9] Among

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[5] The prevalence of such fears in colonial correspondences related to "subversive religious movements" during this period is remarkable. For a good example, see the report issued by Marmitte in 1950, "Politique contre…" 11-12, AA/AI 4736.
[6] "Politique á poursuivre á l'égard des mouvements politico-religieux" Leopoldville 2/25/57, 7. AA/AI 4736.
[7] Ibid, 8.
[8] Ibid, 8
[9] "Politique contre…" 5. AA/AI 4736

the earliest of these studies was a 2-year long, colony-wide research project conducted by an agent named Hemyle Marmitte from 1948-50. His mission was to write a comprehensive report that would clarify the nature of the various movements and sects deemed 'subversive' and 'secret', including Ngounzism (a prophetic movement in Western Congo related to Kimbanguism), Kimbanguism, and Kitawala.[10] For the most part, Marmitte's conclusions reinforced the widespread assumptions that the purpose of the various sects was to "exploit the credulity of natives and maintain their fear of magic powers and superstitious ideas."[11] As vehicles for the perpetuation of 'xenophobic ideas', the major threat was that these movements would be exploited by the far greater, internationally supported threats of nationalism and communism. His recommendation was to redouble their efforts of suppression: continue to relegate Congolese leaders and deport immigrant agitators, put more territorial agents on the ground so that they might more effectively gather intelligence, place the Department of Security in more direct contact with the office of the Governor General, have each territory develop a "secret code" to transmit messages, improve the roads, and place more security trucks on the ground.[12] The only non-security related measure he proposed was to "instill in the natives a sense of individual property," so that Congolese who felt a sense of ownership over their own businesses, for example, would be more likely to remain loyal to the state which protects that property. How the government might accomplish this task is little discussed.

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[10] Ibid, 9.
[11] Ibid, 5
[12] Ibid, 25-33

Not surprisingly, Marmitte's suggestions met with little success and by the mid 1950's the government found itself in what one exasperated administrator would label "an eternal battle that [was] already lost."[13] Not long after Marmitte's report, R. Philippart, a district administrator in Stanleyville, was called upon to produce successive studies about the nature of Kitawala in Stanleyville, which had by then become the most active theater of Kitawalist expansion. It is in Philippart's reports that one can begin to see what would become one of the major themes repeated and debated in colonial circles: that there were two different kinds of Kitawala, 'political' Kitawala and 'religious' Kitawala. The nature and extent of the differences between the different forms of Kitawala would be a topic of heated debate within the administration, right up until Independence.

Differentiating Kitawalas

In his earliest study of the movement, circulated in 1954, Philippart would suggest that the two different types of Kitawala were regionally situated. The first type was the Kitawala of Katanga, which was supposed to have remained ideologically much closer to Watchtower. Meanwhile, deprived of access to Watchtower literature and largely devoid of a literate leadership in Kivu and Orientale, Philippart suggested that Kitawalists developed a doctrine – he referred to it as "current Kitawala" - that borrowed much more heavily from local 'religious' practice, was significantly less organized, and was far more susceptible to incorporation of ideas borrowed from Kimbanguism and, more seriously,

[13] M. Kreutz, "Objet. Recrudence Kitawala dans le Distrist [Stanleyville]," 5/9/56, 3. AA/AI 4737.

nationalism. In his later reports, Philippart would further elaborate his discussion of 'current Kitawala' by identifying what he saw as two ethnically distinct Kitawala "tendencies": the Walengola-Bakumu tendency and the Tapoke-Lokele tendency. He argues that Walengola-Bakumu tendency remained closer to the Kitawala doctrine that he described in 1954 while the other appeared to be evolving towards Kimbanguism. Philippart described it as a "nationalist movement of a fatally xenophobic nature that finds its justification in a loose interpretation of the Bible" and insisted that it was far more violent.

In a show of prejudice typical of the Belgian colonial officials, Philipart voiced surprise that the Lokele could be "seduced" by a "ridiculously infantile credo" like that professed by the Walengola, since it was thought that only "wretched" and "inferior" people could be "contaminated" by Kitawala.[14] For the administrators, it was unbelievable until it happened and, once again, they were caught off guard. Already in 1954, Philippart had noted that there were Topoko-Lokele in certain cells of Kitawala. He believed that they had been "seduced by the mysterious and secret character" of the sect, but they could not tolerate being under the "domination" of Walengola very long, so

[14] Philippart 1956. AA/AI 4737. Belgians –not unlike other colonial regimes – liked to rank different ethnic groups for their perceived intelligence and capacity for work. This Walengola-Bakumu/ Topoke-Lekele distinction was perpetuated throughout the administration. In a memoradum about Kitawala policy, the District Commissioner Kreutz makes the same distinction, worrying that the population of Topoke and Lokele were moving closer to Kimbanguism and that this was "particularly unsettling" because they were "much more intelligent than the Bakumu or Walengola." Of course, the most notorious example of this sort of ethnic ranking by the Belgiams was their policy of importing Rwandaphone immigrant workers into the mining regions of the Kivus during the 1930s because they were perceived as more diligent and capable workers than the local 'Bantu' populations. On this history, see: Koen Vlassenroot, "Citizenship, Identity Formation and Conflict in South Kivu: The Case of the Banyamulenge." *Review of African Political Economy*, 2002.

schism very quickly evolved and they became much more dangerous.[15] In the report, Philippart was particularly concerned that the "level of intelligence" of the Topoko-Lokele adherents was much higher. They held higher positions –"the famous Mussa was a former clerk!" – and constituted the "petite bourgeoisie natives."[16] It was for this reason that they were deemed so much more dangerous.

Leaving aside Philippart's problematic assumptions about the relative intelligence of the two groups, the kind of schism he describes in the report is interesting and will be worth revisiting later. His observations about the dangerous 'nationalist' character of Topoko-Lokele Kitawala came on the heels of events that had taken place in December of 1955. At that time, a number of leaders of a local Kitawala cell in Ponthierville had been arrested. The remaining leaders allegedly rallied around the arrests and at "numerous clandestine meetings" they preached that they must make their move. They made a plan to blow up the armory in Camp Prince Charles to gain the trust of their adepts. Those involved were ex-cons from the CARDs (the Agricultural Colonies for Dangerous Relegués), some soldiers, officers of the Force Publique, territorial police, prison guards, local chiefs and notables, domestic workers of the territorial personnel, some skilled artisans and many workers in the service of the colony, including water porters (one reportedly said he would sink the water barrels when they blew up the armory of Stanleyville).[17] The security forces received intelligence about the plot and

[15] Philippart 1956. AA/AI 4737
[16] Ibid.
[17] Kreutz, "Objet Kitawala au 16 Janvier 1956," AA/AI 4737.

police were called in to make numerous arrests. In the wake of the events, "good will was greatly eroded and the arrests were resented," but a relative calm returned.[18]

Nonetheless, the events of December 1955 brought new urgency to a conversation that had already been in progress since early 1955, when administrators from various *kitawalisé* regions had convened a meeting to discuss the 'Kitawala problem'. They fretted that "all time lost today is taken as profit by the fanatics of the movement to render gangrenous ever wider and deeper layers of the population."[19]

Yet, the combined pressures of the cost of enforcing the Kitawala ban and mounting pressure from the international community to respect religious freedom had forced the administration to look for different options to address the issue. International pressure was becoming particularly burdensome for the administration when the American Watch Tower Society pressed for them to recognize the rights of Jehovah's Witnesses to practice their religion in peace. They chastised the Belgian government for their oppression, insisting it was a matter of "the freedom to worship for all peoples" and pointing out that as a member of the UN, Belgium was bound by its charter, which included securing freedom to worship.[20] Moreover, administrators worried that suppression by force would only result in the loss of life and would "very heavily jeopardize their current civilizing work.[21]"

Watchtower Redeemable? The Legalization Debate

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[18] Ibid.
[19] M. Kreutz, 5/9/56. AA/AI 4737, 3
[20] M.G. Henschel (director of Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society in PA), "Memorandum and Petition –Subject: Jehova's Witness in the Congo." 6/15/56 AA/AI 4737.
[21] M. Kreutz, 5/9/56. AA/AI 4737, 3

In 1955, the Watchtower Society sent a representative – M.G. Henschel of Philadephia - to the capital at Leopoldville (Kinshasa) to petition the administration to lift the ban. In 1956, Henschel once again appealed to the administration in a letter that made the case for legalization. He explained to the Belgian administration how well legalization had worked in Rhodesia and Nyasaland, where there were over 5,000 Jehovah's Witnesses practicing in 1,000 congregations.[22] At a time when those regions were experiencing tumultuous revolts, he argued, "Jehovah's Witnesses [had] been most notable for their calm." He related a story about a strike in Nyasaland. While nearly all of the miners participated in the strike, the Jehovah's Witnesses continued to work. Because of their loyalty, they were given some of the "most responsible positions" in the mine.[23] He was also heartily impressed on his own visit to Rhodesia by the number of Jehovah's witnesses who had "positions of responsibility in the large hotels."[24] Voicing an argument that would be central to the perceived viability of legalization, he maintained that the key to controlling Watchtower was "adequate European supervisions giving sound instruction and counsel."[25]

Henschel was, however, adamant that the administration should recognize the stark differences between Watchtower and Kitawala. He wrote:

> It is well known to us that there is a movement which has been called Kitawala in the Belgian Congo that is composed of lawless individuals who carry on acts of sedition or subversion. Unfortunately, the name Kitawala has been applied to Jehova's witnesses as well, but there is absolutely no connection between the activities and practices of Jehova's witnesses and those of lawless elements such

[22] Ibid, 4
[23] Ibid, 5
[24] Ibid, 5
[25] Ibid, 5

> as Kitawala. It is a well-known fact that Jehova's witnesses throughout the world are the most law-abiding people who pay their taxes.[26]

Kitawalists, in his opinion, were "lawless" troublemakers, while Witnesses were "the most law-abiding people in the world" – a phrase which he used repeatedly in his plea.[27] In fact, in their quest to understand whether and to what extent there were different kinds of Kitawala, what the relationship was between Kitawala and the official Watchtower Society, and how legalization might pan out if Watchtower missionaries were allowed to legally work in Congo, the administration had already decided to commission a study on the question of legalization. An agent named Paul-Ernest Joset was sent to Nyasaland and Rhodesia to investigate how legalization had worked out in those two colonies.

In many ways, Joset's findings in Nyasaland and Rhodesia mirrored what the letter from Henschel had said. In fact, he recounted the very same story about the strike in Nyasaland, adding that the Watchtower adherents had "refused to inscribe themselves to anti-European politics of the African Congress in Rhodesia". [28] He told another anecdote about having met with a white Watchtower leader – Mr. Arnott, a British expat - who criticized the Belgian policy and suggested that rather than banning Watchtower entirely, they should go in and find out whether various cells were Watchtower or "deviationist movements" (i.e. Kitawala).[29] Ultimately, this is precisely what Joset recommended, suggesting that they do an experiment in Katanga and allow a few European Watchtower leaders to come in and try to take control of the movement, that they might guide the

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[26] Ibid 3
[27] Ibid, 5
[28] Joset Report 1956, AA/AI 4737
[29] Ibid.

Kitawalists away from political ideas. He suggested that they "see if they have the means to take them into their hands religiously, as they did in Rhodesia and Nyasaland."[30]

Joset furthermore recommended that they do away with the Agricultural Colonies for Dangerous Relégués (CARDs), arguing that they had simply made the leaders into martyrs and ultimately made them more dangerous. He noted, furthermore, that the number of relégués had become excessively high – 4,350 men, women, and children in the four camps at Kasaji (Katanga), Ekafera (Equateur), Oshwe(Bandundu), and Belingo (Equateur).[31] Not only did this level of relegtion create martyrs, but he went so far as to suggest that it was a waste of human potential. By legalizing Watchtower, he argued, effective leaders could become part of public life, their capacity to organize harnessed by the state, not suppressed. He writes:

> It is essential that the most active Congolese, the most capable, and especially the most influential of the all of the organizations currently existing in the Belgian Congo should be incorporated in the Conseils de Chefferie or Terrotorial as well as other local organizations to a greater degree. It is by making them participate more and more in the public life that we will have them as more devoted collaborators.[32]

If legitimized, Kitawalists might be of service to the state. After all, Joset implied, that was what had happened in Nyasaland.

Joset was fiercely criticized. Philippart doubted whether Kitawala remained close enough to Watchtower for Joset's suggested plan to succeed. In Orientale, Philippart argued, it had become a "purely nationalist and anti-white" movement.[33] He worried that

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[30] Joset "Nouvelle politique á appliquer vis-à-vis des mouvements politico-religieux" AA/AI 4737.
[31] Ibid, 7
[32] Ibid, 8
[33] Philippart, "Rapport de la Prise de Contact Entre Monsieur Joset…" 4/5/1956 [written May 26, 1956], AA/AI 4737, 2.

legalization in Katanga would simply facilitate the spread. Rather than contain the movement, he suggested, legalization might actually prove the teachings of the leaders: the whites were weak and would be forced to recognize them. This might, in turn, unify them, rendering them more powerful. Moreover, he warned, if it didn't work they might not be able to get rid of Watchtower missionaries after having allowed them to come.[34] Exhibiting a bit of the characteristic colonial paranoia, he even insinuated that white Watchtower leaders in Rhodesia might actually be conspirators in the anti-colonial struggles of the Africans, since their cooperation with the government seemed entirely contrary to their teachings. Were they FBI, he wondered? Were they simply pretending to work with government in order to build up sufficient following so that they could realize their ultimate goal of undermining the state?[35] Rather than legalization, he promoted an "unacknowledged tolerance" of 'religious' Kitawala, and no tolerance for 'political' Kitawala. This is what Philippart has been doing in Stanleyville. There were clearly not enough prisons to arrest them all, so they should only arrest the dangerous leaders, with a "violent character".[36] In addition, Philippart was an adamant proponent of using development and propaganda to fight the 'Kitawala problem', a topic discussed further below.

Yet another critic of Joset – D. Halleux - had a different reading of his report. Halleux essentially accused Joset of copying the substantive material in his report "nearly verbatim" from report produced by the security administration in 1953 – "Synthèse sur le

[34] Ibid, 2
[35] Ibid. 3
[36] Ibid, 3

Kitawala" – and using it to support dubious conclusions.[37] He argued that the purpose of secret societies such as Kitawala was to use "magic and superstitious techniques" to create a "tyranny" over the masses. The leaders of the movements appealed to the religious sentiments "deep in the hearts of the natives", Halleux wrote, because they knew that in economic, technical, cultural, and political spheres they were exceeded.[38] He suggested that the religious movements were a tool of elites, who "cannot enter…into direct competition with European culture or economy" and so they "use traditional processes and create new religions to lead the masses."[39] The policy of "'disassociating strictly religious action from political and xenophobic action is a decoy," Halleux suggested. The reason the Congolese looked to Watchtower was because it was American and the teachings regularly address liberation from colonists. So the idea that it could be depoliticized through some nebulous plan to 'develop' their undesirable traits away was an illusion. "Educate the natives? Improve their economic capacity? Increase social and medical services? These are not specific means," he reproached. Moreover, they could, he warned, just as easily augment the power and influence of the leaders. [40]

Halleux' recommendation – rather than implementing 'development' projects in some haphazard way - was to invest energy and resources in supporting the traditional authorities and the elites who were most progressive. They must, he argued, make the "inferiority complex" caused by colonialism disappear and give a sense of purpose to the disempowered populations. But this would, he warned, require administrators to give

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[37] D. Halleux, "Note to Minister: 'Objet: rapports de mission de P.E. Joset sur les sectes secrètes." 12/10/1956 AA/AI 4737, 1.
[38] Ibid, 2-3.
[39] Ibid, 2-3.
[40] Ibid, 5

directives without the "sense of domination" that they so often gave. All of these churches were looking not just for religious emancipation, Halleux pointed out, but for material riches (a 'golden age'). To implement this directive in a less utopian way, he insisted that they must: 1) democratize the districts, and give the Congolese local representation and 2) create teams that could facilitate the social, medical, and economic development in the sectors, putting the locals at the forefront of leadership.[41]

The 'White Kitawalist'

Somewhere both between and apart from Philippart, Joset, and Halleux was Jacques Gérard. Gérard was an interesting and somewhat unique member of what ultimately became known as the Kitawala 'team'.[42] Gérard was an anthropologist and he was commissioned to execute yet another study of Kitawala, however his purpose was somewhat different: try to gain the trust of Kitawalists in order to understand who they were and what they believed, so that he might help to clarify the confusion about

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[41] It's interesting to note here that this push for local representation and grassroots leadership without any real commitment to shifting the unequal distribution of power and access to wealth represented in Halleux' plan bears remarkable similarity to (now heavily critiqued) policies of 'conflict resolution' used in Congo today, where the push for local 'representation' in the form of elections has only served to 'legitimate' a state that has little incentive to offer meaningful change to its constituents. In other words "representation" means very little when it is not accompanied by the power to enact meaningful change and has, thus, done little to quell the conflict. For a cogent critique of this approach, see: Deni Tull and Andrea Mehler, "The Hidden Cost of Power Sharing: Reproducing Insurgent Violence in Africa," *African Affairs*, vol 104, no 416, 2005, p. 375-398

[42] The administration had, in 1955, made it an official part of the agenda to "set up a team composed of 5 experienced agents having in their attributes not only the screening of leaders, but also the intensive counterpropaganda in regions deemed contaminated." M. Kreutz 1956, AA/AI 4737, 2.

Kitawala among Europeans. When his research was ultimately published in a book years later, in 1969, Benoit Verhaegen (another well-known Belgian anthropologist) wrote that Gérard was "one of the rare Europeans" who were "privileged to obtain the trust of the Kitawala adepts," offering them his "sincere and patient friendship."[43] When Gérard himself described his work he claimed that he had lived, in Straussian terms, "like a native" and had been "integrated as completely as possible into the community."[44] He conducted his research in the same territory that had been at the heart of Bushiri's revolt: in Lubutu (Kivu), Walikale (Kivu), Lubero (Kivu) and Angumu (Orientale).[45]

Of course, one must question Gérard 's research premises and his claims to 'insider' status. Such forms of 'participant-observation' in colonial anthropology have been heavily critiqued for decades.[46] Though the administration had relaxed the laws banning Kitawala in the region where Gérard did his work, it is difficult to imagine that any real trust could be fostered in a context in which Kitawalists had, only a decade earlier, been in direct conflict with the colonial government and had since suffered consistent fear, if not experience, of government persecution for their beliefs. Nonetheless, there is some evidence that Gérard 's presence may have assuaged the fears of Kitawalists somewhat, as Gérard 's research apparently coincided with an increase in

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[43] Benoit Verhaegen, "Preface." In Jacques Gérard, 1969.
[44] Gérard 1969, 11. De Mahieu suggests that Gérard posed as a white Kitawala leader, De Mahieu W., "Les Komo et le Kitawala." Cahiers des religions africaines. 10.19 (1976): 54.
[45] Gérard 1969, 12.
[46] For a review of this literature as it relates to Africa, see: Andrew Apter, "Africa, Empire, and Anthropology: A Philological Exploration of Anthropology's Heart of Darkness."*Annual Review of Anthropology* , Vol. 28, (1999), 577-598

Kitawalist activity.[47] It is possible that this was in part a realization of what Philippart had suggested might happen: the relaxed ban had proven the teachings of the Kitawalist preachers. The whites were weak and were being forced to recognize them. In the language of *puissance*, however, a different reading of the increased activity might be possible: the *puissance* of Kitawala was so potent that even the whites were now seeking it. Such a reading might suggest that an increase in Kitawala practice indicated that they had, by procuring a white 'convert', gained currency in the economy of *puissance*. There is, unfortunately, little evidence in the archives to support such an argument, but given the language with which Bushiri and other Kitawalists spoke of Europeans – as possessors and hoarders of *puissance* – such a reading seems possible and even probable.

In any case, leaving aside the question of how well Gérard might have been able to gain the confidence of Kitawalists and how they might have imagined his presence in their communities, it is clear from his writings that he had a somewhat more nuanced understanding of Kitawalist beliefs and practices than most of his contemporaries. He realized, for example, that Kitawala was part of a larger history concerning *puissance,* which - drawing on the work of Placide Tempels - he called *bwanga..*[48] He seemed well aware that as a means for procuring and embodying *puissance*, Kitawala was inherently political insofar as its core teachings were geared toward procuring power and creating a better world free from oppressive and ineffectual leadership. But he saw it not as part of a locally rooted intellectual tradition of power, but in universalist terms, as an expression of

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[47] De Mahieu 1976, 54

[48] Placide Tempels, *Bantu Philosophy*. Paris: Preśence africaine, 1959. Gérard 's discussions of *bwanga* are discussed further below.

the "Homo Politicus"- the naturally political man. He used several anecdotes to prove his point:

> Salamu is strong and intelligent and admired by all. But he is illiterate, so doors to power available to clerks are, for this reason, forever closed to him. He tried working in the mines, but he does not possess the servile nature necessary in all the manual areas of that field; he will never be team leader.
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> In the country, where the villages are small, the chiefs are reduced to a functional role in the lower levels of the state. It is often a hereditary position. Maybe he could hold a position as a notable. But even that post requires a certain level of ascendency that is unavailable to him. But he has a rich personality. In other circumstances, had he been more educated, he might have become an officer, or syndicate chief, or simply a champion of sport. He would be, in some manner, be distinguished; he would have been able to command, to impose himself, to emerge from the masses. But in the humble bush, he becomes a great pastor. Religion interests him in the same way it interested the Knights Templar. Power is his passion and he runs a group with great strength. He is a chief. He is not a priest. He represents well a man strong with power. And Kitawala was the only lever within his reach.
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> Completely other is the manner of Asumani. No less intelligent than Salamu, he does not shine in the arena. Svelte and less virtuous, he rules by language and argument. It is he who beats the record in female conversion. He reads a bit, he has some good sermons, but he doesn't really know how to obtain a bureaucratic grade. He was a domestic: one of those who can empty the house without his master knowing. No less notable, he could fool even the 'experienced' functionary with his bag of tricks. But alas, not one of his ancestors was a leader and Asumani will never be an important notable.
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> Voilà, the image of two remarkable men, each in his own way. But the political spirit blows where it will. There are many men with the political spirit. They are not men of the state. But they are nonetheless politicians.[49]

Gérard imagined Kitawala as a means by which clan lines could be redrawn, with pastors representing clan leaders.[50] But he also saw it as a path by which those who were barred from both 'traditional' and 'modern' paths to power could sate their innate hunger

[49] Jacques Gérard, "Le Caractere Politique du Kitawala au Kivu," 1956. AA/AI 4737 Mwene-Batende would make essentially the same argument decades later. Mwene-Batende 1982.
[50] Gérard 1969, 108.

for that power. Of course, historians have argued for decades now that 'healing movements' have long served such a purpose: as a means to procuring and exercising *puissanc*e beyond and sometimes in direct competition with clan-based power structures.[51] But in the late colonial context, where the debate circulated around whether Kitawala was primarily political and should be banned or primarily religious and should be legalized, Gérard could not or would not see this deeper historical connection, but angled, rather, to paint Kitawalists as "victims of modernity" whose essentially religious movement had been politicized because their very circumstances.[52] Rather than dismantle the political/religious dichotomy, he concluded that Kitawala had "profound religious roots" but was "tormented by politics". Give the Kitawalists' responsibility and the right to power, he argued, and they would remain "no more than a simple sect." He then concluded the study with one more anecdote about a man named Yafari:

> He does not want personal power. He does not search out a great number of adepts or to valorize himself. He leads a small number. He is an example for the masses. Yafari could have been born a priest. He is among those who look for God to show them a better path, but that is completely different story.[53]

Some Kitawalists, Gérard explained, were simply looking for the greater meaning in life, the "better path."

The "Development Idea": Schools, Roads, and Propaganda

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[51] Healing movements, also could serve to bolster such clan-based forms of 'instrumental power' (as David Schoenbrun calls it) when co-opted. Schoenbrun 1999; Neil Kodesh 2010.
[52] Gérard 1969, 106
[53] Gérard "Le Character…" AA/AI 4737.

Thus, in many ways, Gérard was in agreement with Halleux. He felt that if given alternative paths to power – i.e. representation and a voice at the local level – Kitawalists would remain "a simple sect." But unlike Hallieux, he was able to see the politicization of Kitawala in more nuanced terms than disgruntled Congolese who used "magic and superstition" to create "tyranny" over the masses. Moreover, Gérard did not share Hallieux' harsh critique of development as a means to address the 'Kitawala problem'. Like Philipart and Joset, Gérard thought that development – giving the Kitawalists access to the benefits of 'modernity' – would be the most fruitful way forward. And though there were detractors – Hallieux being one of them - this was ultimately what became policy on the issue, as the administration concluded that the existing policies were fruitless. Kruetz sums up the growing sentiment thusly: "It is obvious that the method of incarceration and relegation against a movement whose vitality and violence is well known is ridiculous and will never achieve any tangible results."

To be sure, the 'development idea' was hardly reserved for Kitawala policy. Jan Vansina points out that as early as 1949, when the Belgian Congo laid out their ten-year development plan, significant amounts of capital were to be invested in Congolese infrastructure, so much that Vansina labels it a "welfare state."[54] During these years, Congolese infrastructure – particularly roads and railroads - expanded significantly. Hospitals, health clinics (particularly maternal health clinics) were built across the colony and, once a Liberal politician became minister of the colonies in 1954, the first state-run schools began to appear (previously they had all been mission-run).[55] Much of this work

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[54] Jan Vansina, *Being Colonized: The Kuba Experience in Rural Congo, 1880-1960*. Madison, Wis: University of Wisconsin Press, 2010, 172.
[55] Ibid, 172-175.

was overseen by the Fonds de Bien-Être Indigène (FBEI), an agency established after the war to invest in the 'well-being' of the Congolese population.

What was interesting about the planned Kitawala policy was the underlying notion that they could target specific *kitawalisé* regions with propaganda and development campaigns intended to develop the unwanted political aspects out of Kitawala. They would build roads, create dispensaries and clinics, educate the children, and invest in economic development of the region – though, as Halleux so scathingly pointed out, the means by which they could achieve such ends were never fully articulated. Among the proposed ideas was the creation of an "anti-Kitawala propaganda film" to be shown in *kitawalisé* regions. Such films were not uncommon in the Belgian Congo, where the FBEI held a sum of money earmarked for just such purposes. Belgian film scholars Ramirez and Rolot argue that in the latter years of the Belgian colonial state it was not uncommon for the Congolese – particularly Congolese workers - to be shown "film spectacles" which were paternalistically imagined as "healthy and educative diversions as well as judicious exhortations to social harmony."[56] There is no evidence to suggest that an anti-Kitawala propaganda film ever moved beyond the stage of discussion, but the fact that it was imagined is a notable example of what Jan Vansina has called the administration's "Stalin-like faith in social engineering and planning."[57]

Another favored course of action was the "reinforcement of the administrative capacities of the native districts" which, it was believed, would stave off the continued

[56] Christian Rolot and Francis Ramirez, "Le cinéma colonial belge: Archives d'une utopie," *Revue belge du cinéma* (29) 1990, 7.
[57] Vansina 2010, 173.

spread of Kitawala by reinforcing 'traditional' forms of authority. [58] The Minister of the Colonies A. Bruissert believed that "in places the traditional frames are strong and remain in place, the subversive movements have had little success." Meanwhile, he argued, "those who have been uprooted, detribalized, or are living in a rickety social order no longer responsive to their aspirations…easily turn to new forms of association that have, in their eyes valorized their qualities and ensured them they will have the well-being they aspire to have."[59]

The imagined development projects did not extend exclusively to the regions where Kitawalists were living freely (if also clandestinely) within their communities. In fact, the administration was equally - if not more - concerned with the unfree Kitawalist population: the relegués living in the CARDs. Recall from Chapter Three that when Marmitte was sent out in 1949, unimpressed by the administration of the camps, he found that Kitawalists living the agricultural colonies had "retained their spirit of fanaticism and saw in the creation of the COLAGRE the material realization of their 'Kitawala Church' and did not ever want to leave."[60] Bruissert was frank about his concerns:

> What is being done in the fight against Kitawala, for example, in deciding to take economic-social action in contaminated areas, may lose much of its effectiveness if we do not also continue to develop the agricultural colonies, not only through the creation of schools and improved housing and dispensaries equipped with teams, but also by the organization of a systematic action to redress and improve rehabilitation.[61]

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[58] Buisseret, "Politique á poursuivre á l'égard des sectes subversives, 25/2/57" AA/AI 4737.
[59] Ibid.
[60] Mission Marmitte, 7/15/1949. AA/AI 4736, 4.
[61] Buisseret "Politique a poursuivre…" AA/AI 4737 Buisseret was minister of the colonies.

When Philippart visited the CARD at Kasaji in 1956, he was also unimpressed with the capacity of the camps to "reeducate" the prisoners. He lamented that, "the individual is morally abandoned to his own forces, to his own tendencies, whether they are good or bad, and this in a milieu where the number of bad forces that could solicit him are numerous."[62] How, Philippart wondered, would it be possible in these circumstances for a prisoner who wanted to better himself to do so?

And the concern was not limited to the relegués themselves, but also to their families, many of whom were living at the camps with them. When Philippart visited Kasaji, he noted that there were more than 250 families living in the camps. What of the women, Philippart worried? He noted in many cases that it was the women who were exercising negative influence on their husbands. He reported that "through their mockery and their sarcasm, they have recast their husbands into the fatal orbit of active Kitawala: 'You are afraid. Are you not a man? I was married to a great pastor, but now I'm married to nobody. Everyone mocks me and I am ashamed."[63] And the children were even more cause for concern. The children of men who were relegated for five, ten, fifteen or more years "practically grow up in these conditions."[64] Then, when they were grown, Philippart warned, they would leave the colonies having known nothing other than their father's relegation, which was the sole thing animating their regard for the Belgians: "the

[62] R. Philipart, "Rapport au sujet de la visite effectuée á la colonie agricole de Kasaji par l'administratuer territorial ASST. PPL. Philippart, Stanleyville, le 5 Sept. 1956." AA/AI 4736.
[63] Ibid. 4
[64] Ibid. 5

most violent, the most profound, the most irreducible xenophobia inevitably animates them."[65] He continued:

> ..from their infancy to their adolescence they are practically gorged on xenophobia and politico-religious sentiments…Their resolutely anti-white sentiments are anchored in the depths of their selves, they are an integrated part of their nature, and nothing can change them…the agricultural colonies are, in this point of view, the best school of revolts and revolutionaries that one can possibly conceive. There, growing up right in front of our eyes, are the most pitiless and formidable enemies of tomorrow.[66]

Sources like Philippart's report from Kasadji are useful for the glimpse they offer into the heart of colonial fears: relegation camps were a veritable breeding ground for revolutionaries! But Philippart was not alone in his fears. Indeed, the problem of what to do about the thousands of relegués in the system had, by the 1950s, become one of utmost urgency. Joset was also among those voicing his disapproval of how the detainees essentially were left to their own devices, and he and Philippart became two of the most adamant supporters to what ultimately became the proposed plan: the creation of reeducation camps built on the model of British Mau Mau reeducation camps. Recall from Chapter Three that Joset lauded the "the brilliant results" the British had found with Mau Mau in Kenya.[67] For the women, Philippart suggested, they should build maternities and they should oblige the wives of the detainees to undergo the very same reeducation program as the men in order to avoid incidents of "mockery and sarcasm" causing relapse. For the children, they should build schools. For everyone, they should

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[65] Ibid. 5
[66] Ibid. 5
[67] Joset, 15/6/1957. AA/AI 4736; Philippart "Rapport de la Prise de Contact Entre Monsieur Joset…"(5/26/956), AA/AI 4736, 7.

provide access to leisure activities: 'magnetic tapes' accompanied by speakers, 'music infused with slogans', and, of course, 'films of a special educative character.'[68]

As with the anti-Kitawala propaganda films, there is little evidence to suggest that the sort of broad-scale development initiatives or reform of the relegation system discussed in the administrative correspondences ever really came to fruition. In 1957, the Governor General indicated that Philippart had implemented some of the plans and had seen "encouraging results", but he gives little indication of what such 'encouraging results' looked like. Moreover, in the very same memorandum, he expresses clear frustration with the progress in executing the policies that had been established in the preceding years. Judging from his text, the problems with execution seemed to have two roots. First, as I have just suggested, there were significant differences of opinion about how best to address the 'Kitawala problem'. Exhibiting clear irritation with this reality, the Governor wrote, in reference to the new policies, that "everyone one must conform, including those with 'preconceived ideas.'"[69] Unsurprisingly - given Fred Cooper's observations about the ultimate failure of the development idea – the other problem appears to have been money, or more accurately, the capacity of the administration to designate more funds to projects that were increasingly less 'politically sustainable' in the metropole.[70] The governor does not say as much, but his insistence that the regional agents should look for "volunteer" labor from the local populations in order to achieve the development goals suggests as much. As Vansina explains, many of the development plans – particularly those geared toward changing agricultural practices – were among the

[68] Philippart, "Rapport au sujet.." AA/AI 4736, 5.
[69] A. Buisseret, "Politique a poursuivre…" AA/AI 4736, 5.
[70] Cooper 2005,187

most hated of all colonial policies, so it should not be surprising that implementing them would prove a significant hurdle.[71]

Moreover, even after all of their grand talk about development projects and propaganda campaigns, Kitawala continued to grow. That this was so – particularly in Orientale - can be seen the in reports, detailed in Chapter One, indicating that in the months leading up to independence, Kitawalists were everywhere in the region and involved in MNC-Lumumba independence activities. This raises the question of what was going on within Kitawalist communities and how they may have experienced and thought about the final decade and a half of colonial rule and offers a useful point at which to pivot the conversation in that direction.

Of 'Moral Projects' and the Economy of Puissance

In Derek Peterson's recent article on the intellectual life of Mau Mau detainees, he criticizes Carline Elkins well-known account of the Mau Mau war as a "straightforward struggle between two sides" in which "Gikuyu were either part of a 'Mau Mau population or British loyalists.'"[72] Peterson deconstructs Elkin's argument that Gikuyu detainees were 'socially dead' figures who, in the face of the violence, humiliation, and isolation they endured, sometimes managed to resist (through their continued commitment to Mau Mau) but were often physically and psychologically 'broken' by the British and confessed their involvement. He argues that her "simplified

[71] Vansina 2010, 174
[72] Derek R. Peterson, "The Intellectual Lives of Mau Mau Detainees," *The Journal of African History*, (49: 1), 2008, 75.

analytical categories", built around the question of loyalty to Mau Mau does little to illuminate the "range of intellectual and moral projects in which detainees were involved."[73] Mau Mau oathtakers, Peterson argues, were not so much in a straightforward political war against the colonial state as they were "involved in a moral project," at the center of which were their own families and communities. He writes: "Detainees did cultural work to ensure their wives' fidelity, to get leverage over brothers and clansmen, and to generate rhetorical and social capital with which to engage with the British. They were engaged in innovative cultural and social projects, generating knowledge and making claims on others."[74]

Peterson's approach to thinking about Mau Mau is insightful, and it offers a useful jumping off point to begin thinking about the concerns of Kitawalists, whether they were detainees building communities in captivity, dissidents plotting to blow up the armory in Stanleyville, natural 'politicians' looking for an outlet for their leadership skills, or, as I will discuss shortly, young men and women searching for an *nkisi* – power object - that could 'bring their parents back from the dead' or make them desirable to the opposite sex. Each of these kinds of Kitawalists existed. But more importantly, they were not distinct categories, as a given Kitawalist could fit into any, all, or none of these categories depending on their own interests, concerns and circumstances.

It is undoubtedly true, as I have illustrated above, that Belgian attempts to contain and depoliticize Kitawala were in many ways thwarted by their own disagreement on how to go about achieving such ends and the constraints of balancing the cost of proposed development with the political will of both the metropole and the Congolese

[73] Peterson 2008, 75
[74] Peterson 2008, 75

themselves to bear it. But they were also thwarted on a far more profound level by their disconnect with the actual concerns of people who converted to and practiced Kitawala. Guided by their own political imperatives, the administration was compelled to create and define categories of acceptable and unacceptable – 'religious' and 'political', benign and dangerous – Kitawala. These categories were rendered real by the fact that they were the dividing lines that decided who would be spied on, interrogated, arrested and detained, and who –at least in the later years - would be deemed benign and left to practice their 'religion' in relative peace (though inevitably still under the watchful and wary eye of the state).

But just as the categories of 'Mau Mau' and 'British loyalist' could never encompass the broad range of 'intellectual and moral projects' that concerned the detainees that Peterson discusses, the categories of 'political' or 'religious' could never fully illuminate the 'intellectual and moral projects' of Kitawalists. Nor could the Belgians' myopic understanding of 'political' as 'anti-colonial' reveal much about how, for those who practiced it, Kitawala fit into a broader economy of *puissance – puissance* that was imagined to be necessary to execute the moral and intellectual projects that concerned them. Thus, Belgian attempts to define such categories were doomed from their very conception.

In the final section of this chapter, I will try to illuminate some of the intellectual and moral projects of Kitawalists in these late colonial years. While the previous sections of this chapter make clear that the archives from this period lend themselves nicely to the discussion of the intellectual and moral projects of the Belgians, they unfortunately cannot offer the same kinds of detailed accounts of the concerns and debates within

Kitawalist communities. Nor do I have access to the sort of journals and correspondences written by Kitawalists that Peterson so effectively uses in his account of Mau Mau detainees. But there are shreds of evidence in the archives: interrogation records, anecdotes like those recounted by Gérard, and reports about life inside the CARDs. Read in conjunction with material from earlier chapters, such shreds can be revealing of the ways in which people turned to Kitawala in pursuit of individual therapies, built - and disputed the definition of - communities in diverse circumstances, and sometimes, particularly in the later years, called on the *puissance* of Kitawala in pursuit of ends that were frequently construed as nationalist.

In Pursuit of Therapy

In Chapter Two, I devoted a significant amount of effort to highlighting the 'ritual technologies' that are used within Kitawalist communities in South Kivu and northern Katanga today. Deconstructing notions of 'traditional healing' that focus too narrowly on the materiality of healing practices, I suggested that if we are going to see the continuity between the forms of "traditional" healing historically practiced by herbal healers (*wanganga wa mitishamba*) and within cults of affliction the forms of 'traditional' healing practiced by Kitawalists (with their talcum powder and their assertions that the ancestors are mediums for God), we must look to the immaterial, to the metaphors and discourses of *puissance,* to find it. I did so with an eye toward better illuminating the "hologram" created by the fragments of evidence related to healing practices among Kitawalists in the colonial era, a task to which I now return.

For the most part, Kitawalist healing practices during the colonial era were rarely described with any depth. Most colonial agents referred to such practices only with the disparaging term "superstitions". One sees references to itinerate Kitawalists "posing as *ngangas*" peddling their 'dawas' and communities of Kitawalists refusing colonial medicine in favor of their own healing, which 'came from God'.[75] Some of the most interesting material on Kitawalist healing comes not from administrative reports, but from the interrogation records of the secret service.

In 1947, an unnamed territorial agent did a series of interrogations of some fifty young men and women (some as young as 12, most younger than 17) in Ponthierville (Ubundu) in Orientale.[76] The agent was apparently trying to decipher how and why they had become involved with Kitawala. Nearly every single Kitawalist described how they had been initiated into the sect because they wanted: 1) to see their dead parents, become attractive to the opposite sex and/or be married, 2) to be successful in the hunt/fishing and have plenty of meat to eat (and "never die of hunger"), and/or 3) to have the *puissance* of the whites, which they were 'promised' by their initiators. The process they describe to acquire such *puissance* was nearly identical in each case. They had incisions made on their chests, which were then rubbed with ash. Then a mixture of pilipili (hot peppers), water, and sexual fluids (semen for women and 'vaginal fluid' for men) was rubbed into their eyes. For those who wanted to see their dead parents, 'mannequins' were made out of kaolin and the mud from a termite hill. Several of the women then report engaging in,

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[75] See, for example, "Mulonda Mission" Report, *AA*/GG 74.343

[76] AA/GG 73.939 These files are secured files created by the secret service, so the names of the agents have, in many cases, been removed.

or being asked to engage in, sexual relations – which most report refusing because their brideprices had not been paid.

There are a number of interesting things to consider in these reports. First, the report that they were all asking to see their deceased parents seems peculiar. One questions whether their responses were appropriately translated into French and whether the term was not more likely a less specific name for ancestors such as *wababu*. Alas, it is impossible to know the answer to such a mystery. The fact that they were nearly all teenagers is also curious. If they were, indeed, all teenagers with deceased parents it would indicate that Kitawala in that region, at that time, had a particular appeal to certain similarly afflicted populations, making it a good example of a cult of affliction.

The therapies themselves are also interesting. In this case, it would seem like there is some real material congruence between preceding ideas of how to access and wield *puissance* and those described by the young Kitawalists. The use of termite hill mud is particularly interesting. In her work on the early history of the Batwa, Kairn Klieman has noted that in much of West Central Africa – indeed much of the Bantu-speaking world - termite hills served as "receptacles for ancestral first-comer spirits who control the fecundity and fertility of people and land."[77] Drawing on Klieman's work, Neil Kodesh writes that "historical actors in West Central Africa employed termite hills in a variety of ritual context, including initiation rites for fertility cults, practices designed to placate lineage ancestors, and ceremonies performed by rain specialists."[78] This

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[77] Kairn Klieman. "*The Pygmies Were our Compass" : Bantu and Batwa in the History of West Central Africa, Early Times to c. 1900 C.E.*, Portsmouth, NH: Heineman, 70, 151, 160.

[78] Neil Kodesh 2010, 184. Kodesh notes that anthills played a significant role in the royal-installation rites of the Bugandan king in the second half of the 18th century.

connection – between the ancestors and termite hills – seems far from coincidental in a context where the mud of termite hills was being used to summon the deceased parents/ancestors of the Kitawalists in question. The use of ash – a 'powder that comes from trees' – is also suggestive, given the prevalence of 'powder' in Kitawalist healing today and Kabanga Kamalondo's assertion that the use of powder, oil, and candles in Kitawalist healing dated back to the time of Mwana Lesa.

Other aspects of the interviews require a critical eye: the accounts of young girls being initiated into Kitawala with sex, in particular. Belgians seemed to have a perverse fascination with the sexual practices of Kitawalists. They were convinced that Kitawalists practiced "sexual communism" and it was one of the most oft-repeated and sensationalized descriptions of Kitawalist communities.[79] That every single girl interviewed by the agent in question indicates that either, yes, she had sexual relations after her initiation, or more often, no, she did not, should give pause. It seems likely that this agent's preconceived ideas about Kitawalist sexual relations were influencing his line of questioning. In a different set of interrogations, when asked whether the women in the church "sleep with the adepts," one Kitawalist very curtly responded: "No. Neither in the forests nor the villages."[80] He seemed to know what the agent was implying, and refuted it entirely. Kitawalists did – and still do – practice polygamy and it is entirely possible that some of these young girls 'married' into a Kitawalist community. But there is little evidence outside of the rumors cycled through Belgian reports that such 'communistic' sexual practices had any role in the church. The propensity for Belgians – particularly missionaries - to hyper-sexualize Africans, combined with the fact that in all likelihood

[79] See the archival series: AA/AI 4737.
[80] AA/GG 6754.

such rumors circulated among and were perpetuated by non-Kitawalists - just as today rumors circulate that Kitawalists are *walozi* (witches) who perform ceremonies at night in cemeteries – renders the claims dubious.

Interrogation records of such rich and interesting detail are far from common, though another series of interrogations – this time by an agent named Emile Bastin, near Stanleyville – proves enlightening as well. A man named Yailo reported to Bastin that he "entered Kitawala because they healed him" by rubbing him with oil. Another Kitawalist, Gilbert, reported that within the church, 'dawas' were prepared by the "zikonis" and the "bouwesi", whom he compares to nurses (bouwesi) and nurses' assistants (zikoni). Quick to deflect any criticism of their healing practices, he points out to Bastin that "among the whites it's the same thing." Another man, Akaluko, also reports that he had fallen ill and the Kitawalists healed him using "plants of the forest" which were boiled in water and inhaled as a vapor. He reported that he rested for two days with the Kitawalists and returned to the village healed. Another man described a medicine called 'sango' that was 'put on the body' when one became ill. He noted that "if [the patient] is healed, he/she was in a good relationship with God." Another – a Kitawalist healer – indicated that the 'dawa' that he carried in his pouch was palm oil. One man reported going to Kitawala in search of a cure for his daughter's epilepsy. Yet another told Bastin that he was baptized very quickly into the movement because he was told they had "an *nkisi* that heals people" and he had been sick.[81]

As with the previous interrogations, these interviews strongly indicate that Kitawala was interpreted and received as a new and powerful healing cult in the economy

[81] Ibid.

of *puissance*. Once more proving himself somewhat more insightful than his contemporaries, Gérard seemed to realize as much as well, though his observations about Kitawala and *bwanga* were omitted from his colonial report - which was intended to highlight the purely 'religious' roots of Kitawala – and only appear in his study published in 1969. The arrival of Europeans, Gérard argued, had introduced a cycle of the destruction followed by reintroduction of various forms of *bwanga*. When the Europeans arrived, the '*féticheurs'* thought they could "adapt by imposing new *bwanga."* But their new *bwanga* (i.e. practices/objects geared toward procuring *puissance*) proved "impuissant" – powerless– against the influence of the strangers. So they turned away from these *bwanga* and burned their fetishes. Then a *bwanga* would come that could vanquish the others. But then this new *bwanga* would once more prove unsatisfactory. It would be vanquished and the old *bwanga* would return. Then the iconoclasts would "make a clean sweep of all of the *bwanga"* and the cycle would continue. Through all of the waves of different *bwanga* – by which, one could posit, he meant various healing cults (what Janzen calls "drums of affliction") – certain ancestral *bwanga* were presumed to remain powerful. Among the Kumu, he explains, this *bwanga* was tied to the spirits of *esumba* – the initiation rites tied to local territorial spirits- and it was embodied in a shrine kept in each village. The esumba was the supreme *bwanga*, but it did not suppress the other *bwanga*. What made Kitawala different from all of these other *bwanga* that preceded it was that it was "the most powerful *bwanga,*" because it could also suppress the *bwanga* of *esumba*.[82]

[82] Gérard 1969.

Kitawala's currency in the economy of *puissance*, then, was that it was a veritable super-*puissance* – not different in kind or conceptualization, but in potency: its *bwanga* – which came from the Christian God - was more powerful than even the most powerful *bwanga* that preceded it. Gérard gave this explanation in trying to make sense of the fact that Kitawalist regularly built a reputation for renouncing 'fetishes' while at the same time retaining the use of 'dawas'. He offered the example of a Kitawalist preacher who denounced 'fetishes', but honored his clan taboos and kept the medicine horn he procured at his *esumba* initiation close at hand.[83] Gérard was, in essence, trying to make sense of what he and his contemporaries – and many who have followed them – referred to as the 'syncretism' of Kitawala. For most colonial commentators – particularly missionaries - 'syncretism' had a distinctly negative connotation. It implied that Kitawalists used "loose interpretations of the Bible" to justify their "fatally xenophobic" movement, and that its leaders "seduced" and created "tyranny" over the masses with the use of "magic and superstitious techniques."[84] Moreover, it implied that there were two distinct spheres of influence – "Christian" and "traditional" – that could be mixed together to create something new (and dangerous).

If Gérard largely avoided the former, he did not manage to entirely avoid the latter. Though his observations that Kitawala fit into a longer history of waxing and waning sources of *bwanga* were insightful, where Gérard failed was in his insistence - in the vein of Placid Tempels - that *bwanga*, rather than a historically-rooted theory of power that could be and was consistently rearticulated in new and sometimes materially

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[83] Gérard 1969.
[84] Philippart,1956 AA/AI 4737, D. Hallieux, "Rapports de mission de M.P.E. Joset sur les sects secretes." AA/AI 4736

different contexts, was a philosophy of power innate to the "Bantu race."[85] It was not a historically, culturally, and linguistically situated discourse of power that could be and – as the evidence presented above suggests – *was* mobilized and rearticulated by individuals in their interactions with and interpretations of Kitawala in the colonial context, but something essential to "the Bantu mind." Gérard failed when he brought Kitawala, and *bwanga* more broadly, out of the realm of history and into the realm of race.

Creating and Contesting Communities

If for many people who were initiated into Kitawala it served as a means by which to access much-needed *puissance* in their lives – whether to ameliorate their own social and physical ailments or those of their families and communities – for others it proved ineffectual. The danger of focusing on what brought people into Kitawalist communities is that it obscures the experiences of those who perhaps joined and found it insufficient for their needs, or those who refused to join in the first place. As Gérard pointed out, there were any number of cults that preceded Kitawala and the puissance of many of them was, at some point, found wanting and they were abandoned for new inlets to the economy of *puissance*.

While many of those who went to Kitawala looking for healing found it and stayed, many did not. The same man who went to Kitawala hoping that his daughter would be cured of epilepsy reported that she was not cured and he had left the religion. Six of the people interviewed by Bastin told him that they had "learned nothing from the religion" and "would

[85] Gérard 1969.

not stay".[86] These reports must be read in the context of interrogation: they may have felt it was in their best interest to disparage Kitawala. But they may also be sincere. One of the young girls interviewed in Ponthierville in 1947 likewise reported that she did not stay in Kitawala once she was initiated because she "suffered too much." She felt she had been lied to by the leader who baptized her because she had been promised she would be "loved by all men" and was not.[87]

The point is that not everyone found the *puissance* they were looking for when they joined. Still others report that joining Kitawala had adverse effects on their social lives and positions within their communities. One man reported that he was a Kitawalist for a time but ultimately decided to renounce it. He was then installed as a police captain in his village, but the villagers "refused to obey" him because he was a Kitawalist. He reports that because he was still considered an adherent, regardless of his renouncement, he decided to return to Kitawala.[88] This, of course, indicates the extent to which Kitawala was contested within many of the very same communities it had become influential.

Even within the Kitawalist communities there was contestation and disagreement about what the 'moral project' of Kitawala should be and how it should be achieved. It is striking, for example, that in Philippart's report of how the Topoko-Lokele had become *kitawalisé,* he notes that after they had been "seduced by the mysterious and secret character" of Kitawala, they could not tolerate being under the "domination" of the Walengola very long, so schism very quickly took root. Philippart explained that the two tendencies "despised each other" –"Wanapita pembeni wa njia – watoto wa shetani" ("They do not follow the way, they are children of Satan") - and spoke with repugnance about the pastors in the other group.

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[86] AA/GG 6754
[87] AA/GG 73.939
[88] AA/GG 6754

Recalling the discussion of the break between EDAC and Kitawala of Katanga, the similarity of the language is striking. As with the two groups in South Kivu and Katanga decades later, it is not unreasonable to suggest that the Walengola and the Topoko-Lekele were disagreeing about how one should access and wield puissance, and to what ends.

Still others who had initially been attracted to and believed vehemently in Kitawala as a viable means to procuring *puissance* left the church, no longer convinced of its viability. In a 1958 report, Philippart wrote about what he labeled the "Lotika Jean Affaire." Philippart had come across a notebook that belonged to Lotika Jean, who was one of the original leaders arrested in Katanga with Mutombo Stephan and relegated to Lubutu. The notebook detailed the story of how Lotika had abandoned Kitawala after his arrest, deciding that it was a bad religion, full of hate. In 1957, he was approached by present Kitawalist leaders who ask him to take his place at the head of the church, since the different wings were feuding about power. They wanted him to reunite it. He refused, telling them he would give them spiritual guidance instead. He wrote that he became a Kitawalist because he believed that one must be baptized before God and put them in that position. He cited the Belgians as an example: if they were in power, he said, it was because God put them there. Philippart was shocked by what he found in the notebook, writing that he had never encountered such sentiments from a Kitawalist. He questioned whether it was Kitawala at all. Lotika Jean also named a successor to himself, but Philippart doubted that all of the factions would agree with the choice. In his report on the notebook, Philippart was almost gloating that this major founder of Kitawala had turned away from it and left the remaining factions feuding.[89]

Yet, even as Philippart gloated that one great Kitawalist had lost faith in *puissance* of Kitawala, others reaffirmed and reimagined connections within their communities. We can

[89] AA/GG 927

see this in the relegation camps, where some of the 'fanatics', as Philippart saw them, saw in their detention the realization of a community rich with the *puissance* of Kitawala – a chance to create a moral monopoly, to dominate the economy of *puissance* and reaffirm their beliefs that they were powerful and therefore feared by the Belgians. Others surely saw their continued commitment to the Kitawalist community as a means of survival in conditions of isolation and oppression. In the figure of the wife, urging her husband to stay firm in his beliefs lest her peers 'mock' her, we can see a woman whose status and perceived access to *puissance*, hinged in some way on her husband's continued commitment to the movement.

Some groups searched for increasing connection with Kimbanguism in particular by incorporating the prophet Kimbangu as a significant prophet within the church. Of course, as highlighted above, the Belgians feared that this was a sign that Kitawala was inching closer toward becoming a unified, xenophobic nationalist movement. But I would argue that it must also be read in the same way as the incorporation of Lumumba as a Kitawalist prophet discussed in Chapter One: as a mean by which the *puissance* of another important Congolese figure could be accessed in order to pursue the betterment of their communities.

Finally, as evidenced by incidents such as the Stanleyville armory plot in 1955 and, as outlined in Chapter One, the Kitawalist participation in MNC-Lumumba party mobilization in the final years of colonial rule, the Belgians were not entirely wrong to imagine that in some places, under some leaders, the moral project of Kitawala leaned toward what might be called nationalism. In some places, particularly in the final years of Belgian rule, their goals were, indeed, to dismantle the colonial state and see Congo become a land ruled by the Congolese. But, as Mwene-Batende points out in the conclusion to his study of Kitawala, their goal was never a secular nation-state, but a state in which those in charge

would look to Kitawala for the *puissance* required to rule, and Kitawala would come to dominate and regulate the economy of *puissance*.[90]

Conclusion

Imagining Kitawala as either political/anti-colonial or purely religious was and is far too narrow of a lens. It was never a movement that was exclusively about the illegitimacy of Belgian rule, though that was part of it. In the same way "religious" Kitawala was never exclusively about prayer and healing – for in the context of Congo such notions have an inherently political nature. Kitawala was about power – about *puissance* - and what are moral and immoral uses of power. It was about the ways in which communities and individuals, faced with discord and upheaval wrought on them by colonial violence, could wield power such that it could heal their communities, their families, and their selves. It was about finding a more effective way to access that power so they would have the strength to improve lives and achieve the moral and intellectual projects they imagined for their communities. And this sort of yearning to access and wield power did not disappear with the colonial regime, particularly not when what followed was years of Mobutu followed by two decades of conflict. But nor did it begin with Kitawala. Rather, Kitawalists drew on and continue to draw on much older discourses and practices related to power that are deeply rooted in the language, culture, and intellectual history of the region.

This chapter has surveyed the colonial history of Kitawala after Bushiri's revolt, highlighting how the movement became a near obsession for the Belgian officials, and tracing a gradual and contested shift in policy toward Kitawala in the 1950's from containment to rehabilitation, as the Belgians imagined they could "depoliticize" Kitawala.

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[90] Mwene-Batende 1982, 265-273.

At the same time, the chapter followed the spread of Kitawala into new regions, looking for fragments of evidence through which we can begin to understand what drew people to follow the movement and what sort of space it might have occupied culturally, intellectually, and morally in Congolese communities. These two stories, though different in their narrative lens, are certainly not independent of each other. In many instances Belgian policies and individual agents shaped the histories Kitawalist communities in profound ways, sometimes by relegating them and rendering their very existence political, but other times by categorizing them as 'purely religious' and allowing them to spread their teachings, or even, as was the case with Gérard, attempting to become 'part' of their communities, potentially altering their position in the local economy of *puissance*. But Belgians, too, were altered by Kitawalists, as in the late colonial era they came to understand the limits of their knowledge and the futility of their previous attempts to suppress the movement.

Moreover, in their attempts to remedy these issues they produced knowledge – archives of studies and correspondences – that, as I note in the introduction to this study, have profoundly shaped the way the scholars have framed discussions of Kitawala since, centering the question of 'political v. religious' in discussions of the movement's nature, even as Kitawalists themselves continued to articulate their concerns through the language of *puissance*. But in their diagnosis and representation of what they understood as the 'superstitious' elements of Kitawala as a symptom of the failure of Congolese peasants to adapt to modernity – colonial producers of knowledge had an equally profound legacy. That legacy can be seen in the story of UNICEF and PP2 that opened this study, but it can also be seen in the more recent tendency of scholars of eastern Congo to imagine religious groups such as Kitawala, often characterized as 'prophetic' or 'charismatic', as a symptom of 'despair' and leaders of such movements as exploiters of 'superstition'. It is to a discussion of this legacy – and the local histories such configurations obscure – that I turn in the next

section, as I broaden the analytical scope to think about the significance of other actors in the post-colonial economy of puissance.

Section Three

Chapter Six

Beyond Kitawala:
Histories of *Puissance* in the Post-Colony
(The Wamalkia wa Ubembe Case)

In March of 2003, at the height of the Second Congo War, a handful of community leaders from Fizi, in South Kivu, came together for a meeting in the refugee camp Lugufu II in Tanzania. [See Map 6.1] Present at the meeting were five traditional authorities of Fizi territory – *bwami wa Ubembe*– and Tata Wahiseelelwa, the prophet of a locally influential religious group known as the Troisième Eglise, or Wamalkia wa Ubembe. The *bwami* had called the meeting to ask Wahiseelelwa a question: why, when the power of the *bwami* had been unable "to jump the lake," had Wahiseelelwa's power remained intact in the refugee camp? While the people had denied the authority of their *bwami*, telling them that, "their power had remained in Congo," Wahiseelelwa had been welcomed to the camp with great reverence and "his leadership and his greatness (*ukubwa*) continued to command the respect of those around him."[1] The *bwami* wanted to know what advice the prophet could offer them on how to address the grave issues of poverty, disorder, discrimination and violence that plagued the people of Ubembe, both in the camp and at home.

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[1] 24 Sinai Mpendwa, "Ripoti Kuhusu wa Masultani wa Asili wa Mtaa wa Fizi (RDCongo) na Tata Wahiseelelwa." Lugufu II, Tanzania, 3/25/2003, p. 2. This report was copied from the church archives of Wamalkia wa Ubembe in Baraka, South Kivu, DRC on 12/10/2010. In the report, - which is written entirely in Swahili - the bwami tell Wahiseelelwa that their people had told them, "Your traditional power cannot jump the water. If you were bwami in Congo, when you came here [to the refugee camp] that power remained in Congo."

Tata Wahiseelelwa offered two related solutions. Citing discrimination and discord among the Bembe people as one of the biggest impediments to peace, he suggested that they must establish a governing body that would unite all of the Bembe by overseeing distribution of land and work – two of the most contentious issues at the heart of the local dynamics of the conflict. His second recommendation was to open a decentralized financial system that would create a communal treasury ("caisse villageoise") in each village in Fizi. This project would give villagers access to credit and help to combat poverty.

In the grand scheme of the history of the conflict in eastern Congo, the results of this meeting are perhaps negligible. It produced no Fizi-wide council of the Bembe that has managed to solve disputes about land and job distribution and bring peace in the way that Tata Wahiseelelwa imagined. And while the Wamalkia wa Ubembe have, within their own church community, created rotating credit programs meant to encourage entrepreneurship (particularly among women) via the granting of small loans, there exists no larger program of "caisses villegeoises" in the territory of Fizi such as that Wahiseelelwa described. Yet, even if the meeting produced no obvious results, the fact that the *bwami* turned to Wahiseelelwa in the first place, and that they did so because he seemed to possess a form of power that could "jump the lake" when their own power faltered, in many ways demonstrates the significance of the broader argument that has been at the center of this dissertation: that the theories of power, or *puissance* that I have traced through the history of Kitawala up to this point neither began, nor ended with the colonial era. Rather, they have continued to shape the ways in which people create communities and articulate political and spiritual legitimacy in Central Africa.

The Broader Economy of Puissance

In previous chapters, I have focused analysis of the economy of *puissance* and its various actors almost exclusively on Kitawalists in an effort to offer a deeply rooted account of how they have, at various points in their history, envisioned, articulated, and embodied *puissance*. While such an approach offers the benefit of a richly textured narrative, it risks developing an argument that is myopic in scope, particularly when Kitawala has always been but one source of *puissance* in the broader economy. Thus in this chapter, I turn to a different case study in an attempt to widen the analytical scope to include another religious movement – also the subject of numerous rumors about their access to *puissance* - that has a history that is at once distinct from and reminiscent of Kitawala's history: Wamalkia wa Ubembe. Indeed, as the Wamalkia wa Ubembe narrative presented in Chapter One indicates, Wamalkia themselves imagine their history as entangled with that of Kitawala, as they both are believed by Wamalkia to have procured their *puissance* from the same source: the whites (specifically the Catholics, who were hoarding it).

As this chapter demonstrates, thinking about the history of Wamalkia wa Ubembe in conjunction with that of Kitawala, shifts the conversation back to the subject of puissance in the post-colony in interesting ways. Because the contemporary histories of both groups converge geographically in eastern Congo, and in Fizi specifically, reading them together raises interesting questions about to the role that religious leaders and

communities – particularly those of a 'prophetic' nature or those rumored to be *puissant* – have played within the largely rural and displaced communities of Eastern Congo: How have they – as well as those outside of their communities – imagined that role? What are the historical terms by which such prophets, and those who turn to them, have defined power and the capacity to lead? These questions, in turn, open up a broader set of questions: What can the discourses of power that animate moments of interaction like that between the *bwami* and Wahiseelelwa add to the preceding discussion about the broader economy of *puissance* in the region? What does it mean when political leaders turn to prophets in search of legitimacy? What imaginaries of moral action are religious leaders and politicians subject to within their communities and how do those imaginaries guide other power-wielders in the region?

In addition, the chapter highlights the ambiguous nature of prophetic leaders such as Wahiseelewa, who are often cast within scholarship and other outside reports of the region, as either charlatans or saints. This language must be read as part of a legacy of the colonial discourse discussed in Chapter Five. Reports of 'charlatan' healers and charismatic religious leaders who prey on the 'superstitions' of vulnerable people for their nefarious purposes were classic colonial tropes used to exemplify the failure of many Africans – particularly rural populations – to adjust to modernity and as the impetus behind many colonial development projects. But such discourse about the relative morality of religious groups and leaders does not belong exclusively the domain of enduring colonial tropes, but must also be read as part of the deeply rooted discourses about moral and immoral uses of *puissance* that I have sought to engage in this study.

However, seeing the ways in which this discourse works requires close attention to local histories of claims to *puissance* and debates about legitimacy.

Beyond Charlatans and Saints

The preceived growth in the number of religious groups in the DRC since the 1990s is phenomenon that has been remarked upon by numerous scholars, journalist, and humanitarians working in the region. From Kinshasa to Kisangani to Bukavu to Lubumbashi, the signs of this proliferation seem to be written all over the Congolese culturescape, in areas both urban and rural. In urban areas, it is Pentacostal Charismatic Churches that seemingly grow most rapidly, while in rural areas prophetic healing churches remain most salient. In the Western DRC this religious change has been the subject of a number of excellent studies in recent years, while in the East little recent scholarship has focused on this religious transformation or its historical context.[2]

When the subject of the 'proliferation of churches is addressed, it is most frequently evoked – particularly in the east - as a sign of the deterioration of the social fabric in the region – a sign of the "despair of the Congolese people."[3] Filip De Boeck

[2] For examples of interesting recent scholarship on religion in Western Congo, see, for example: Denis Tull on Bunda dia Kongo: "Troubled state-building in the DR Congo: the challenge from the margins," *Journal of Modern Africa Studies*, vol. 48, n 4, 2010, 643-661. On media and religious transformation in Kinshasa, see: Katrien Pype, "Historical Roots Towards Religious Television Fiction in Post-Mobutu Kinshasa," *Studies in World Christianity* (15:2) 2009,131-148. See also, Yolanda Covington-Ward 2008. For exception to this assessment of the study of recent religious history in Eastern Congo, see Emma Wild-Wood 2008.

[3] Anne Verhoeve, "Conflict and the Urban Space," *in* Koen Vlassenroot and Timothy Raeymakers, *Conflict and Social* Vlassenroot, Koen, and Timothy Raeymaekers. *Conflict and Social Transformation In Eastern Dr Congo.* Gent [Belgium]: Academia Press

has called prophetic churches a "hermit's choice," their followers the tragic victims of 'mimesis' who "fail mentally and practically to 'imagine' and 'remember', author, and thereby 'find' and institute society anew."[4] Contrasted with legitimate forms of civil society and mainstream churches that continue to draw on international aid networks to offer social services, independent churches are sometimes even regarded as predatory enterprises and impediments to development. In an edited volume about social transformation in the Eastern Congo, for example, Anna Verhoeve writes about how in Goma various "sects" - which she contrasts with "traditional" (ie. mainstream protestant and Catholic) churches - make a business of extorting money out of the local population (for whom "superstition still plays an important role") by threatening to "curse" them if they do not "hand over part of their income."[5] In a study of the mining economy of Kamituga, Koen Vlassenroot and Timothy Raeymakers describe the "completely modern phenomena" of erstwhile prophets who mimic the charisma of traditional "*féticheurs*" and go around "selling" the word of God to villagers.[6] They describe "eccentric" men who travel between villages, wearing white robes and drawing crowds, ultimately luring people into "*chambres de prière*," where they exchange dubious healing practices for the price of a goat, or gasoline, or even sexual relations.

Scientific Publishers, 2004, 114. For an example of the same tendency among journalists, see Colette Braeckman, "Running on empty in the poll booths" *in Xindex: The Voice of Free Expression*, 14 Feb 2007.

[4] Here De Boeck is discussing the Bunda dia Kongo in Bas Congo specifically, but in doing so is making a larger argument about violence, memory, and religious communities in Congo. Filip de Boeck 1998, 34-39.

[5] Anne Verhoeve 2004,114.

[6] Koen Vlassenroot and Timothy Raeymaekers, "Conflict and Artisan Mining in Kamituga" In Koen Vlassenroot and Timothy Raeymakers, *Conflict and Social Transformation in Eastern DR Congo*, Academia Press, 2004, 150.

Rumors and opinions about such predatory churches and pastors are abundant in Eastern Congo. Indeed, as noted in Section One, Kitawalists are frequently the subject of such rumors. Yet, as I argue above, while we must recognize, on the one hand, the colonial roots of such interpretations, they are not exclusively the machinations of scholars and other commentators. They are, rather, part of a larger discourse about witchcraft, consumption and morality in the region and they often say more about that discourse and the people engaging it than they do about the actual internal practices and ideologies of such churches and leaders.[7] There are certainly pastors who prey on their congregations in such ways, "eating" their financial resources and using occult practices to manipulate them, but such practices are hardly the rule. Scholars and observers must be careful not conflate these rumors with reality, for these morality claims are often born of the social and political rifts that divide communities – rifts that are often amplified by the scarcity and vulnerability wrought by conflict and economic exploitation that characterizes Eastern Congo.

Yet, as I found in the course of my fieldwork for this study, such charismatic healers rarely exist as the sort of itinerant charlatans that Vlassenroot and Raeymakers describe. Rather, they are often part of some larger group or network, and people are not so easily lured into their "prayer chambers" unless they have in some way garnered a reputation as powerful wielders of spiritual force. As I have already noted, Kitawala is widely known in Fizi and Northern Katanga – both historically and at present - as a

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[7] There is vast amount of recent scholarship that has highlighted the deep historical and cultural connections between witchcraft and discourses of political legitimacy, morality, consumption, and modernity, both in Congo and Africa more broadly. See, for example, Michael Schatzberg, 2001. Wyatt MacGaffey 2000.; Peter Geschiere 1997 ; Birgit Meyer 1999; Florence Bernault, 2006. On the role of rumor in such discourses, see Luise White 2001.

movement that is *puissant*. They are known as skillful evokers of ancestral spirits, and for this reason, they are often called *walozi*, or witches. They very frequently perform healing ceremonies in "prayer chambers" and Kitawalist leaders will often travel between villages for the purpose of performing such rituals. Recall the image [Photo 1] from Chapter One of Amani Simbi, a Kitawalist leader in the village of Mboko, in Fizi, wearing a white robe inscribed with the words "Fata Mungu wa Asili" ("Follow the Ancestral God"). Amani travels between villages on a bicycle for the purpose of instituting such prayer chambers when obliged to do so. He is also a former leader in the local Catholic Church, which he left not to pursue the seeming economic benefits of "selling God's word," but for carefully considered theological reasons – namely his attraction to complex Kitawalist notions of the continuity between ancestral practices and Christianity. As the story goes, he took so many of the Catholic parishioners with him when he left, the local priest offered to build him a house if he would return to the church with those followers.[8] He refused. So, not only does he not ask for anything in return for organizing prayer chambers – as is Kitawalist practice, though they accept offerings of thanks – but he has overtly refused economic incentive to abandon such practice.

On the surface, Amani's story seems to affirm the description of itinerant pastors moving between villages in white robes, hosting prayer chambers and at times accepting gifts in return. But the details reveal a much more complex story, which only becomes

[8] Interview with Amani Simbi 5/19/10. This is the only recorded version of this story I have, but it was told to me several other times in informal settings by sources both inside and outside of the church. I have no verification from the local priest, who was not in the country at the time of my research.

more complex when read in light of previous section of this study.[9] Kitawala is not a "completely modern" phenomenon, but rather a nearly century-old movement that draws on much older discourses of traditionality in historically situated ways. There has certainly been an increase in the number and the visibility of Kitawalists practitioners in recent years, and the increased vulnerability of local populations as well as the decreased access to health care must be read as part of that story, but such functionalist explanations cannot constitute the only lens through which these transformations are read. Of course, I do not mean to imply that the pastors that Vlassenroot and Raeymaekers' informants were talking about were necessarily Kitawalists. I am simply suggesting that, as Chapter Two demonstrated, without looking much more closely at this phenomenon of itinerant pastors and prayer chambers," at the notion of (im)materiality that guide people's understandings of malady and therapy and "ontological politics" at play in the post-colonial space where religion and healing meet in Eastern Congo, it is virtually impossible to know anything substantive about these pastors/healers or the people they are healing. But we can be fairly certain that they are not all charlatans and "superstitious" peasants, just as we can be certain that they are not all saints and, moreover, that there is no agreement within the community about their legitimacy as healers or the morality of their practices.

This leads to the larger point: if we are to understand this apparent religious transformation in Eastern Congo in recent years, then it must be situate it both within the broader political and cultural milieu and within the longer history of the region. Unfortunately, since the beginning of the conflict, very little of research of this nature has

[9] On traditional healing practices and alternative ontologies in post-colonial Africa, see Stacey Langwick 2011. On Kitawalists specifically, see Chapter Two.

been done. On the one hand this is, of course, a matter of the practical challenges of conducting research in a conflict zone, but it is also symptomatic of larger trend in the study of religion in Africa - a trend that might be called the "Pentecostal turn" - which has shifted scholarly focus to the largely the urban and transnational phenomenon of Pentecostal Charismatic Churches (PCCs), with their "intensive links to transnational circuits."[10] In any case, the result has been a real dearth in literature on religion in the most conflict-affected areas of Eastern Congo, particularly in rural areas. As I have demonstrated with previous Sections, and will continue to demonstrate with the case study of Tata Wahiseelelwa and the Wamalkia wa Ubembe, this gap has obscured our ability to see forms of power and discourses of legitimacy that are central to understanding and historically situating that transformation.

Who are Wamalkia wa Ubembe?

As noted in the introduction, Wamalkia wa Ubembe, or the Troisième Eglise is a religious group that is highly influential, particularly among the Bembe, in the zone of Fizi, South Kivu. It is difficult to get a sense of just how many followers the church has, but their presence in the region is palpable, and one can see them – with their typical green clothing and (for men) black hats - everywhere in the region.[11] The Troisième Eglise emerged out of another church called l'Eglise de la Foi that began in 1953 in

[10]Birgit Meyer 2004..

[11] I have no accurate demographic information on the church, but a map found among Wamalkia records indicates that there were, in 2000, over 150 branches of the church in South Kivu alone. "Carte Centenaire: Mission 3ieme Eglise Malkia wa Ubembe, 3/6/2000," Copied from the Wamalkia wa Ubembe Church Archives, Baraka, South Kivu, 12/2010.

Eastern Kasai, the followers of which came to be known as "Wadomineurs." Recall from Chapter One that according to Wamalkia, the church began when a Congolese priest named Mbuyi Charles befriended a Belgian priest named DeClerk. When Mbuyi Charles saw that the white priests prayed near the cemetery on certain days at midnight and he was not allowed to attend, he was certain that they were hoarding the power of God. He asked his friend, DeClerck, to show him what happened at these evocations. After some reluctance, the priest showed him where they went: into the "mountain" by the cemetery. There Mbuyi Charles saw a vision in which the shades/spirits of black people were bound and the shades of white people freely wielded the power of God. DeClerck told Mbuyi Charles to perform a prayer that effectively freed the black people and gave them access to the power of God. Mbuyi Charles took that power, and transferred it to his confidant, Bakwalufu, who ran with it to Kinshasa. Mbuyi Charles and DeClerck were murdered for their actions – presumably because they had effectively transferred the power of God, previously hoarded by the whites, to the Congolese people. Meanwhile, Bakwalufu blessed six prophets, giving each of them access to the power of God. Among these prophets were: Patrice Lumumba, whose task was to procure freedom of the body; Kadima Illunga (of Kitawala), whose job was to show people the way of the Black God, and Simon Kimbangu, who was given the power to "call down the spirit" for the people.[12]

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[12] This version of the foundation story of l'Eglise de la Foi comes from a document that was given to me by Mzee 24 Ngandu, one of the 24 elders of the Wamwalkia Ubembe, during my fieldwork. It was given to me on 12/3/10 in the town of Baraka, District of Fizi, Province of South Kivu. The document has no date or author. The same story was related to me in multiple interviews with the elders of Wamalkia: Wazee 24 of Wamalkia Ubembe, Interview, Baraka, DRC, 12/2/10 and 12/8/10. Also a version of this story is present in the one short thesis about Wamalkia that exists: Etungano Lubende Verité,

Bakwalufu served as the spiritual leader of the church and the guardian of the spiritual power of God until his death in 1983, at which point he transferred the power of God to a young disciple named Alimasi Bulangi Essé. Upon that transfer of power, Alimasi was reborn as Tata Wahiseelelwa Neno, the incarnation of the power of God on earth, and l'Eglise de la Foi took the name the Troisième Eglise, or Wamalkia wa Ubembe. Wamalkia wa Ubembe understand their church to be directly descendent from the Catholic Church (ie. the Second Church, the first being Judaism). Thus, they incorporate numerous Catholic rituals into their own services and have continually petitioned the Catholic Church to recognize Tata Wahiseelelwa as the incarnation of God's power on earth.

Shortly after his incarnation as Tata Wahiseelelwa, Alimasi and his followers – nearly all of whom were in their 20s and early 30s – moved to the outskirts of Baraka, where they built a separate cité – called Mahelo Bi'esse Centrale – that would be inhabited only by Wamalkia.[13] Within the cité, Wahiseelelwa and his followers established strict guidelines on how to live a healthy life, which were written down along with the church's ritual guidelines and prayers in a book called "Vie Eternelle: Cahiers des Communications." These guidelines were generally established by divine revelations experienced both by Wahiseelelwa himself and by the spirit mediums in the community (called 'antenne').[14] These 'communications' dealt with everything from personal

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"Histoire de la 3ème Eglise Wamalkia Ubembe et son impact socio-économique en territoire de Fizi (1983-2009)," graduate thesis, ISP-Baraka, 2008-09, 19-20.

[13] Mzee 24 Ngandu, Interview with Author, Digital Recording Baraka, DRC, 12/13/10.

[14] I call the "antenne" spirit mediums here, but the Wamalkia draw a distinction between spirit mediums who call down spirits – "invocation" – and spirit mediums who are chosen by God to deliver a message –"incarnation." The "antenne" are the latter:

behavior –"no one living in Mahelo may consume alcohol or smoke" (Communication 030) and "Every family should eat at least three times per day" (Communication 029) – to personal appearance (Communication 027 and 057), to public sanitation – "every home must build a proper latrine" (Communication 59). The cité was mapped on a grid, with each family allotted a plot. They were (and are) expected to plant and maintain flowers in front of their homes(Communication 153) and to allocate time each week for "salon" labor (maintenance and beautification of public space).[15]

Ultimately, this concern within the Wamalkia community for public health and well-being of their larger community transferred to the formation of a public NGO called EMO BARAKA. Under this umbrella organization, which one might call the civil branch of the church, Wamalkia have implemented numerous development projects across Fizi, where subsidiary Wamalkia communities (Bi'esse) have become ubiquitous.[16] They have built "postes de santé" – small dispensaries – for people living outside of the main towns in Fizi. They have organized rotating markets for villagers who have difficulty getting to the central markets. The have establish multiple schools in the region. In fact, the first school established by Wamalkia was established in the refugee camp in Tanzania during Wahiseelelwa's displacement during the First Congo War, from

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"Incarnation is the spirit of God who chooses a home (nyumba) that he will use as a tool like a radio that accesses the news." Mzee 24 Ngandu 12/2/10.

[15] Salon, of course, is a term that dates back to the corvee labor requirements under Mobutu. "Vie Eternelle: Cahiers des Communications" is a standardized volume that the Wamalkia had printed for their own use, thus there is no publication information on the book. I hold a copy on the prayer book in my personal library, which was given to me in Fizi in December of 2010.

[16] One estimate places the number of members in the church within Fizi alone at 20 thousand. Etungano Lubende Verité 2008-09. 22.

1996-98.[17] In 1986, they implemented hydraulic system to bring running water to town of Baraka.[18] As mentioned above, they have formed a subsidiary women's group - MKUWA – Mradi wa Kuinua Uchumi wa Wakina Mama katika Africa (Project to Improve the Economic Standing of Women in Africa) – that has created a rotating credit system for women and has plans to acquire and operate a mill so that women may affordably process their crops. They have even built a road to a once underutilized agricultural region 27km outside of Baraka, Katanga-Mkela. Rumor has it that the reason that the route had been so long neglected was because it was cut off by a river-crossing that was home to particularly malicious spirits (*bazimu/shetani*), who had caused all previous bridge-building projects – both by Mobutu and by MONUC – to fail. The Wamalkia, however, are said to have been successful because Tata Wahiseelelwa's power – the power of God – outmatched the power of the spirits.[19]

For Wamalkia, the building of the bridge – like the fact that Wahiseelelwa's power was able to "jump the lake" - is a miracle that demonstrates Tata Wahiseelelwa's power and legitimacy.[20] Yet, for many outside of the community, it is evidence that Wahiseelelwa dabbles in darker forms of power, which are both respected and feared. Indeed, during the Mobutu years, Tata Wahiseelelwa's power was at times considered a threat by other local authorities and power wielders. In 1990, two other influential prophets in the region – Amisi Hamiradho and Hibwe Melenga - accused Tata Wahiseelelwa of "false prophecy" and he was arrested and imprisoned by the security

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[17] Etungano Lubende Verité, 2008-09, 34.
[18] Etungano Lubende Verité, 2008-09, 33. Today, this hydraulic system is no longer functional, but it worked up until most recent period of conflict in 2003.
[19] Wazee 24 of Wamalkia wa Ubembe 12/8/10.
[20] Ibid.

service and Agence nationale de Documentation. Because the Wamalkia wa Ubembe had no official papers, they were subject to a rarely enforced the law implemented under Mobutu in 1971 that put strict limitations on the number and kind of churches that were legally allowed to exist.[21] The Wamalkia tell the story as follows:

> One day we got into trouble with the soldiers of Mobutu. We had no papers yet. They wanted to persecute/harass people who were followers of the Troisième Eglise. At that time, it was like war between us. It was in Zeboloni Katanga, 12 km from here (Baraka). There was a soldier who wanted to take money from the Wamlakia. The Wamalkia refused. The soldier wanted to kill them. The followers started to fight him. They defeated the soldier and took his gun. The soldier went back to Baraka centre and returned with other soldiers and they burned their houses and the church (Mahelo). They left 12 km and went to 6 km, where they went into our village in Nyako. There they beat people and burned their homes, they burned the church. They were firing their guns. They came here and called for everyone to gather in the church. We went there. They made us go into the church. They shot at us, but the bullets did nothing. They lit brush on fire and they tried to burn the building, but it would not burn. They put the gun against people and tried to kill them and they couldn't. They took Baba and forced him and 12 other followers to push their car into town. They marched us to the center of town and they were going to kill us. But they couldn't. They were beating us like dogs, trying to get one of us to die. They forced us to strip naked and push the car. When we arrived they made us put our clothes back on. It was all about the message (Wahiseelelwa's prophecy). We were harassed because of the message. People saw us beaten, and they went into their homes and cried. When we arrived, they imprisoned us. When the captain returned, he came to find this chaos. He wanted to see us with his own eyes, and he believed. They took our pictures and took records on us, but they were lost during the war. And they released us. It all happened here.[22]

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[21] Ordinance 71/012 of December 31, 1971. For the juridical text, see Jean-Pacifique Balaamo Mokelwa 2006, 139. Under the law, all Protestant chuches were consolidated into a single organization, the Église du Christ au Zaïre. The Catholic church, the Greek Orthodox church, and Kimbanguist church (EJCSK) were also officially recognized, while 700 independent churches were denied civil status. Cited in Bennetta Jules-Rosette 1997.

[22] Mzee 24 Matshimbo, Interview with Author, Digital Recordning, Baraka, DRC, 12/13/10.

Ironically, in some ways this incident only served to bolster Tata Wahiseelelwa's reputation as *puissant* and it is rumors and stories like those recounted above that most followers cite as what initially attracted them to Wamalkia wa Ubembe. To quote one of the 24 elder of the church, "This is what brings people into this church and they come to believe that Baba is really God."[23] But it is also the fact that Wamalkia wa Ubembe, with Tata Wahiseelelwa as their spiritual and public figurehead, have had a discernible impact on socio-economic conditions in Fizi, particularly in and around Baraka. He is known throughout the region and he commands considerable respect in the community. When politicians seek office in Fizi, it is said that they must first seek Tata Wahiseelelwa's blessing, if they hope to be successful.[24] Similarly, when armed groups have made their way into Baraka at various times during the conflict, they have either sought Wahiseelelwa's permission to pass through his land or avoided it altogether.[25] Such is the nature of his reputation as a wielder of spiritual power. And it was surely this reputation that ultimately brought the *bwami* to his door at the refugee camp in Lugufu II. As to why his power was perceived to have "jumped the lake", while the power of the *bwami* did not, observe the explanation offered by one of the Wamalkia elders:

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[23] Wazee 24 of Wamalkia wa Ubembe 12/8/10. To cite a few conversion narratives that support this assertion: Mzee 24 Hamua (Jennie), Interview with Author, Baraka, DRC, 12/12/10; Mzee 24 Matshimbo12/13/10Ebengo Milenge, Interview with Author, Digital REcording, Baraka, 12/12/10. Most had encountered various difficulties in their lives (illness, death of loved-one) and, hearing rumors of Baba's puissance, came to the church and found truth in it.

[24] It is interesting to note that in his short discussion of Eglise de la Foi in Kinshasa – one of the only publications about the church that exists – Guy Bernard suggests that Bakwalufu had a similar reputation. Guy Bernard 1971, 151.

[25] Tata Wahiseelelwa, Interview with Author, Field Notes, Baraka, DRC, 12/3/2010. Of course this applies mostly to the Mai Mai Yakutumba in Fizi and has not always been true, as even Tata and many of his followers were ultimately forced to flee across the lake to Lugufu II in Tanzania during the Second Congo War.

> Here in Africa, there are customary chiefs (*bwami wa asili*), who control the witchcraft (*bulozi*) of entire communities. The *mwami* is the grand sorcier of the community. And they can't make someone the *mwami* who is not puissant with the ancestral spirits (*shetani*).[26] In the account of the *bwami* in the refugee camps, they declared in front of Baba that their customary rule had no puissance because it cannot jump the water. In Tanzania, their puissance was crushed because the ancestral *puissance* has no effect outside their community, because all peoples have their own ancestral puissance. And this is why this *puissance* that they call *bwami wa asili* has no effect on people of other heritage (*asili*).[27] And this is why those grand sorciers of the zone of Fizi witnessed to Baba that, indeed, he had a *puissance* stronger than all others. It can jump the lake and it can go to the whole world.[28]

Tata Wahiseelelwa's "super-*puissance*" was able to jump the lake because it was not tied territorially to a given community. It was not tied to a specific ethnicity or clan. In Lugufu II, people were not assigned into clusters, villages, and zones that mirrored their communities in Congo, rather they were assigned by family units. Moreover, they had no claim to the land they inhabited, and certainly no ancestral ties to it. In such mixed populations outside of the land from which they drew their ancestral power, the *bwami* ceased to have functional authority, and became ceremonial figureheads at best, while political leadership was transferred to elected officials, chosen by UNHCR election processes.[29] It was precisely the universalizing discourse of Christianity, as articulated by Wamalkia wa Ubembe through much older discourses of *puissance*, that allowed Tata Wahiseelelwa specifically, and other religious leaders more broadly, to lay claim to a

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[26] I translate *shetani* as ancestral spirits here, though of course the direct translation is Satan. On the subject of this translation, see: Birgit Meyer 1999 and Stacey Langwick 2011.
[27] Asili here means ethnicity, but it also refers to clan and territory affiliations.
[28] Wazee 24 of Wamalkia wa Ubembe 12/8/10.
[29] See: Shelley Dick, "Review of CORD community services for Congolese Refugees in Tanzania" UNHCR Evaluation and Policy Analysis Unit, EPAU/2002/13, 2002

form political legitimacy in the diverse community of the refugee camp when the *bwami* no longer could. [30]

Local Discourses of Power

One cannot read the preceding discussion of Wamalkia wa Ubembe without observing that there are multiple discourse of power at work in the description of Tata Wahiseelelwa, the community he and his followers have built, and the local historical context that they have both shaped and been shaped by. Tata Wahiseelelwa emerges as a powerful figure on multiple levels. He is powerful in the sort of conventional charismatic political sense – he exhibits a clear capacity to lead and to organize a community in ways that are productive and beneficial to the socio-economic wellbeing of both his followers and the broader community. This has at times put him into competition with local authorities, but at other times rendered him a powerful figure to seek out for counsel and approval. Such was the case in the meeting in Lugufu II. But he is also understood to be powerful in the spiritual sense - *puissant*. He and his followers attribute his success to the fact that he has, via the work of Mbuyi Charles, Bakwalufu, and God himself, come to possess the power of God on earth. To people outside the Wamalkia community, this power is frequently read not as the power of God, but as another form of spiritual power, that of the occult. Rumors abound that the reason Tata Wahiseelelwa and his followers are so powerful is because they consort with powerful ancestral spirits – *shetani* – at

[30] On the prominent role of religious leaders in Lugufu II, see Shelley Dick, "Review of CORD…"…op. cit., p. 28-29.

night in the graveyards that they build next to their churches.[31] Even within the Wamalkia community, people draw parallels between the two. Indeed, I was told by a member of Tata Wahiseelelwa's own family that before he came to possess the power of God, Wahiseelelwa had been a powerful *mfumu*/practitioner of the occult.[32] According to this person, the reason Wahiseelelwa was drawn to l'Eglise de la Foi in the first place was because he had heard that they possessed a form of spiritual power even more powerful than the occult – the power of God – which he ultimately came to possess. It is for this reason that Wamalkia wa Ubembe believe that witchcraft cannot touch them. In a sense, Tata Wahiseelelwa possesses the most powerful witchcraft of all. Like the 'bwanga' of the Kitawalists Gerard described in Chapter Five, the 'bwanga' of Tata Wahiseelelwa was more powerful than those the preceded it. It is what one of the Wamalkia elders labeled "super-puissance."[33]

Conclusion

Of course, as the history of Kitawala I have presented demonstrates, in practice, each of these forms of power deeply entangled and continue to have a profound bearing on notions of political legitimacy and the capacity to lead in the region.[34] To return to the words of Wyatt MacGaffey: "In Central Africa, at all social levels, the exercise of power

[31] Birgit Meyer 1999; Stacey Langwick 2011.
[32] On the definition of *mfumu*, see David Schoenbrun 1998, 108-111.
[33] Wazee 24 of Wamalkia wa Ubembe 12/8/10
[34] See: Jan Vansina 1990; David Schoenbrun 1998; Wyatt MacGaffey 2000; and Michael Schatzberg 2001.

in social relations" are understood through the lens of *puissance*, which "is necessary to all effective leadership and is a component of all exceptional success, though it is also an instrument of evil."[35] Kindoki is witchcraft is spiritual power is the capacity to lead is political power. Discursively and practically these varied forms of power bleed together: the same power that can heal a community can harm it. Yet, they are not equivalent, as they are subject to related discourses of morality – there are right and wrong ways to use these varied forms of power. But these discourses of morality are themselves contentious and subject to historical context. MacGaffey reminds us that "*kindoki* is a language of conflict and negotiation, not consensus."[36] It is important to acknowledge that the distinction between "eating" and "protecting" powers is fluid and open to subjective interpretation.

This offers a potentially useful way to think about the proliferation of churches in Eastern Congo. There are perhaps "eating" churches and "protecting" churches - pastors who prey on the despair of the Congolese people for personal gain, and prophets such as Tata Wahiseelelwa, who have, in their own way, continually demonstrated a genuine intent and capacity to protect their parishioners and better their lives in whatever way they can. But this does not mean their work is necessarily and unanimously seen as good or above social critique. But it is seen, and as the meeting in Lugufu II demonstrates, it is part of intra-communal conversations about political legitimacy and efficacy in the context of the conflict. However, without the kind of substantive research that allows us to understand and disaggregate, and compare various religious groups and the local and regional historical contexts in which they have emerged, we will continue to see them

[35] MacGaffey *Kongo Political* 2000, 2.
[36] MacGaffey 2000, 12.

only at the most functional level as a sign of despair. Nor can we see the processes of conflict and negotiation going on between and within communities about the legitimacy of the forms of power exercised by emergent and expanding religious communities and leaders. Moreover – and this leads me to my final point – we cannot see how churches and religious leaders and the institutions they create relate to the larger economy of *puissance* in the region.

As I move to conclude this study, I will return to this question, once more, in an effort to heed Nancy Rose Hunt's urgent call to tether Congo's past to the present, bearing mind the necessity to tether them to the past. I will argue that as with other power wielders who exist within the larger economy of *puissance* in the region (which, I will argue, might also include armed groups, local and regional political leaders, and NGOs), 'religious' actors are born of varied contexts and exhibit an array of objectives, methods, and intentions, which can range from genuinely productive and well-intentioned to explicitly predatory and destructive. Indeed, one might conceive of the economy of puissance in terms of an economy of protection and predation. And, on which end of this protection-predation spectrum a given church or leader lies is not a subject of consensus, but one of contention and negotiation. And those negotiations hinge on discourses of power and morality that, both today and in the past, have highlighted the fraught and ambiguous relationship between healing and violence, protecting and preying, in the intellectual history of the region.

Conclusion

At its core, this study centered around two questions posed in the introduction: Why is it that Kitawala – a movement long associated with anti-colonialism – has continued to have appeal and significance in the lives of people in eastern Congo in the post-colonial era? How might understanding the answer to that question change how we can read the history of Kitawala? As I argue throughout this study, the answers to these questions revolve around the continued relevance of the theories of power that have historically animated Kitawala, informing the actions and interpretations of the individuals and communities it has touched. In order to make this argument, I have endeavored to demonstrate that healing – on both the individual and communal levels – was and remains central to the practice of Kitawala and its significance to those who practiced it in the past and those who practice it in the present.

On one level, highlighting how Kitawalists historically engaged the same dynamic theories of power that have animated deep regional histories of health and healing is significant because it exposes an aspect of Kitawala's history (healing) that has been largely ignored, subsumed into discussions of witchcraft and baptism. Filling this gap allows us to see not only how the restoration individual and communal health was and remains a central concern of those drawn to the movement, but also exposes the realms of power in which women have wielded a central role in the history of the movement. This allows us to see how, as 'mamas of the prayer chambers,' women may not have wielded the visible institutional power in Kitawalist history, but they have nonetheless wielded 'invisible' forms of power. When we take such forms of power seriously, we can begin to

imagine how, in this capacity, Kitawalist women have made material interventions in history via means that are immaterial.

But on a more profound level, drawing healing - and the deeply rooted discourses and practices of power it in engages - into the center of the history of Kitawala provides an analytical path around tired debates about the extent to which Kitawala was either a 'political' or 'religious' movement by exposing the ways in which the political, religious, and healing aspects of the movement were inseparable, each intimately connected and all revolving around these same theories of power. Moreover, it emphasizes the fact that the analytical separation of such categories belies the ways in which people in Central Africa have historically imagined the secular and the sacred, the visible and the invisible, as two intimately connected aspect of the world in which they lived and live.[1].

In this sense, this history of Kitawala has, in many ways, constructed what I have labeled a 'tradition narrative.' In this narrative, I have searched for the ways in which a religious/political/healing movement like Kitawala, in addition to fitting within 'Watchtower' and "materialist" narratives of colonial imposition and exchange, can and must also be situated within "Africa-based" narratives of social health.[2] This is explicitly

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[1] This intertwining of the visible and invisible worlds is not unique to Central Africa, but the 'theories of power' described in this study draw their substance from ethnolinguisic and historical research of scholars such as Christopher Ehert, David Schoenbrun, and Jan Vansina who have identified a "shared collective representation" of this entanglement that can most readily be traced in the languages and practices of Bantu-speaking peoples of central and (and, to a large extent, eastern) Africa. For a good discussion of this literature and of the delineation of something that might be called a 'Central African' notion of power, see: David Gordon 2012, Loc 330-502. For Chris Ehret's work, see: *An African Classical Age: Eastern and Souther Africa in World History, 1000 B.C. too A.D. 400*. Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1998, 158-60. For Vansina's work on the 'Equatorial Tradition' see: Vansina 1990. For Schoenbrun's work on the Great Lakes, see: Schoenbrun 1998.

[2] Kodesh 2010, 193

not an argument in favor of imagining the endurance of 'static' traditions, but an interrogation of the ways in which – to quote Anthony Appiah – Africans "still share the beliefs of their ancestors in an ontology of invisible beings."[3] It is, in many ways, a pathway toward getting around 'rupture' theses that proclaim the 'death of tradition' perpetrated by the onslaught of colonialism to more subtle theses that suggest that 'traditions' - such as the theories of power outlined in this study - though they may have been rendered 'invisible' by their entanglement with Christian imagery and ideas, anti-colonial/nationalistic endeavors, or labor/class politics - have nonetheless continued to be evoked, re-imagined, employed, and disputed. Indeed, they have shaped such processes of entanglement at their core, particularly in the articulation of moral and immoral uses of power/*puissance*.[4]

It is on this last point – about the centrality of discourses of morality to the interpretation and experience of *puissance* – that I would like to offer some final thoughts. I highlight it not only because it elucidates, once more, the fact that there has been a fraught relationship between healing and violence, or 'protecting' and 'eating' *puissance*, in Central African history, but because it opens a potential way by which the history presented in this study might be 'tethered' to the present.

The Economy of Protection and Predation

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[3] Anthony Appiah and Allen R. Grossman. *In My Father's House: Africa in the Philosophy of Culture.* New York: Oxford University Press, 1992.

[4] On the 'death of tradition', see: Jan Vansina 1990, On the need to search for 'invisible histories' that draw on narratives rooted in the African past, see: Feierman 1999, 186-187.

By way of conclusion, then, I would like to suggest how the history of Kitawala, as well as that of other emergent and expanding religious groups such as Wamalkia wa Ubembe, can be read in the larger social and political context of contemporary Eastern Congo. Recently, scholars of the conflict have argued that one of the great paradoxes of the peace-building process in the nominally post-conflict region is that competition over the right to control peace-building activities has led to increased militia presence by creating "regional markets for protection."[5] Emphasis on security reform as the most effective means of building peace has, in essence, made warlordism the most efficient path toward power-sharing in the region. It is through these practices of warlordism that various armed groups gain access to the negotiating table and are able to push for incorporation into state networks of political patronage, thereby reaping the economic incentives – namely, rights to collect "protection money" from local industries and populations – that such patronage confers. For the peasants who constitute the "forced clientele" of these armed groups, the relationship to their "protectors" can range from purely extortionist to a kind of "negotiated peace," but in either case the ultimate result is that the persistent drain on the resources of peasant households has rendered rural economic activities, particularly agricultural practices, unsustainable.[6]

Such analyses reflect a growing consensus among scholars of the region that there is something profoundly flawed about a peace-building model that seeks to placate violent actors by incorporating them into a centralized state that has consistently failed to a) protect its citizens from the violence perpetrated by such predatory actors, b) to

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[5] See: Deni Tull and Andrea Mehler, 2005; Timothy Raeymaekers, "Why History Repeats Itself in Eastern DRC," *e-International Relations*, 12/20/2012, http://www.e-ir.info/2012/12/20/why-history-repeats-itself-in-eastern-dr-congo/ (accessed 12/22/2012).
[6] Timothy Raeymakers 2012.

address any of the underlying local disputes over land and power that are often "hijacked" by regional and national actors to legitimate their own claims to the spoils of the protection economy[7], or c) to provide even the most basic social services to its citizens - a task which, particularly in the East, has become almost exclusively the domain of non-state actors such as local and international NGOs and, very often, local religious groups. On this final point, Denis Tull and Pierre Englebert have rightly noted that the international community's tendency to, on the one hand, support efforts to strengthen and legitimate the centralized state (via elections, for example), while, on the other hand, investing heavily in the non-state sector (via enormous sums of aid money channeled through NGOs), has "provoked fierce competition between state and nonstate actors for outside funding."[8]

Read in conjunction, observations about armed groups competing with each other in "markets for protection" and Tull and Englebert's observations about competition over "aid resources" are suggestive. If we expand the notion of "markets for protection" in the realm of armed groups to a broader notion of an economy of *puissance*, it might alternately be imagined as an economy of protection and predation. This opens a potentially useful new lens through which to view the varied groups and actors in the region who are, in essence, competing over different sorts of rights to offer protection – which in practice can often take the form of predation. This can include armed groups, who, as noted above, are in competition to exchange "protection" for taxation rights, but who also participate as consumers of occult powers. Non-state actors and the NGOs they

[7] On the failure of both peace-building processes and the Congolese state to address local dynamics of the conflict, see Severine Autesserre 2010. Also, Denis Tull 2010.
[8] Pierre Englebert and Denis M. Tull. "Postconflict Reconstruction in Africa: Flawed Ideas about Failed States," *International Security* (32:4) Spring 2008, 114.

operate are in competition to attract large sums of aid money to "protect" populations. Procurement of these sums and the jobs they produce are subject to networks of patrimony and, in practice, aid resources are very frequently "eaten" by those actors who purport to use them for protection. Politicians are in competition for political power, ostensibly for the purposes of serving and protecting their constituents, but in practice often for their own piece of the Kabila regime's patrimony pie. And, finally, religious groups are competing over the right to offer their followers spiritual protection, but at times also over the right to participate in the aid economy, or to wield influence over political actors and even armed groups.

What is so potentially useful about drawing these varied providers of protection into this larger framework is that it allows us to see how protection and predation exist together, the one sometimes leading to the other and sometimes not. We can also see that whether power is being used legitimately in the service of protection or whether it has become a form of predation is a subject of negotiation: there is not necessarily consensus either within or outside of a given community on the matter. Moreover, we can begin to look for ways in which these various forms of protection and predation have overlapped in the past, allowing us to better contextualize their manifestation in the present. There is, for example, a long history of international "aid societies" and missions in Congo that too frequently ignored or even facilitated violence and predation in the name of protecting their converts. Congolese religious/healing/political movements such as Kitawala have, likewise, perpetrated violence in the name of protecting their communities. Like the Mai-Mai today, armed groups in the past purported to draw on disembodied spiritual forces in

their violent acts of protection – to correct imbalances in the economy of puissance. And political leaders cultivated reputations for practicing the occult.[9]

These are the historical foundations upon which any understanding of the local communal power dynamics that have emerged in the midst and in the aftermath of contemporary conflict in eastern Congo must ultimately be built. As the history of Kitawala presented in this study highlights, in Central Africa, spiritual forces are understood to have agency and their *puissance* – like that of Lumumba – can be claimed and wielded in the name of communal protection. They can also be embodied – in talcum powder that heals or in a man – Bushiri or Tata Wahiseelelwa – who has claimed accessed to the super-*puissance* of God. Thinking back to Tata Wahiseelewa, he is a man who at times has claimed to protect his community in various ways. He has offered his followers spiritual protection from witchcraft and access to the power of God, but he has also offered them material protection in the form of relatively successful development projects. He has offered them political guidance and he has protected them from predatory armed groups. But he has also asked them to give tithes and to adhere to a strict code of behavior and he and his followers are often regarded with suspicion, for the same power that makes him charismatic and powerful makes him and his followers dangerous. Ambiguous discourses of power "that can jump the lake" and their accompanying discourses of morality are not bizarre addendums to more concrete discussions of power dynamics in Eastern Congo - either in the past or the present - they are a central to those power dynamics. They animate discussions about power – who should wield it, how they

[9] On the use of the occult by the Mai Mai, see: Emma Wild-Wood, "'Is it Witchcraft? Is it Satan? It is a Miracle' Mai-Mai Soldiers and Christian Concepts of Evil in North-East Congo," *Journal of Religions in Africa*, vol 28, no 4, 1998, p 450-467. On politics and the occult in Congo, see Michael Schatzberg…op. cit.

should use it, and how they have come to possess it - at all levels, and it is precisely their ambiguity that makes them powerful in a region where the lines between protection and predation are continually blurred.

Appendix 1: Photographs

Image 1: Pastor Paul II (PP2) of Kitawala Filadelphie speaks with health officials.[10]

Image 1.1 Altar built for offerings to Lumumba[11]

[10] V. Petit and J. Pittenger, "Part 2: A Trojan Horse Strategy."
[11] Photograph by the Author, Swima, DRC 6/30/10

Image 1.2 Singing and dancing at 30 June service[12]

Image 1.3 EDAC Leaders, Mboko, South Kivu [13]

[12] Photograph by the Author, Swima, 6/30/10
[13] Photograph by the Author. Mboko 2010.

Image 1:4 EDAC Member in Fizi[14]

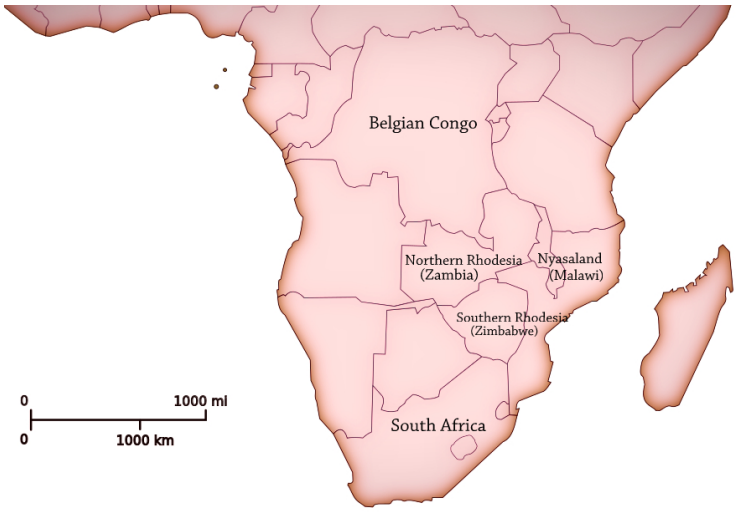
Image 2.1 Vestline Talcum Powder[15]

[14] Photograph by the Author. Mboko 2010.
[15] Photograph by the Author, Kalemie 2010.

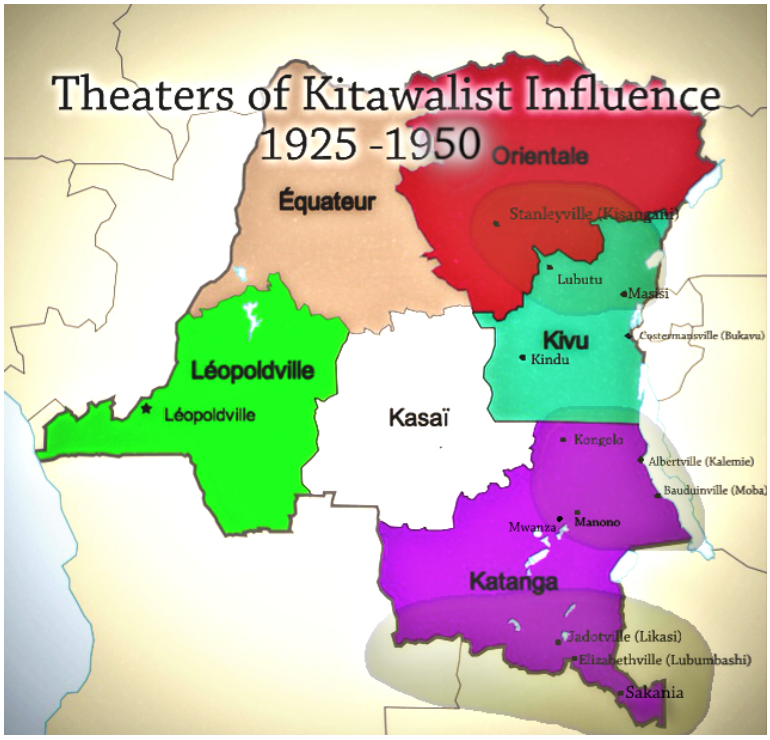
Image 3.1: Photos of the Prophet Kadima Ilunga Emile[16]

[16] Photos collected in from the grandson of Prophet Ilunga, Ilunga Wesele Joseph, at the Kitawala Mission approx. 10 k outside of Kalemie, Katanga, 11/11/10. Unfortunately, there is no explanation of the photos beyond indicating that they all picture of the Prophet Ilunga.

Appendix 2: Maps



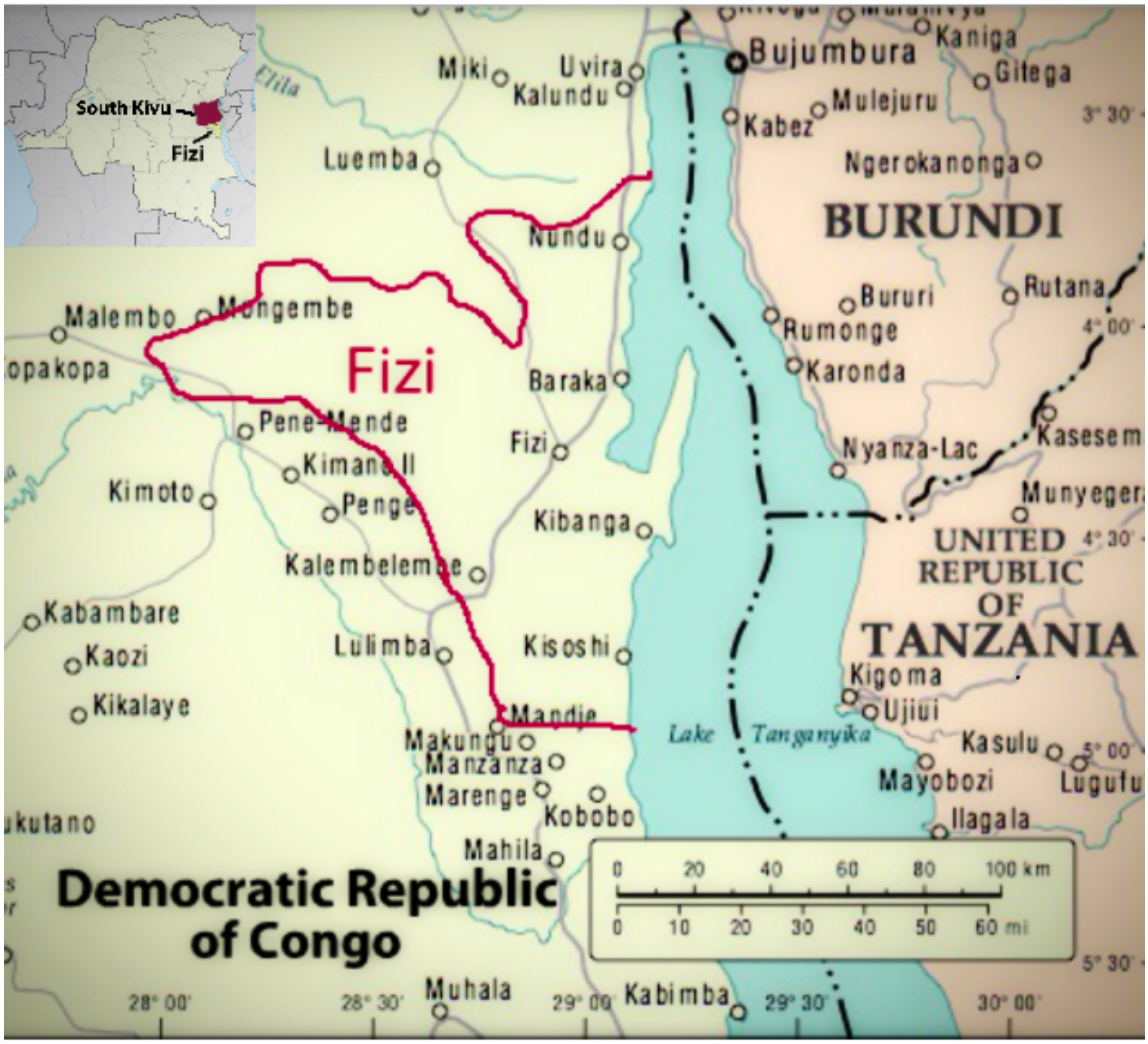
Map 3.1: Map of Southern African Countries with Watchtower Activity[17]



Map 3.2 Theaters of Kitawalist Influence.[18]

[17] This map was designed by the author using a DRC map template acquired from commons.wikimedia.org

[18] This map was designed by the author using a DRC map template acquired from commons.wikimedia.org. It reflects the provincial borders and names of the Belgian



Map 6.1 Fizi

Congo from 1933-1960. The highlighted areas are not exact representations of the areas influenced by Kitawala from 1925- ca.1950, but approximations.

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