

**Violence and Memory: The Mulele “Rebellion” in Post-colonial D. R.
Congo**

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Abstract

Between 1963 and 1968, Pierre Mulele, previously Minister of National Education in the first post-colonial government of the Democratic Republic of Congo, led a rebellion in Kwilu province against the Congolese government. Strongly opposed to the new form of colonialism expressed in the “Belgo-Congolese dream,” Mulele took up arms to change the order of things. This thesis is about the suffering caused by this rebellion, the reproduction of this suffering across time, and its inscription in the imaginary of the survivors and, indirectly, the Congolese state and various political regimes in power in Kinshasa from the 1960s to the present. It is the overall question of the “imaginaries of suffering” that drives the analysis: suffering as what people experienced in the concrete conditions of existence during the rebellion; suffering experienced by the body during the rebellion; suffering as what the “body” remembers because it carries visible marks, recognizable by the self and others; and suffering as what leaves marks in the minds of the suffering subjects. The thesis is also about power, its meaning, and the complex interplay of forces between power, memory, and suffering. It draws on evidence from archival materials, oral testimonies, and debates from philosophy, history, anthropology, literary studies, and medical humanities published over the last thirty years by scholars from Europe, Asia, the Americas and Africa.

Keywords: Mulele, rebellion, suffering, imagination, reproduction, body, power, memory, Congo, Zaire.

Declaration

I declare that this thesis is my own unaided work. It is submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. It has not been submitted before for any other degree or examination at any other university.



Emery Masua Kalema

On the 24th day of February, 2017

Dedication

To my parents, for reminding me that knowledge is freedom.

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Abbreviations

ACL-PT	Assemblée Constituante et Legislative–Parlement de Transition (Constitutive Assembly and Legislative – Transitional Parliament)
AFDL	Alliance des Forces pour la Libération du Congo (Alliance of the Forces for the Liberation of Congo)
AIPRO	Affaires Intérieures Provinciales (Provincial Internal Affairs)
ANC	Armée Congolaise Nationale (Congolese National Army)
ATAP	Administrateur Territorial Assistant Principal (Principal Territorial Assistant Administrator)
CI	Circonscription Indigène (Indigenous or local area)
CNL	Conseil National de Libération (National Council of Liberation)
CVR	Corps des Volontaires de la République (Voluntary Force of the Republic)
GD	Gendarmerie
HCB	Huileries du Congo Belge (Oil Mills of Belgian Congo)
INEAC	Institut National pour l’Etude Agronomique du Congo Belge (National Institute for Agronomy in Congo Belge)
INERA	Institut National pour l’Etude et la Recherche Agronomiques (National Institute for the Study and Research of Agronomy)
JMPR	Jeunesses du Mouvement Populaire de la Révolution (Youth of the Popular Movement of the Revolution)
MPR	Mouvement Populaire de la Révolution (Popular Movement of the Revolution)
PALU	Parti Lumumbiste Unifié (Unified Lumumbist Party)
PLC	Plantations Lever au Congo (Lever Plantations in Congo)
PSA	Parti Solidaire Africain, Belgian Congo (African Solidarity Party)
RENAMO	National Resistance Movement of Mozambique
TO	Travailleur Ordinaire (Unskilled worker)
TPM	Travaux Publics et Mécaniques (Public and Mechanical Works)
UN	United Nations
UPC	Union of the Populations of Cameroon
US	United States of America

Introduction

Overture

This thesis is about a moment that is relatively forgotten in the history of decolonization in Africa. It is the period that followed almost immediately upon formal decolonization and the transfer of power from colonial authority to that of the newly independent states. This period, which occurred in a number of African countries, was marked by numerous conflicts, most of which call into question the legitimacy of the new state. It took place, for example, in Cameroon with the rebellion led by the Union of the Populations of Cameroon (UPC) in the 1960s.¹ It also applied to the second phase of decolonization: for example, Mozambique saw an armed resistance led by the National Resistance Movement of Mozambique (Renamo) in the 1970s² and Zimbabwe experienced the Matabeleland rebellion in the 1980s.³

On the one hand, these conflicts or uprisings in the immediate post-independence period often resulted in the deployment of various forms of state violence, the nature and scale of which have sometimes reached exceptional or traumatic levels for the people

¹ The rebellion in Cameroon started in 1948 and ended officially in 1958 after the assassination of the UPC leader by the French authorities. The dispute resumed after Cameroonian independence in January 1960. See Achille Mbembe, *La naissance du maquis dans le Sud-Cameroun (1920-1960): Histoire des usages de la raison en colonie*, Paris: Karthala, 1996; and Richard Joseph, *Le mouvement nationaliste au Cameroun: les origines sociales de l'UPC*, Paris: Karthala, 1986.

² The war in Mozambique extended into the 1990s. See Alex Vines, *Renamo: From Terrorism to Democracy in Mozambique?* New York: New York University Press, 1996; Sibil W. Cline, *Renamo: Anti-Communist Insurgents in Mozambique; The Fight Goes on*, Washington, D.C.: United States Global Council, 1989; Bruce W. Dayton and Louis Kriesberg (eds), *Moving from Violence to Sustainable Peace*, London: Routledge, 2009; Anna Leão, *Different Opportunities, Different Outcomes: Civil War and Rebel Groups in Angola and Mozambique*, Bonn: Deutsches Institut für Entwicklungspolitik, 2007; Carolyn Nordstrom, *A Different Kind of War Story*, Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1997; Mark Simpson, *Political Decompression and Historical Revisionism in Mozambique*, Johannesburg: South African Institute of International Affairs, 1992; Michel Cahen, *Mozambique: analyse politique de conjoncture*, Paris: Indigo Publications, 1990; and Victor Ingreja, "Frelimo's Political Ruling through Violence and Memory in Postcolonial Mozambique," *Journal of Southern African Studies* 36, 3 (December 2010), pp. 781-799.

³ On this rebellion, see Jocelyn Alexander et al., *Violence and Memory: One Hundred Years in the "Dark Forests" of Matabeleland*, Oxford: James Currey, 2000; Heike I. Schmidt, *Colonialism and Violence in Zimbabwe: A History of Suffering*, Oxford: James Currey, 2013; Martin Meredith, *Our Votes, our Guns: Robert Mugabe and the Tragedy of Zimbabwe*, New York: Public Affairs, 2003; Catholic Commission for Justice, *Gukurahundi in Zimbabwe: A Report on the Disturbances in Matabeleland (1980-1988)*, Johannesburg: Jacana, 2007; and Enocent Msindo, *Ethnicity in Zimbabwe: Transformations in Kalanga and Ndebele Societies, 1860-1990s*, New York: University of Rochester Press, 2012.

involved. On the other hand, the independent state has generally attempted to force the inhabitants of regions thus affected by violence to forget these events. By reconstructing and analysing the events in one region of the former Belgian Congo in the aftermath of independence, this study contributes to the elucidation of how such key moments—which have often been characterized by a proliferation of civil wars—have had strong and decisive influences on the trajectory of independent states.

This thesis focuses on the Mulele rebellion, a guerrilla war led by Pierre Mulele, one of the founders of the *Parti Solidaire Africain* (PSA) in 1959 and former Minister of National Education of the Lumumba government in July 1960, and his companions. The rebellion took place mainly in the Kwilu region, then inhabited by approximately one and a half million people and located about 500 km to the east of the capital city of Kinshasa.⁴ The rebellion lasted from 1963 to 1968, with the aim of re-conquering the Congolese state from what the rebels called Belgian neo-colonial domination.⁵ This form of “neo-colonialism,” which in the view of the rebels was more insidious than traditional colonial rule, operated through Congolese intermediaries. The post-independence conflict that ravaged the Congo in the 1960s was characterized by both local and international dimensions.⁶ After the assassination of Patrice Emery Lumumba in 1961,

⁴ Herbert F. Weiss, *Congo 1964: Political Documents of a Developing Nation*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1966, p. 4. On the Kwilu region and its cultural and linguistic groups, see Henri Nicolai, *Le Kwilu*, Bruxelles: Cemubac, 1963.

⁵ Sindani Kiangu, *Le Kwilu à l'épreuve du pluralisme identitaire (1948-1968)*, Paris: L'Harmattan, 2009, p. 228. On the context in which the rebellion arose, the key reasons behind mobilization, how the guerilla war was led, how many people supported Mulele, their age category as well as their beliefs, see Renée C. Fox, Willy de Craemer and Jean-Marie Ribeaucourt, “La deuxième indépendance. Etude d'un cas: la rébellion au Kwilu,” *Etudes Congolaises* 8, 1 (1965), pp. 1-35; and Ludo Martens, *Pierre Mulele ou la seconde vie de Lumumba*, Bruxelles: Epo, 1985.

⁶ By “international dimension” here I mean the intervention of foreign powers, such as Belgium, France, the United States of America (US), the Soviet Union, as well as the United Nations (UN). On this aspect, see Crawford W. Young, “Post-Independence Politics in the Congo,” *Transition*, 23 (1966), pp. 34-41; Stephen R. Weissman, *American Foreign Policy in the Congo, 1960-1964*, London: Cornell University Press, 1974; Victor Marchetti and John D. Marks, *The CIA and the Cult of Intelligence*, London: J. Cape, 1974; Anthony Mocker, *The New Mercenaries: The History of the Hired Soldier from the Congo to the Seychelles*, Minnesota: Paragon House, 1987; Piero Gleijeses, *Conflicting Missions: Havana, Washington, and Africa, 1959-1976*, Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002; Michael R. Belscloss, *The Crisis Years: Kennedy and Khrushchev, 1960-1963*, New York: Harper Collins, 1991; Georges H. Dumont, *Histoire de la Belgique*, Paris: Edition du Club France loisirs, 1977; Albert Kalonji Ditunga Mulopwe, *Congo 1960. La sécession du Sud-Kasaï: La vérité du Mulopwe*, Paris: L'Harmattan, 2005; Cléophas Kamitatu-Massamba, *Kilombo ou le prix à payer pour rebâtir la R-D Congo*, Paris: L'Harmattan, 2007; and Frank R. Villafañá, *Cold War in the Congo: The Confrontation of Cuban Military Forces, 1960-1967*, New Jersey: Transaction Publishers, 2007.

Pierre Mulele became the centre of the tensions between these national and international dimensions as he questioned the nature, quality, and content of decolonization and postcolonial trajectories.

The Mulele rebellion has been the subject of numerous studies. In the 1960s and 1970s, scholars who ventured into this field were concerned with issues of ideology, political radicalization, mass mobilization, socio-political analysis of the rebels, their identities, the causes of the rebellion, as well as the ambiguous features of the movement.⁷ In general, scholars were interested in the political ideology of post-independence popular movements. The Mulele rebellion was considered an apt illustration of the processes which led to the founding and development of social movements in the Third World after 1945. At a global level, the debate remained confined to the then still under-studied category of political violence known as the “aborted revolution.”⁸ It was strongly believed that an appreciation of the aborted rural revolution in Kwilu would help scholars understand the reasons for the prevention of political change in sub-Saharan Africa.⁹ The studies led to the insight that the increasing coercive capacity of African armies was legitimated by their strong endorsement by their local governments, which was the key element that ultimately enabled the newly independent African states to suppress popular rebellions.¹⁰

In the 1980s, the debate shifted to three themes. In some ways, these were re-iterations of some of the debates of the 1960s and 1970s, but with new insights. They were the role of international powers in the Congo crisis;¹¹ secondly, “the forms and

⁷ See, for example, Fox, de Craemer and , “La deuxième indépendance,” pp. 1-35; Benoît Verhaegen, *Rebellions au Congo*, vol. 1, Bruxelles, CRISP, 1966; and Mark Traugott, “The Economic Origins of the Kwilu Rebellion,” *Comparatives Studies in Society and History* 21, 3 (July 1979), pp. 459-479. In terms of argument and approach, Benoît Verhaegen’s last book, published in collaboration with J. Omasombo, E. Simons and F. Verhaegen in 2006 does not completely move away from his first volume on the Mulele rebellion published in 1966. See Benoît Verhaegen and al., *Mulele et la révolution populaire au Kwilu (République Démocratique du Congo)*, Bruxelles: MRAC, 2006; and Reuben Loffman, “Book Review: Mulele et la révolution populaire au Kwilu (République Démocratique du Congo),” *African Affairs* 108, 431 (2009), pp. 332-333.

⁸ See Claude E. Welch (Jr.), “Ideological Foundations of Revolution in Kwilu,” *African Studies Review* 18, 2 (1975), p. 116.

⁹ Welch, “Ideological Foundations of Revolution in Kwilu,” p. 116.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 127.

¹¹ See Philippe Borel, “La politique belge à l’égard du Congo pendant la période des insurrections (1963-1964),” in Catherine Coquery-Vidrovich and al. (eds), *Rébellions-révolutions au Zaïre (1963-1965)*, vol. 2, Paris: L’Harmattan, 1987, pp. 7-35; Marcia Wright, “Pour que l’évolution se poursuive: projets et

modalities of mass mobilization,” “the role and weight of the ethnic factor as a catalyst for this mobilization,” the “dialectical partner of political ideology;”¹² and lastly, “the specific impact of the complex and engaging personality of Pierre Mulele.”¹³ These debates examined in particular whether Pierre Mulele’s actions in Kwilu should be considered a rebellion or a revolution.¹⁴ In the same decade emerged the idea, first put forward by Ludo Martens, that “Patrice Emery Lumumba and Pierre Mulele remain the only true Congolese nationalists among the fighters of Congolese Independence.”¹⁵ In the late 1990s and early 2000s, the themes of political ideology¹⁶ and identities re-surfaced. The rebellion was analysed as a “social theory.” Pierre Mulele himself was presented as an ambiguous figure in the history of Kwilu: “hero, martyr, or traitor?”¹⁷

The goal of this thesis is not to re-iterate these substantial works and debates on the Mulele rebellion. It is rather to name, transcribe, document, and analyse the suffering caused by the Mulele rebellion that began in 1963 and lasted until 1968. How was this suffering inscribed in the imaginary (or the minds) of the survivors and, indirectly, the Congolese state and various political regimes in power in Kinshasa from the 1960s to the

politiques des Etats-Unis au Congo, 1963,” in Catherine Coquery-Vidrovitch and al. (eds), *Rébellion-révolution au Zaïre (1963-1965)*, vol.2, Paris: L’Harmattan, pp. 36-61; and Daniel Van Der Steen, “L’attitude de la presse occidentale en 1964,” in Catherine Coquery-Vidrovitch and al. (eds), *Rébellion-révolution au Zaïre (1963-1965)*, vol.2, Paris: L’Harmattan, pp. 61-70.

¹² See Constant N’Dom, “La mobilisation des masses,” in Catherine Coquery-Vidrovitch and al. (eds), *Rébellions-révolutions au Zaïre (1963-1965)*, vol. 1, Paris: L’Harmattan, 1987 pp. 211-216; Constant N’Dom Nda Ombel, *Pierre Mulele assassiné, la révolution étranglée*, Bruxelles: CEP, 1984; Benoît Verhaegen, “Le rôle de l’ethnie et de l’individu dans la rébellion du Kwilu et dans son échec,” in Catherine Coquery-Vidrovitch and al. (eds), *Rébellion-révolution au Zaïre (1963-1965)*, vol.1, Paris: L’Harmattan, pp. 147-167; and Catherine Newbury, “Réflexions sur les racines rurales et la révolution: Rwanda et Congo oriental,” in Catherine Coquery-Vidrovitch and al. (eds), *Rébellion-révolution au Zaïre (1963-1965)*, vol.2, Paris: L’Harmattan, pp. 95-105.

¹³ See Verhaegen, “Le rôle de l’ethnie...,” pp. 147-148.

¹⁴ See Catherine Coquery-Vidrovitch, “Avant-propos,” in Catherine Coquery-Vidrovitch and al. (eds), *Rébellion-révolution au Zaïre (1963-1965)*, vol.1, Paris: L’Harmattan, p. 7; Verhaegen, “Le rôle de l’ethnie...,” pp. 147-148; Nzongola-Ntalaja, “Fondements du mouvement insurrectionnel et problème de cadres,” in Catherine Coquery-Vidrovitch and al. (eds), *Rébellion-révolution au Zaïre (1963-1965)*, vol.1, Paris: L’Harmattan, pp. 229-234; and Ludo Martens, “L’idéologie du mouvement révolutionnaire au Congo-Kinshasa (1963-1968). Forces et faiblesses,” in Catherine Coquery-Vidrovitch and al. (eds), *Rébellion-révolution au Zaïre (1963-1965)*, vol.1, Paris: L’Harmattan, pp. 217-228. Scholars’ views remained divergent on this question. In this thesis, I will use the word “rebellion” instead of “revolution.”

¹⁵ See Martens, *Pierre Mulele...*

¹⁶ See Kizobo O’Bweng-Okwess, *Introduction à la pensée de Pierre Mulele*, Lubumbashi: Presses Universitaires de Lubumbashi, 1999.

¹⁷ See Kiangu, *Le Kwilu...*; and Sindani Kiangu, “Pierre Mulele, martyr ou traître? Les langages de la mémoire,” in Michèle Baussant, *La mémoire, l’histoire et l’oubli*, Québec: Les Presses de l’Université Laval, 2006, pp. 131-142.

present? It is the overall question of the “imaginaries of suffering” that is at the core of my analysis: suffering as something people experienced in the concrete conditions of existence during the rebellion (Chapter One); suffering understood as what a person experienced in the body during the rebellion (Chapter Two); suffering as what the “body” remembers¹⁸ because it carries visible marks, recognizable by the self and others (Chapter Three); and suffering as what leaves marks in the minds of the people involved (Chapter Four). The thesis privileges the voices of the victims and the testimonies of those who witnessed the rebellion in order to explore political power and its meaning at the broader level of the history of Congolese society. It also wishes to explore time and the reproduction of suffering caused by the rebellion across (the arc of) time. Lastly, it seeks to explore the complex interplay between power, suffering, and memory.

Evidence, methods, theories, and approaches

The thesis is largely based upon early postcolonial archives of the Mulele rebellion, materials created at the time and enriched over the last five decades.¹⁹ I also draw on more than one hundred oral interviews I conducted with witnesses and survivors who are today settled in Kinshasa, Kikwit and its surrounding villages (500 km east of Kinshasa), Idiofa (656 km east of Kinshasa) and Gungu (686 km south-east of Kinshasa). The interviews were conducted in Kikongo, Lingala and French.²⁰ They took place in several stages and over several months: March 2013, September 2013-February 2014, March 2015, July-August 2015, and December 2015.²¹

The thesis also brings into play published resources and official reports into the rebellion and its aftermath, including commentaries right up to the present. It employs maps generated at the time of the rebellion and ever since, photographs taken at the time

¹⁸ See Didier Fassin, *When Bodies Remember: Experiences and Politics of AIDS in South Africa*, trans. Amy Jacobs and Gabrielle Varo, Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007.

¹⁹ The “Conseil National de Libération (Congo) Commandement des Forces Armées Populaires. Etat Major Général Records” collection (forthwith Archives Conseil National) is located at the Hoover Institution, Stanford University. The documents are mainly written in Kikongo, a Congolese language, and in French. I also use private collections.

²⁰ All translations in the thesis are my own.

²¹ The thesis makes use of long quotes from these interviews and the quotes are assigned to the names of the interviewees. Unless otherwise specified, all names used in this thesis are real.

of the rebellion as well as my own taken during the field work, newspaper accounts and other forms of evidences, including scars and marks on the bodies of survivors. The thesis is also informed by analysis of dreams and nightmares recounted during interviews.

Three remarks in relation to methodological questions and problems of interpretation should be made here. First of all is the difficulty of working with “gruesome” materials.²² When writing about violence, suffering, and memory, we are not merely objective onlookers, we are in fact contributing to the archive itself.²³ This has implication for us as researchers, whose subjectivities influence how we chose to present the evidence at our disposal. The photographs and images reproduced in this thesis are “shocking”; some of the descriptions of torture are disturbing; the voices of the witnesses are “loud.”²⁴ Their reproduction in this thesis is a response to the burning question that animates this thesis: “How does one write about suffering in a way that does not compromise the suffering of the person on whom it is inflicted and of those who are reading about this suffering?”

Secondly, the evidence which the thesis gathers together does not necessarily share the same status; nor is it of the same genre. Official reports are not the same as individual testimonies gathered through private correspondences; written testimonies are not the same as oral testimonies; a testimony given at the time of the events is not the same as a testimony given fifty years later.²⁵ The different valency of the evidence carries

²² See Susan Sontag, *On Photography*, Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1979; Susan Sontag, *Regarding the Pain of Others*, London: Penguin, 2004; Elana Newman and al., “Trauma Exposure and Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder Among Photojournalists,” *Visual Communication Quarterly* 10, 1 (2003), pp. 4-13; Keren Cohen and Paula Collens, “The Impact of Trauma Work on Trauma Workers: A Metasynthesis on Vicarious Trauma and Vicarious Posttraumatic Growth,” *Psychological Trauma: Theory, Research, Practice, and Policy* 5, 6 (2013), pp. 570-580; and Anthony Feinstein and al., “Witnessing Images of Extreme Violence: A Psychological Study of Journalists in the Newsroom,” *Journal of the Royal Society of Medicine* 5, 8 (2014), pp. 1-7.

²³ See Schmidt, *Colonialism and Violence in Zimbabwe...*, pp. 8-11.

²⁴ The thesis uses the masculine form of “he” in the discussion of the torture imposed on the survivors. This is particularly the case when eyewitnesses speak of the torture done to them and the torture they witnessed perpetrated against their immediate colleagues. This raises the question of the gender of my interviewees: there were more men than women. But it also raises the question whether the torture was perpetrated in particular against men, so that it is mainly men who function as witness to it. The evidence on my disposal suggests that men were the main target of torture.

²⁵ See David William Cohen and E.S. Atieno Odhiambo, *The Risks of Knowledge: Investigations into the Death of the Hon. Minister John Robert Ouko in Kenya, 1990*, Athens and Nairobi: Ohio University Press-East African Educational Publishers LTD, 2004; Christian Chevandier, “Objet de recherche, méthodes et

significant implications for its interpretation. One possible question that might be asked—and this applies to all disciplines working with issues of truth and objectivity—is whether the stories told by my informants are true or false; how can we determine if they are true or false? If what the informants said is true, did the events they described unfold precisely as portrayed? What means do I have as a scholar to verify and ascertain the truthfulness of the accounts? If what the informants said is false, what role does falsity play? In the end—and this is my first theoretical approach—questions on truth and falsity might not be the right ones.²⁶ Some of what my informants said is probably true, and some probably false. The figures of speech they employed and the descriptions they produced in order to account for the tragedy probably aimed at producing dramatic effects: conviction and sympathy, with political meanings.

More useful, I suggest, is the question of plausibility, likelihood and probability: that which my informants accounted for in their testimonies is likely to have happened, regardless of whether it actually happened or not.²⁷ And what also matters is the fact that informants can now speak (to me) as if these things actually happened, knowing full well that even as a historian I hardly have the means to verify their stories. What they account for are things that we can imagine could have actually happened, especially in a context in which they found themselves during the rebellion; a context in which any distinction between the normal and the ordinary (or extraordinary) either no longer existed or was deeply re-configured because of violence and the imperative for many of them to survive. In a situation where the distinction between the normal and the abnormal no

sources en histoire,” *Recherche en soins infirmiers* 2, 109 (2012), pp. 33-36; Dominique Aron-Schnapper and Danièle Hanet, “D’Hérodote au magnétophone: sources orales et archives orales,” *Annales. Economie, Sociétés, Civilisations* 35, 1 (1980), pp. 183-199; Jan Vansina, *De la tradition orale : essai de méthode historique*, Tervuren : Musée Royale de l’Afrique Centrale, 1961 ; Marc Bloch, “Critique historique et critique du témoignage,” *Annales. Histoire, Sciences Sociales* 5, 1 (janvier-mars 1950), pp. 1-8 ; François Bedarida, “Une invitation à penser l’histoire : Paul Ricœur, la mémoire, l’histoire et l’oubli,” *Revue Historique* 3, 619 (2003), pp. 731-739 ; and Dominick LaCapra, *History & Criticism*, Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1985.

²⁶ On the question of truth and falsity, see Paul Ricœur, “Narrative Time,” *Critical Inquiry* 7, 1 (Autumn 1980), pp. 169-190; Paul Ricœur, “Narrative Identity,” *Philosophy Today* 35, 1 (Spring 1991), pp. 73-81; Michel Foucault, *Le courage de la vérité: le gouvernement de soi et des autres II. Cours au Collège de France, 1983-1984*, ed. Frédéric Gros, Paris: Gallimard-Seuil, 2008; Luise White et al., *African Words, African Voices: Critical Practices in Oral History*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2001; and Alessandro Portelli, *The Death of Luigi Trastulli and other Stories*, Albany: State University of New York Press, 1991.

²⁷ See Portelli, *The Death...*, pp. 2, 26, 50-58.

longer holds, everything becomes possible. And when everything becomes possible, narration is liberated from its ordinary strictures.²⁸ Under such circumstances, truth is mostly an effect of affect. As a result, most of my effort in this thesis is to approach the stories re-counted by my informants as acts of affect.²⁹

Thirdly, the materials that form the core of this thesis are fragments of texts, speeches, words, and artifacts. They are fragments of evidence. The idea here—and this is my second theoretical approach—is not to make them say what they do not say, but to use them as an entry point to events that happened in the past, events which can only be partially reconstituted by these fragments. One of the questions this kind of evidence raises is: “What kind of interpretation does one get from them?” The interpretation we can get from fragments can only be fragmentary. Fragments do not allow for total interpretation. Ultimately, the knowledge that one can build from them will, out of necessity, be an incomplete kind of knowledge, a position which needs to be embraced as such. This should not be considered a lack, but the most logical approach.

My interpretation of these fragments comes from a close reading of them. This attempt at close reading builds from theoretical insights gained from the work of Georges Bataille (particularly his conception of space as sacrificial), Deleuze and Guattari (*Nomadology*), Michel Foucault (bio-politics, *Surveiller et Punir*), Reinhardt Koselleck (*Future Past*), Achille Mbembe (*Necropolitics, On the Postcolony*), Jean-Paul Sartre (*Being and Nothingness*), Martin Heidegger (his concept of “being-towards-death” and his phenomenology of fear), Jacques Derrida (*The Gift of Death*, his theory of specters, as well as his conception of time), Elaine Scarry (*The Body in Pain*), Jean-Luc Nancy (*The Intruder*, and *The Ground of the Image*), Frantz Fanon (his dialectic of self and others), Nancy Rose Hunt (her conception of laughter), Walter Benjamin (his conception

²⁸ On the configuration of narration, see Paul Ricœur, *Temps et récit*, Paris: Seuil, 1983; Paul Ricœur, *Temps et récit: la configuration du temps dans le récit de fiction*, Paris: Seuil, 1984; and Paul Ricœur, *Temps et récit: le temps raconté*, Paris: Seuil, 1985.

²⁹ See Kathleen Stewart, *Ordinary Affects*, Durham: Duke University Press, 2007; Paul Hoggett and Simon Thompson (eds), *Politics and the Emotions: The Affective Turn in Contemporary Political Studies*, London: Continuum, 2012; Brian Massumi, “The Autonomy of Affect,” *Cultural Critique*, 31 (Autumn 1995), pp. 83-109; Constantina Papoulias and Felicity Callard, “Biology’s Gift: Interrogating the Turn to Affect,” *Body and Society* 16, 1 (2010), pp. 29-56; Ruth Leys, “The Turn to Affect: A Critique,” *Critical Inquiry* 37, 3 (Spring 2011), pp. 437-472; and Couze Venn, “Post-Lacanian Affective Economy, Being-in-the-World, and the Critique of the Present: Lessons from Bracha Lichtenberg Ettinger,” *Theory, Culture & Society* 21, 1 (2004), pp. 149-158.

of time), Cornelius Castoriadis (his theory of imaginary), Paul Ricœur (*History, Memory and Forgetting*), Jean-Pierre Vernant (*Dans l'oeil du miroir*) and Sabine Melchior-Bonnet (*The Mirror: A History*).³⁰

I will not go into detail about this constellation of theoretical perspectives here. I will show how this can be done in the course of the account. The conclusion will demonstrate explicitly how they are deployed in the chapters, each of which explores its own set of problems. The latter will also set out the theoretical contribution made by this thesis.

A short intellectual trajectory

My interest in the subject of human suffering goes back to August 1998. I was 14 years old. At the time, Kinshasa, the capital city of the Democratic Republic of Congo where I was born and grew up, was besieged by Rwandan-Ugandan rebel forces who were fighting against the Congolese central government.³¹ There was no food. For eighteen days there was no electricity. We had to hide under the beds. My father was caught up by civilians who wrongly accused him of complicity with the rebels. He was beaten up—and almost burned. We were forced, as many others, to leave our home. We crossed the N'djili river on foot to seek refuge in the neighbouring municipality [*commune*] of Kisenso. I witnessed my mother nearly drowning. I realised that the man who carried me across the river on his shoulders was in physical pain.

It is after this experience that I began to think seriously about suffering. I even considered studying medicine after high school. But I was finally drawn to the discipline of history which is infused with questions from philosophy and medicine and engages with inquiry into human suffering. During my undergraduate years, I was exposed to leading professors at the University of Kinshasa, including Congolese scholars, such as Ernest Kiangu, Jean-Marie Mutamba, Isidore Ndaywel, Elikia M'Bokolo, Martin Kalulambi, Jacob Sabakinu, Pamphile Mabiala, Jérôme Mumbanza, Georges

³⁰ Here, I am only referring to the key sources of inspiration. Many more are outlined in the thesis itself.

³¹ On this rebellion, see Isidore Ndaywel è Nziem, *Nouvelle histoire du Congo: des origines à la République Démocratique*, Paris: Le Cri, 2010, pp. 611-616; Gérard Prunier, *From Genocide to Continental War: The Congolese Conflict and the Crisis of Contemporary Africa*, London: Hurst, 2009, pp. 181-208; and Filip Reyntjens, *The Great African War: Congo and Regional Geopolitics, 1996-2006*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009, pp. 144-221.

Tshund'Olela, Noel Obotela, Charles Sikitele, Paul Serufuri, Valère Belepe, Pierre Mukuna and Paul Bakwalufu. In 2011, Nancy Rose Hunt, an American scholar who had taught me in my first year of studies, encouraged me to apply and study at an English-speaking university abroad. I came to the Wits Institute for Social and Economic Research (WiSER), at the University of the Witwatersrand in Johannesburg, South Africa, with its inter-disciplinary approach to social science enquiries.

Some of the themes that shaped my intellectual life at WiSER are the postcolony, the question of what it is to be human in the world, and the question of memory and imagination. I am completing this thesis at the moment of enormous tenuousness in the world that does not seem to have any clear sense of humanity. Some of the arguments developed here could land me in jail if I were to set foot in Congo again; politically, Kinshasa is still a very complicated and “ambiguous” terrain.

Chapter One – Space, Mobility, and Displacement

This chapter has two goals. One is to show the relationship between the meaning of space, controls over mobility, and resulting displacement in the context of the dramatic Mulele rebellion. The second, which overlaps with the first, is to show how suffering becomes embedded within space—a violent space, the space of the rebellion—through the forms and structuring of continual movement of people within that space.

The main argument of this chapter is that violent conflicts, in their nature, always shatter the mental, temporal, and spatial frameworks by which people make sense of their lives. When conflicts break out that are accompanied by violence, terror, and actual physical movements, they rupture the previous logics of daily life that people used to make sense of their lives. Not only does this affect the physical bodies of people, but it also affects the relationship of the self with the environment. The chapter points strongly to the centrality of space and displacement in the production of suffering.

It is divided into four parts. The first is about the occupation and re-configuration of the contested zone in Kwilu, as well as the regulation of how people circulate within space, both by the rebels and the government forces. The second part deals with the phenomenon of continuously fleeing from the conflict within the contested zone, as well as the role of imagination and dreams in how people began to make sense of suffering during the conflict. The third part focuses on the periphery, the areas immediately surrounding the contested zone, and its contribution to the production of suffering. Finally, the last part looks at the “refugee camp” as a site of exclusion.

On territorial occupation and the regulation of movements

In June 1963 Pierre Mulele secretly returned from China where he had gone to learn about guerrilla warfare.¹ By July he had reached the Kwilu district where he set up his *maquis* (the headquarters of his resistance movement).² Until September, he trained his

¹ Georges Nzongola-Ntalaja, *The Congo. From Leopold to Kabila: A People's History*, London: Zed Books, 2002, p. 128.

² Jules Gerard-Libois and Jean Van Lierde (eds), *Congo 1964*, Bruxelles: CRISP, 1965, pp. 9, 11. *Maquis* is a territory where armed resistance gathered.

partisans.³ During the last quarter of 1963, his followers engaged in sporadic incursions against the positions held by the Armée Nationale Congolaise (Congolese National Army, ANC).⁴ In January 1964, the rebels launched a major campaign and a crisis spread across the region.⁵ The movement grew to such an extent and was so successful that it soon conquered and occupied a “huge” territory of about 300 km length north-south and 120 km wide east-west (see Figure 1 and Figure 2).⁶ By December 1963, rebel positions were reported to be in the Kapia, Bulwem and Sedzo sectors in the Kalo *préfecture*.⁷ They had six sectors of the Idiofa Territory under their control.⁸ They also spread their domination over eleven districts of Gungu Territory as well as three districts of Bulungu Territory.⁹

The rebel leaders reorganized the area they had conquered but the gradual fragmentation of this new system led to the creation of regional “fiefdoms.”¹⁰ To consolidate and extend their power within the region, the rebels divided the occupied territory into three zones.¹¹ The northern part, located between Bulwem and Kalanganda, was initially placed under the leadership of Felix Mukulubundu¹² and Valère

³ I use the terms *partisan* and *rebel* interchangeably. On the enrolment and training of Mulele’s partisans, see Martens, *Pierre Mulele...*, pp. 144-148.

⁴ Isidore Ndaywel è Nziem, *Histoire générale du Congo. De l’héritage ancien à la République Démocratique du Congo*, Bruxelles: Duculot, 1998, p. 617.

⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶ Martens, *Pierre Mulele...*, p. 149.

⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸ *Ibid.* Here are the six *secteurs* of Idiofa: Kanga, Kalanganda, Yassa-Lokwa, Banga, Belo, Madimbi and Kipuku.

⁹ Sindani, *Le Kwilu...*, p. 234. Here are the eleven districts of Gungu: Kiboba, Matadi, Mungindu, Kilamba, Lukamba, Gudi, Kondo, Kandale, Kilembe, Mudikalunga, Kobo and Lozo. In Bulungu, they occupied Kipuka, Niadi, and Imbongo.

¹⁰ Anonymous, “Rapport: Motifs du dirigeant en chef de Kangu,” reel 2, box 2, doc. 1194. Archives Conseil National; Milwamba and Mungulu, “Lettre,” reel 1, box 1, doc. 226. Archives Conseil National; and Gaston Mafuta and Emmanuel Mbayolo, “Lettre,” reel 1, box 1, doc. 00295. Archives Conseil National.

¹¹ It should be said that there was a more complex reconfiguration of space through the dynamic between rebels and government spaces and also with the ambiguous spaces, like some mission posts and villages that remained between these two types of spaces or that sometimes belonged to the two spaces at the same time.

¹² Felix Mukulubundu was very quickly sent to Brazzaville by Mulele, to serve as a liaison with the Conseil National de Libération (CNL). On this movement, see Gerard-Libois and Van Lierde, *Congo 1964*, pp. 31-78.

Munzamba.¹³ The centre, situated near Idiofa and not far from Iseme and Impasi, was led by Theodore Bengila and Pierre Mulele himself. The third zone was initially located around Yassa-Lokwa but removed soon after and relocated to Kilembe. It was under the charge of Louis Kafungu and Eugene Mumvudi.¹⁴

Figure 1: Location of Kwilu province in the Congo¹⁵

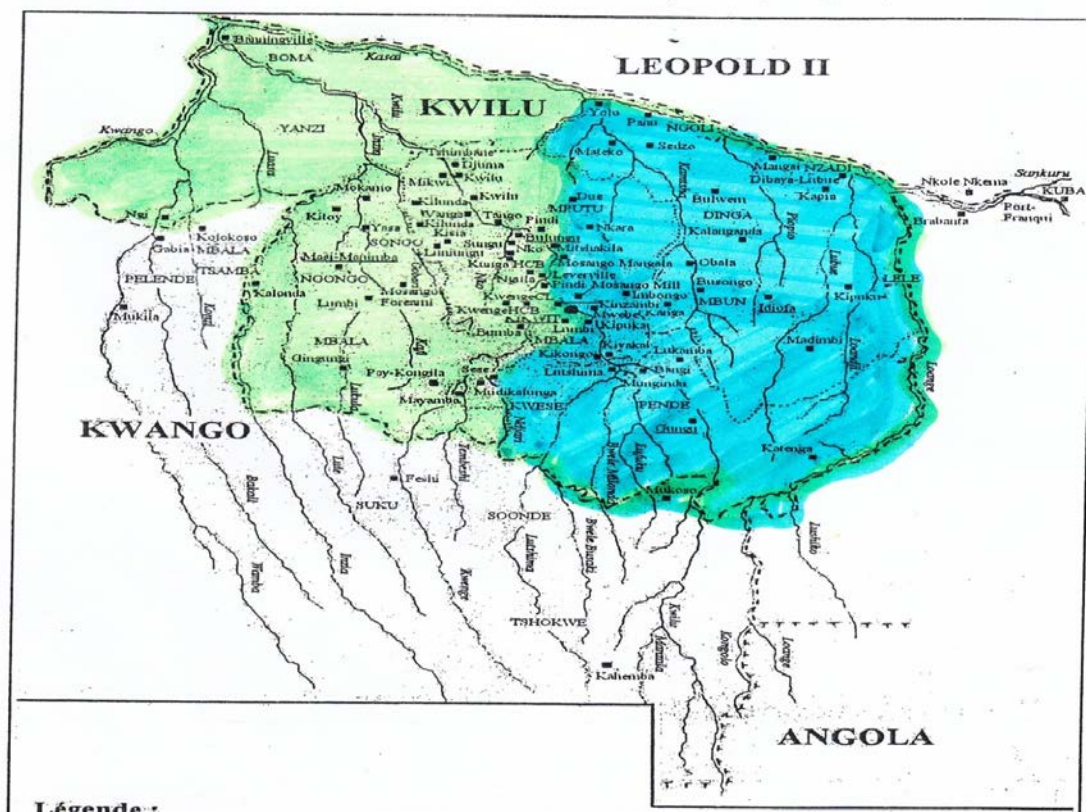


¹³ Martens, *Pierre Mulele...*, p. 149.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Wikipedia, "Kwilu province," CC BY-SA 3.0 license. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kwilu_Province. Accessed on 15 September 2016.

Figure 2. Rebel influence in Kwilu. (Blue: Zone under rebel control. Green: Zone controlled by the government)



In April 1964, confronted by serious administrative problems, the rebels decided to re-organize the territory into five new zones.¹⁶ According to the rebel leaders, this new territorial segmentation was key to how the rebellion was inscribing its power onto the landscape.¹⁷ Administrative structures based on the communist model were set up by the rebel leaders to help them monitor the population under their jurisdiction.¹⁸ At the lowest level of the hierarchy, the rebels created the *Equipe* (group) of *partisans*.¹⁹ At the

¹⁶ Martens, *Pierre Mulele...*, pp. 185-186. East, West, North, South, and Centre. These new fiefs were run by Evariste Menaba, Kanamba, Situkumbansa, Pierre Damien Kandaka and Eugene Mumvudi.

¹⁷ Zénon Mibamba (77 years old), oral interview, Kinshasa, 28 March 2013. Zénon Mibamba was one of the leaders of the Conseil National de Liberation in Brazzaville from 1964 until 1968. The interpretation is mine.

¹⁸ CRISP (ed.), *Congo 1965*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1967, p. 91.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 92.

intermediary level, between the *Equipe* and the zone, they created *sous-directions* (sub-category).²⁰ All these structures were under the supreme authority of Mulele.²¹

The occupation of the territory by the rebels, followed by its gradual fragmentation into regional “fiefdoms,” raised numerous problems for the rebels. From the onset they were aware of the importance of securing the land they took from the government.²² In order to do so, the rebels introduced a number of initiatives. Firstly, they mounted fierce resistance against government forces by guerilla warfare: ambushes, hit-and-run attacks, sabotage as well as the destruction of bridges and ferries.²³ They dug large pits on strategic roads, covered with nets, branches and sand, so that vehicles of the *militaire* would fall into them when passing through. The rebels would then come out of their hiding spots and kill “all” the occupants the vehicles.²⁴ These tactics proved very effective in preventing the *militaires* of the ANC progressing towards the territories under rebel control, enabling these to isolate this zone.²⁵ Local administrative officers, who carried out patrol missions with the ANC troops in the areas surrounding the “liberated” zone²⁶ reported on these ambushes:

On 5 March 1964, [...] we left Bulungu for Nkara through Kikandji, Mitshakila and Kikongo. On our way, we realized that Nsama-Nsama *bis*, a village located in the Niadi sector, had been burnt by the rebels. [...] 8 km from the Catholic post of Bisenge, where we stayed before our departure, we were attacked the first time. There were big holes and trees branches along the road until Bisenge [...] In Musayi village, which is located in the *Circonscription Indigène* [local area] of Niadi, precisely at the boundary between [...] Niadi and Imbongo, we found a rebels sanctuary. [...] From here on, the obstacles increased. We were obliged to stay in Tango-Gomina, in Imbongo sector. [...] On the morning of 7 March 1964, we continued our walk downstream of Tango-Gomina. It was a real disaster for us; a hole of about 20 m wide and 6 m deep: the roadway was completely cut off [...]. Having been

²⁰ CRISP (ed.), *Congo 1965*, p. 92.

²¹ Ibid. On the recruitment and training of the rebels, see Martens, *Pierre Mulele...*, pp. 144-148.

²² On the ways in which the central government reacted to this rebellion, see Ludo Martens, *Abo: Une femme du Congo*, Paris: L’Harmattan, 1995, pp. 79-212; and Martens, *Pierre Mulele...*, pp. 145, 151-153, 276-297.

²³ Gerard-Libois and Van Lierde, *Congo 1964*, p. 15.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ The territory under rebel control.

confronted with insurmountable obstructions, we were finally obliged to use the Kikwit road to return to Bulungu.²⁷

To secure the “liberated” zone more efficiently, the rebels decided to station security guards at strategic points.²⁸ Mostly appointed forcibly,²⁹ these wardens were assigned absolute power over those who passed through.³⁰ They controlled the exit and entry points of the liberated area.³¹ Some of them were positioned in trees as “hidden cameras” to “screen” all individuals and “assets” entering and leaving the villages. The rebels conducted daily patrols throughout the “liberated” zone to impose their authority and monitor people’s mobility.³² These strategies of surveillance, based on the dissemination of security guards at strategic locations, continue to haunt the memories of those who lived in war zone. As this man from Musenge Mputu says:

This is something I will never forget. [...] There were a lot of checkpoints all over the roads, leading from one village to another. [...] All of them were constantly and closely monitored with unprecedented severity. [...] There would be security guards on *this* road. There would be others on *that* road and many others on all the other ones. [...] They would send five to six people to set up barriers. In the morning, around 7 am, they would replace these people with others. [...] All the exits would be controlled. None of them would be left unguarded.³³

As key tool in the protection of the “liberated” zone, the security guard service was subjected to careful and regular inspection.³⁴ This ensured that the guards carried out their duties of controlling and monitoring these spaces where people were moving diligently. Most rebel reports of the time place a strong emphasis on the word “vigilance.”³⁵ The security guards were obliged to watch over the enemy without

²⁷ Marcel Mafuta, “Rapport administratif,” reel 12, box 8, folder 8, file I, doc. B0176. Archives Conseil National. See also Benjamin Ngolo and Damien Mulay, “Rapport équipe n° 1283,” reel 1, box 1, doc. 00334-T. Archives Conseil National.

²⁸ Isidore Ngyum (73 years old), oral interview, Idiofa, 21 November 2013. Former rebel leader. He was 24 years when the rebellion broke out.

²⁹ In case of refusal, these people, who were also rebels, were imprisoned.

³⁰ Justin Kaziamba (60 years old), oral interview, Kinshasa, 1 December 2013. Former security guard in Gungu in 1964. He was 11 years old when the rebellion broke out.

³¹ Emmanuel Mukela (67 years old), oral interview, Idiofa, 23 December 2013. Former partisan of Musenge Mputu between 1964 and 1966. He was 18 years old when the rebellion broke out.

³² Isidore Ngyum (73 years old), oral interview, Idiofa, 21 November 2013.

³³ Emmanuel Mukela (67 years old), oral interview, Idiofa, 23 December 2013.

³⁴ Timothée Kandolo, “Rapport n°9,” reel 2, box 1, doc. 00939. Archives Conseil National.

³⁵ Ibid.

respite.³⁶ They were required to monitor and scrutinise every single road ruthlessly.³⁷ Those who failed to carry out their mission were punished brutally³⁸ and replaced by others, to prevent the passage by the enemy.³⁹ In a letter addressed to Louis Mayele, the deputy chief of the rebel's Department of Military Affairs, Timothée Kandolo, the political adviser of Intshwem village, explained how he implemented the instructions regarding the security guard service in the villages under his supervision.

With regard to the security guards, [...] we are doing all we can to implement your recommendations. Here are the names of the heads of the security guards: (1) Ndayolo: [...] Mbila Mungiangi village; (2) Léon Isosa: Mbila Isanango village; (3) Romer Yingimba will be in charge of Mbila Imbweti; and (4) Albert Ipolo will be in charge of the guards of Mbila Mikingu village. The heads of the security guards must ensure that their people are doing their job very well. They must watch over the enemy. [...] We have chosen one person who will monitor every single road. He will replace those who are absent. His name is Mbulu Constant.⁴⁰

One of the men who were commanded as guards described his duties in this way:

As long as someone is designated to perform guard duty, they must not sleep. [...] They must remain awake [...] and provide safety for those they are supposed to protect. [...] No matter how old someone is, they must be on armed guard duty. [...] During the night, the head of the *Equipe* will send someone to check up on them. If he catches them sleeping, he must arrest them and lock them in an unusual prison under the ground. [...] This can go up to three days.⁴¹

This is to show that the security of the “liberated” zone was of greatest interest for the rebels. Those who ran away from the rebel positions at the time remembered the ways in which the strategies put in place by the rebels affected the landscape. They described the space under rebel control as one transformed into barricades and

³⁶ Timothée Kandolo, “Rapport n°9,” reel 2, box 1, doc. 00939. Archives Conseil National.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Justin Kaziamba (60 years old), oral interview, Kinshasa, 1 December 2013.

³⁹ Timothée Kandolo, “Rapport n°9,” reel 2, box 1, doc. 00939. Archives Conseil National.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Justin Kaziamba (60 years old), oral interview, Kinshasa, 1 December 2013. See also Jean-Baudouin and Jean-Anathase, “Affaire chef d'équipe A. Kimbenze,” reel 4, box 3, doc. 2412-T. Archives Conseil National.

enclosures with fixed entry and exit points.⁴² There was no contact with the outside world.⁴³ Control over mobility within this space was carried out with severity.⁴⁴ This way of managing the space led to the creation of a monitoring network, criss-crossed by a set of relays, each of which was endowed with “absolute” power over the people-in-motion.⁴⁵

Yet, the dissemination of individual security guards at strategic points seemed not to be enough for the rebels. Driven by the strong desire of scrutinizing the movement of people under their control, the rebels made use of other “technologies” of surveillance and documentation. One of these was to put new laws into place. The most important of these was introducing the compulsory carrying of a “*laissez-passer*” (travel document) (see Figure 3) throughout the “liberated” zone.

As during the colonial era, the *laissez-passer* was a legal document every person was required to carry on themselves when outside of the house. It played a key role in differentiating those who supported the rebellion from those who opposed it. At each checkpoint, the rebels appointed people responsible for checking these documents.⁴⁶ Inspections at these checkpoints were carried out with excessive brutality.⁴⁷ The inspectors were divided into several groups, all located at the same checkpoint but

⁴² S[imon] Ndala, “Rapport de la mission de pacification psychologique pour le secteur Bulwem, préfecture de Kamtsha-Loange (12 décembre 1964),” reel 12, box 8, folder 9, file I, doc. B 0230. Archives Conseil National.

⁴³ André Isungi, “Deuxième partie du rapport administratif de mission de pacification en secteur d’Imbongo (12 novembre 1964),” reel 12, box 8, folder 9, file I, doc. B 0221. Archives Conseil National.

⁴⁴ S[imon] Ndala, “Rapport de la mission de pacification psychologique pour le secteur Bulwem, préfecture de Kamtsha-Loange (12 décembre 1964),” reel 12, box 8, folder 9, file I, doc. B 0230. Archives Conseil National.

⁴⁵ Isidore Ngyum (73 years old), oral interview, Idiofa, 21 November 2013.

⁴⁶ Timothée Kandolo, “Rapport n°9,” juin 1964, reel 2, box 1, doc. 00939. Archives Conseil National. The manner in which the *laissez-passer* was employed is well illustrated by the case of Kisangala, a partisan stationed at Bumbana camp. When he was sent to the rebel headquarters as paracommando, he had to obtain a *laissez-passer* to bypass the security systems. He left Bumbana camp on 20 June 1964 and was received by Equipe 845 on 21 June. His document was stamped by the political commissioner of *Equipe* 845 on that day. Later the same day, he was received by Equipe 591. Two days later, his papers were successively checked by Equipes 416, 845 and 1304. On 24 June, the document was stamped by Equipes 1213 and 1442. On 26 June, the stamp in his document shows that he was received by Eugene Mumvudi, commander of Southwestern military region and on 27 June by the military commander of the Kimbunda camp. The following day, his paper was finally stamped by Equipe 179, the last checkpoint before he reached Mulemba, the rebel headquarters. See Emmanuel Munzudi and Théophile S., “Laissez-passer,” reel 1, box 1, doc. 00348. Archives Conseil National.

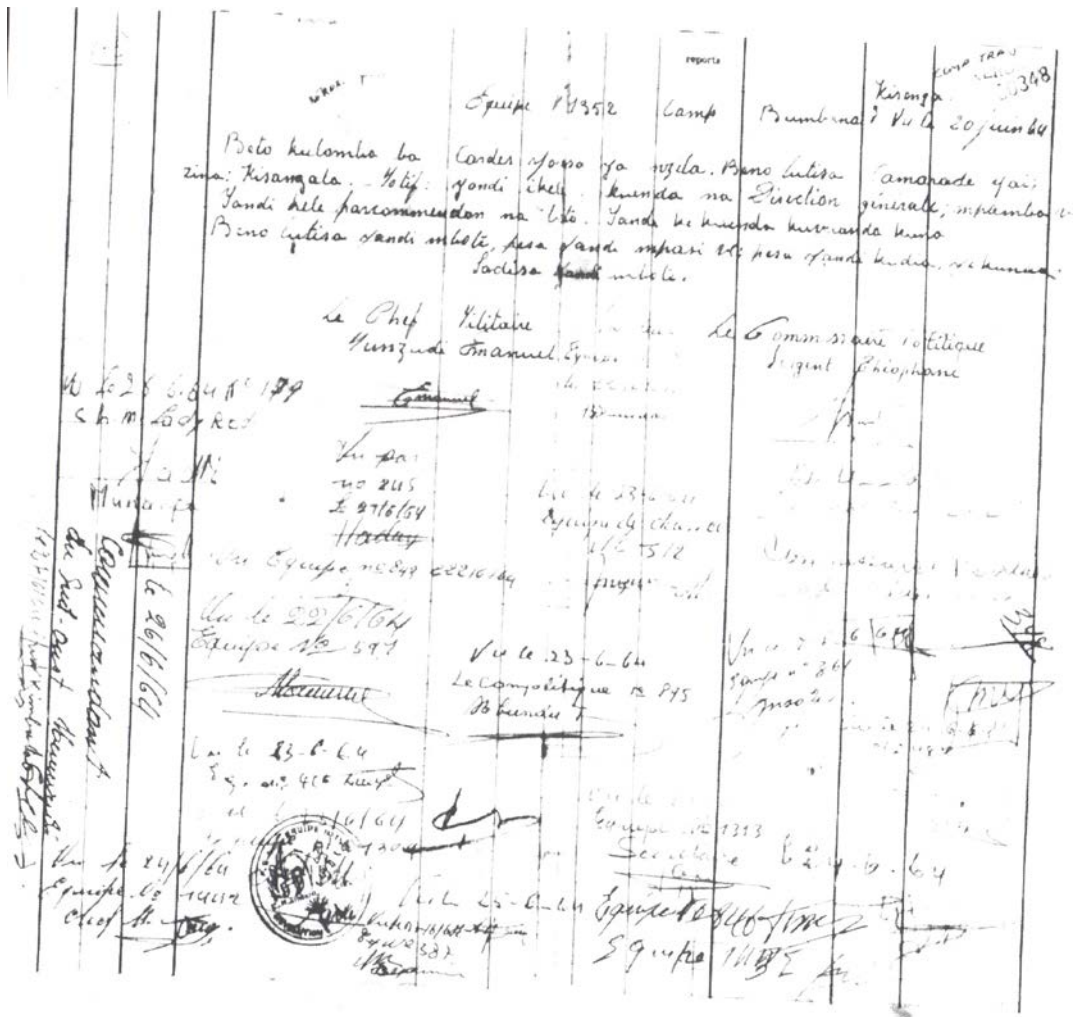
⁴⁷ Bertin Mukela (70 years old), oral interview, Idiofa, 23 December 2013. See also Casonets Mufuki, “Lettre, le 2 février 1964,” reel 2, box 1, doc. 00882. Archives Conseil National.

hidden in the bushes, and each successively checking the documents of the same travellers. Bertin Mukela, a former leader of the rebellion, recalled these modalities of control:

I arrived at the village at night from Idiofa. [...] In the morning, the rebels came to arrest me. [...] They told me: 'We must go to Mulele.' I packed my bag and we started to go. There were already *Equipes* in all the villages. [...] Everyone had to carry a *laissez-passer* to pass through. [...] When we arrived at the checkpoint, we stopped. We showed our *Laissez-passer*. They checked and let us pass through. [...] When we had walked not even a few steps, others appeared from behind the bushes and asked for our papers. After checking our documents, they disappeared into the bush. Again others reappeared, only to check our documents once more. [...] It was like that all along the road.⁴⁸

⁴⁸ Bertin Mukela (70 years old), oral interview, Idiofa le 23 December 2013.

Figure 3: Rebel *laissez-passer*⁴⁹



Control of documents at checkpoints was carried out scrupulously. The rebels were required to show a great attention to detail when processing the documents. To confirm the authenticity of any document carried by the travellers passing through the security systems, the rebels had to check simultaneously the seal, the signature, as well as the identity of the person who signed the documents. In the rebel areas it was the *Equipe* leaders who were exclusively responsible for issuing travel permits. But because the trafficking of fake documents and the imitation of signatures became an increasingly

⁴⁹ Emmanuel Munzudi and S. Théophane, "Laissez-passer," reel 1, box 1, doc. 00348. Archives Conseil National.

common phenomenon, the inspectors revised their policies⁵⁰ and began to question the authenticity of documents signed by *Equipe* leaders.⁵¹ In a new system, travellers were now required to present a document that was signed and sealed by the rebel headquarters.⁵² In June 1964, Fernand Kiboba, a rebel *militaire* leader on a mission to Feshi, desperately reported on this new rule to his supervisors:

Here, to pass through all the checkpoints, a lot of comrades only require documents with your signature. [...] For them to believe that we were genuinely sent by you, all they want to see are the documents from headquarters. [...] Please send us a document entitled: ‘*Laissez-passer* for Feshi,’ otherwise we will not be able to pass through.⁵³

If the movement of people in the area under rebel control was subjected to the compulsory carrying of a *laissez-passer*, the possession of this document by no means guaranteed the freedom of movement within the area. Aware of the fraud and traffic of fake documents, the rebels required travellers to validate their *laissez-passer* with a password in oral questioning. These passwords were esoteric formulas that had to be learnt off by heart.⁵⁴ They were known only to a limited group of rebels within a given radius. With these passwords, the inspectors at the checkpoints could easily differentiate the supporters of the rebellion from those known as “contra-revolutionaries.”

These esoteric formulas included a question and answer set. This could change several times during the day, especially if the rebel position was under attack by the *militaires* or if someone from the area under rebel control had escaped towards the military positions.⁵⁵ This is why, for example, in June 1964 the rebels of N’djili camp, located in the vicinity of Mbangi in Gungu, changed their passwords on the eve of the

⁵⁰ Ndiang Kabul (67 years old), oral interview, Kinshasa, 30 March 2013. He joined the *maquis* in 1964 when he was 18 years old. After the rebellion, he pursued his studies at Lovanium in Kinshasa where he was awarded a degree in economics. He was the governor of the *Banque Centrale du Congo* from 1994 to 1997. He died in Kinshasa in December 2013.

⁵¹ Ndiang Kabul (67 years old), oral interview, Kinshasa, 30 March 2013.

⁵² Fernand Koboba and Joachim Manaka, “Lettre: voyage pour Feshi, juin 1964,” reel 1, box 1, doc. 00341. Archives Conseil National.

⁵³ Timothée Kandolo, “Rapport n°9,” reel 2, box 1, doc. 00939. Archives Conseil National.

⁵⁴ Eugène Kitoto (78 years old), oral interview, Kikwit, 1 November 2013. Former rebel leader. He was 28 years old when the rebellion broke out.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

military attack.⁵⁶ People travelling in the rebel area now had to be able to answer the question “What is two plus two?” with the ironic answer “Saturday.”⁵⁷

The secret codes upon which the rebels relied were based on the circulation of knowledge. In a situation of heightened vulnerability caused by rebel terror, it was often difficult for people living in the rebel area to find out newly coined passwords. The rebels punished this lack of knowledge by inscribing the “bodies” of uninitiated travellers with their power. The rebels seized them, blindfolded them and stripped them naked before meticulously “scrutinizing”⁵⁸ their orifices.⁵⁹ The rebels would then flog the uninitiated with a whip or a stick, and scratch signs and marks onto their naked skin.⁶⁰ The uninitiated would then be entrusted to the care of guardians who would accompany and watch them throughout their journey.⁶¹ On their arrival at their destination, they would be assigned to the intelligence services who would continue to observe them secretly.⁶² With these new ways of monitoring, the rebels were able to institute a strong field of visibility and surveillance, grounded in secrecy, around the “bodies” of uninitiated travellers.

While a *laissez-passer* required additional procedures of verification in the security systems, the non-possession of this document could lead to a person’s death. The rebels automatically assumed such a person to be from the enemy. Undocumented people were unable to present themselves and testify to their innocence or even loyalty without arousing the suspicion that they might be without a document because they were complicit with the Congo army. They were killed with overwhelming and brute force.

⁵⁶ Célestin Madidi and Willem Madidi, “Laissez-passer. Affaire Commando,” reel 1, box 1, doc. 00349. Archives Conseil National.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Here the word scrutinize is used figuratively.

⁵⁹ Bastin Bembo (66 years old), oral interview, Idiofa, 16 December 2013. Former partisan of *Equipe Mungay*. He was 17 years old when the rebellion broke out. Interpretation is mine based on what he told me.

⁶⁰ Ibid. and Jean Mayo (75 years old), oral interview, Lukamba, 2 November 2013. Jean Mayo was a nurse when the rebellion broke out. In early January 1964, he was asked to leave Kikwit Sacré Coeur where he was working. He was accused of supporting the rebels. Not having any other alternative, he risked walking from Kikwit Sacré Coeur to his village in Lukamba.

⁶¹ Isidore Ngyum (73 years old), oral interview, Idiofa, 23 December 2013.

⁶² Ndiang Kabul (67 years old), oral interview, Kinshasa, 30 March 2013.

Bonaventure Bongongo,⁶³ former rebel from Mungay, witnessed this kind of abuse perpetrated at checkpoints between 1964 and 1966. In an interview, he said:

This was not a joke at the time. [...] Whoever got to Mungay and did not have a *laissez-passer* was killed, [...] regardless of any kind of appeals to their innocence or loyalty [...]. This was the rule that used to govern the entire rebellion [...] and everyone was bound to this law. [...]. You leave your village for another, you must have a *laissez-passer*. [...] If you do not have any, you will be considered an enemy. [...] The rebels will bury you alive [...]. Many times, I witnessed the killing of people at checkpoints. [...] Those who left their villages without a *laissez-passer* and went without control, the rebels arrested and killed them on the spot. I did witness gruesome scenes. [...] Any person who knew that their relative went out without a permit was aware that it was finished! He (the relative) would never come back. The rebels would bury him alive in the bush. [...] That was the rule.⁶⁴

The re-positioning of the ANC and its deployment in the region led to a new and complex re-configuration of space. The rebels began to lose parts of their position and the “huge” territory under their control was gradually reduced to a multiplicity of “liberated” pockets patched with government-controlled pockets.⁶⁵ The confrontation between the rebels and the ANC *militaires* led to the creation of other, “ambiguous” forms of spaces. They were mainly mission posts and villages that were located between the rebel and government-held areas, or that sometimes even belonged to both areas at the same time.⁶⁶

The complexity of the dynamic between the rebels and the *militaires* within these areas led to the intensification of strategies of control within the contested region. Roads leading to major centres—and besieged by the rebels—were officially closed by the *militaires*.⁶⁷ They subjected mobility on these roads to strict controls.⁶⁸ Mines were

⁶³ This is a pseudonym.

⁶⁴ Bonaventure Bongongo (70 years old), oral interview. Idiofa, 16 December 2013.

⁶⁵ The re-positioning and the deployment of the ANC in the region occurred throughout 1964, but it was in the third term of 1964 in particular that the rebels began to lose their position.

⁶⁶ See David Lenda, “Lettre, le 18 mai 1964,” reel 4, box 3, doc. 2324. Archives Conseil National; Fr. Maswalo and P. Kileba, “Lettre, le 19 mai 1964,” reel 4, box 3, doc. 2319. Archives Conseil National; Anonymous, “Lettre, le 5 mai 1964,” reel 4, box 3, doc. 1484. Archives Conseil National; Elie Moutiya, “Lettre, le 17 mai 1964,” reel 3, box 2, doc. 3830. Archives Conseil National; Verman Ndeke and Damien Ilunga, “Lettre, le 17 mai 1964,” reel 4, box 3, doc. 2334. Archives Conseil National; Osée Tshingila, “Lettre, le 14 mars 1964,” reel 2, box 2, doc. 1223. Archives Conseil National; and Anonymous, “Lettre, le 1 mai 1964,” reel 4, box 3, doc. 1449-T. Archives Conseil National.

⁶⁷ Bug. Pwapelle, “Rapport administrative sur la situation dans la préfecture d’Idiofa, période du 19 août 1964 au 18 septembre 1964,” reel 12, box 8, folder 9, file I, doc. B0215. Archives Conseil National.

buried at strategic locations.⁶⁹ Sometimes, civilians were armed and instructed to control junctions.⁷⁰ The *militaires* identified routes used regularly by rebel leaders and subjected them to special controls [Figure 4]. The entire region was governed by a regime of curfews—as it had been during the last months of Belgian colonial rule before independence.⁷¹ The state made extensive use of colonial technologies of surveillance to crack down on the rebels. In a confidential letter to the administrator of Kamtsha-Loange of 28 February 1966, the government chief executive of Bwalenge region gave firm instructions in relation to lockdown policies and security sweeps of the areas under rebel control:

I would ask you to be in touch with the administrator of Kamtsha-Loange so that he conducts the same operations around the Tshene, Bethanie and Bulwem Catholic missions. These places constitute empty spaces—where the insurgents move as they please to go to their headquarters which is located for the moment between Mampungu, Kimpunu and Ndanda in the *arrondissements* of Gungu and Bulungu. [...] I would also ask the commander of the second company to think about the possibility of occupying the capital of the Elom-Esala region. The mission of this position will be to perform sweeping operations in the Ntomoti forest and to meet with the position of the Fifth Company, which is located at Bwalenge for the moment—and which will also be moving towards Isiengi. This operation will automatically move the positions of Obala, Yassa-Miwuni, Kanga and Musenge-Munene, when they will hear the rifle shots of their colleagues. This will definitely allow us to move away from this hotbed of rebels who are constantly badgering the poor population.⁷²

In March 1967, the head of the provincial Customary Services and Internal Affairs, suggested the establishment of blockades and the launch of major operations in the same

⁶⁸ Bug. Pwapelle, “Rapport administrative sur la situation dans la préfecture d’Idiofa, période du 19 août 1964 au 18 septembre 1964,” reel 12, box 8, folder 9, file I, doc. B0215. Archives Conseil National.

⁶⁹ Four mines were dug out by the rebels on 9 February 1966 on the road towards Bulwem. See Ev. Menaba, “Lettre,” reel 11, box 8, folder 1, file G, doc. 6033. Archives Conseil National.

⁷⁰ D. Piese, “Aperçu sur la situation de la Kamtsha-Loange. 8 septembre 1964,” reel 12, box 8, folder 9, file I, doc. B0212. Archives Conseil National.

⁷¹ Ministre provincial des affaires intérieures, “Lettre: Rapport situation Kandale,” reel 11, box 8, folder 3, file D, doc. G66/ 59B. Archives Conseil National. On the curfews during the last months before independence, see Jean-Marie Mutamba Makombo Kitatshima, *Du Congo Belge au Congo indépendant (1940-1960)*, Kinshasa, IFEP, 1998, pp. 395-402.

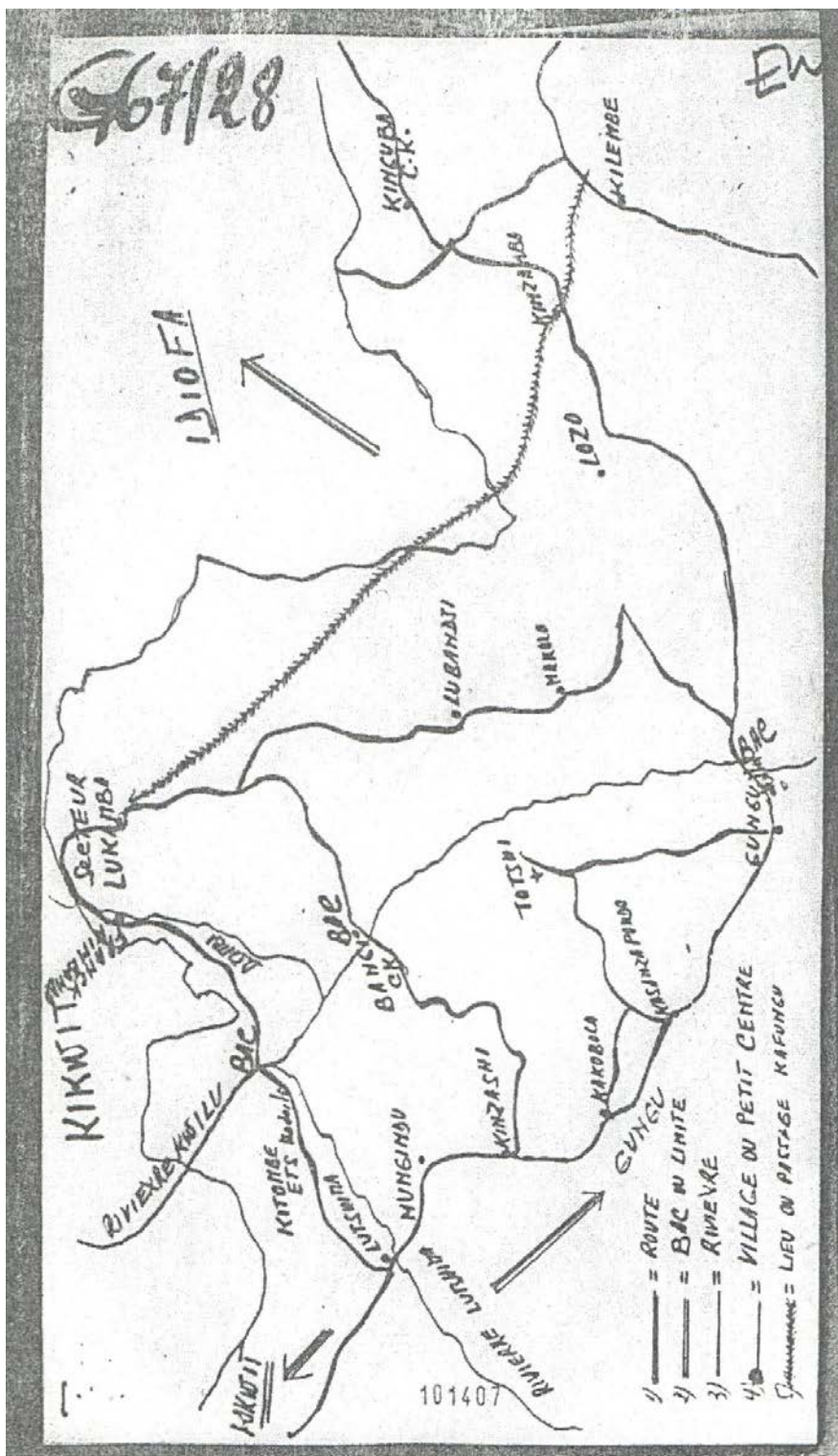
⁷² N., “Situation région Bwalenge (Yassa Lokwa, le 28 février 1966),” reel 12, box 8, folder 10, file I, doc. B0254. Archives Conseil National.

region, to neutralize the rebels.⁷³ By April 1967, the prefecture of Gungu was, literally, a grid. Entrances and exits were managed by special schedules.⁷⁴ People's small gestures of everyday life, such as walking, were monitored by a special regime of visibility.

⁷³ P. Kibal, "Lettre: pacification territoire Kalo," reel 11, box 8, folder 4, file F, doc. G67/12. Archives Conseil National.

⁷⁴ Flavien Luzi, "Lettre: Suspension sortie aux ressortissants de la préfecture Gungu," reel 11, box 8, folder 2, file D, doc. G65/30. Archives Conseil National.

Figure 4: Routes taken by Louis Kafungu, Commander of the rebel forces, in 1967⁷⁵



⁷⁵ L. Kiniari, Lettre: Retour Kafungu Louis, reel 11, box 8, folder 4, file F, doc. G67/ 27. Archives Conseil National.

To regulate the movements of people more effectively in the war zone, the *militaires*, in collaboration with local authorities, introduced three new measures. The first established a regime of inspections. Based entirely on acts of coding and calculation, this regime collected “debris” of knowledge that could be captured in numbers. Its primary goal was to gain mastery over people, to control their movements, and in Deleuze and Guattari’s vocabulary “to submit them to the spatio-temporal framework of the state.”⁷⁶ As a technology of control and surveillance, it made extensive use of census data. The *militaires*, accompanied by the local authorities, visited the villages to requisition the population.⁷⁷ They would proceed with counting because they held the “metric power.”⁷⁸ If people were not present, their relatives would be punished: literally, their “bodies” would be appropriated by the *militaires* or local authorities.⁷⁹ They would beat them up, and progressively transform them into “abjects of death,” before putting them in jail.⁸⁰ The following excerpts from the administrative archives give evidence of this:

On 15 November 1963, I began to go around all the villages to make an inventory of the population—according to the decision taken during the council meeting. I insisted on seeing all people in the village: men, women, and children. Harsh measures were taken against families where one person was missing. On 21 November 1963, I checked the Katshaka, Kinganda, Ponde and Makulumbi villages. I noticed that five boys were missing. Their parents were arrested and sent to the capital of the *arrondissement* of Haut-Kwilu. They could not be released until their children were found. [On 25 November 1963,] I continued my control in Mbete-Mako, Shimuna, Totabi and Kihumba villages. I arrested ten suspects. On 17 December 1963, accompanied by Lieutenant Epengola, *Préfet* Kikolo and the *militaires*, we arrested eighty rebels during our tour in Bakwa-Mushinga, Yongho, Kanzongo, Kunga-Kiamba and Yamvu *groupements*. We sent them to the capital of the prefecture.⁸¹

On Friday 8 November 1963, while I was in the hospital, I was surprised to hear from the head of the official school of Gungu that the *militaires*, on the

⁷⁶ Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *Nomadology: The War Machine*, trans. Brian Massumi, New York: Semiotext(e), 1986, p. 65.

⁷⁷ Adolphe Kuma Kuma (74 years old), oral interview, Kikwit Sacré Coeur, 22 November 2013. Teacher since the 1950s, he was 25 years old when the rebellion broke out. He was beaten up by the *militaires* during the census of the population in 1964.

⁷⁸ Deleuze and Guattari, *Nomadology...*, p. 64.

⁷⁹ Adolphe Kuma Kuma (74 years old), oral interview, Kikwit Sacré Coeur, 22 November 2013.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*

⁸¹ David Mukubuta, “Rapport de Mr Mukubuta David, chef de secteur Kiboba-Matadi, mois d’aout 1964. Gungu le 9 septembre 1964,” reel 13, box 9, folder 5, file O, doc. F64/47A. Archives Conseil National.

invitation of Kandale's health officer during his census tour, went to Kimbandji village, and that they had heavily beaten up the villagers. A man [...] was left seriously ill and bleeding. [...] I asked the health officer to tell me the reason of [the incident]. [...] In the presence of the warrant officer and the master sergeant major, the health officer stated that he had received instructions that allowed him to use military forces when they were at 500 m from him and, accordingly, he could not be blamed for anything.⁸²

The second measure consisted in intensifying the process of identifying people. Controls at checkpoints were tightened⁸³ with the introduction of morphological details to check the identity of travellers. Instructions were given to the *militaires* to thoroughly analyse people's morphology. All the checkpoints were in possession of biological details and photographs of the main rebel leaders.⁸⁴ In a confidential letter of 27 October 1967, the head of Kikwit's intelligence service described Louis Kafungu, the rebel chief of staff, in the following manner:

Louis Kafungu is a big man. He has an oval face. He is medium brown in colour. His head is slightly elongated. He has a big nose with large nostrils. He has blue eyes, a wide mouth with thick lips. He is more or less 1,80 cm tall and his face is bent like a bull.⁸⁵

In 1968, the practice of identifying people based on morphological descriptions was generalized. It became the best means of the *militaires* in tracking down insurgents. On 24 January 1968, the head of Lozo sector urged all the chiefs of *groupements*, community leaders and *capitas* (deputy chiefs) of villages in his jurisdiction to clearly identify the faces of those passing through, and to check their identities thoroughly.⁸⁶ In February 1968, the administrator of Gungu endorsed this decision.⁸⁷ He insisted, however, that the identification of travellers' faces take precedence over the control of

⁸² B. Masaya, "Rapport administratif sur l'incident qui a eu lieu au village Kabandji," reel 13, box 9, folder 2, file P, doc. F63/81A. Archives Conseil National.

⁸³ P.E. Pwapelle, "Lettre: opposition de résidence dans la ville de Kikwit, 18 novembre 1963," reel 13, box 9, folder 2, file P, doc. F63/77. Archives Conseil National; Mayilamene, "Lettre: recherche Bula-Bula. 13 mai 1964," reel 13, box 9, folder 4, file O, doc. F64/38. Archives Conseil National; and Cabinet Commissaire Extraordinaire, "Lettre confidentielle n°49: recherche Webe Mathias," reel 13, box 9, folder 4, file O, doc. F64/40. Archives Conseil National.

⁸⁴ L. Kiniari, "Lettre: Retour Kafungu Louis," reel 11, box 8, folder 4, file F, doc. G67/27. Archives Conseil National.

⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁶ Anonymous, "Procès verbal de la réunion du secteur Lozo," reel 11, box 8, folder 4, file F, doc. G68/4 A. Archives Conseil National.

⁸⁷ Ibid.

their identity document, as in his estimation most rebels hid behind pseudonyms in order to bypass the security systems.⁸⁸

The last measure consisted of the mandatory carrying of a *laissez-passer*. As with the two first measures, this was an attempt by the Congolese state to insert itself into the landscape. According to a circular from the Provincial Minister of Justice in 1964, the responsibility of issuing *laissez-passers* in the countryside fell within the jurisdiction of local authorities.⁸⁹ In opposition to the rebels, however, military supremacy came to prevail in the matter. The *militaires* rejected all documents issued by local authorities.⁹⁰ They wanted to have absolute control over the population:⁹¹ they wanted to fix them tightly onto the landscape, distribute them, and monitor their daily movements. They wanted to have a stronghold on all movement. On 19 April 1967, Lieutenant Nguya, the commander of 7th Military Company, thundered against local authorities for issuing *laissez-passer* documents to the population. He considered this procedure as an intrusion.

Mr. Regional of Kilembe, [...] I have just received some *laissez-passers* signed by you and initialed for agreement by the head of *secteur* Kilembe. Other papers have been issued by the head of *secteur* himself. I insist that all documents called '*laissez-passer*' must be signed [...] only by the commander of the 7th Company, who has clear priority in the region of Kilembe. If such is not the case, I will take severe actions against all offenders found outside of their home regions without the signature of the commander of the 7th Company on their papers.⁹²

As in the case of the rebels, the possession of a *laissez-passer* in the government-controlled area was by no means a guarantee of freedom of movement. In the context of extreme violence and mistrust, the possession or non-possession of a *laissez-passer* seemed to have the same effect. Travellers were generally assumed to be part of the enemy camp, even if they conformed completely with government regulations. This

⁸⁸ Anonymous, "Procès verbal de la réunion du secteur Lozo," reel 11, box 8, folder 4, file F, doc. G68/4 A. Archives Conseil National. On the colonial genealogy of this method of identification, see Anonymous, "Le recensement et l'identification des populations congolaises. Un nouveau système a été élaboré," reel 11, box 8, folder 1, file G, doc. 873. Archives Conseil National.

⁸⁹ I. Lukoko, "Lettre: opérations militaires," reel 13, box 9, folder 5, file O, doc. F64/22. Archives Conseil National.

⁹⁰ L. Kumuseke, "Rapport sur l'évolution du mouvement jeunesse dans le secteur Kipuka. 3 mars 1964," reel 12, box 8, folder 8, file I, doc. B0175. Archives Conseil National.

⁹¹ Adolphe Kuma Kuma (74 years old), oral interview, Kikwit Sacré Coeur, 22 November 2013.

⁹² Patrice Epengola, "Lettre: Laissez-passer, Kilembe, le 19 avril 1967," reel 11, box 8, folder 4, file F, doc. G67/13. Archives Conseil National.

situation led to many people being put to death.⁹³ From 1964 to 1967, clashes were reported at checkpoints within the contested zone. In an account of the development of rebel activity in Kipuka, the head of this entity described these clashes as follows:

At Vunda, a man from Kazamba-Kisumbu village, [who was] passing near a bridge, was arrested by *the militaires*. [The latter] requested his ID. After having shown his papers, the *militaires* said that the man was a rebel. Despite all explanations, the man was beheaded and displayed on the bridge in such a way that all those who passed by this place saw the body and [felt] terrified. [...] They have sought refuge in the bush where they are starving. Whenever a truck passes, [they] must first hide, thinking that it is a military vehicle.⁹⁴

In 1967, a school boy was senselessly shot down by the *militaires* on the pretext that he lacked a *laissez-passer*. In a protest letter by the *préfet* of Mangai to the administrator of Idiofa, one can see the misery and anguish that the institutionalization of the *laissez-passer* caused throughout the contested zone.

Mr. Director, [...] Seko Elia, [...] father of [...] Seko Barthelemy who was shot on 18 September 1967 in Idiofa by the *militaires* under the pretext that he lacked the *laissez-passer*, came to my office. He wanted to confirm whether or not his son, who has been the victim of shooting, [...] had obtained a *laissez-passer* before he went to Kikwit to enrol in secondary schools. After checking all the lists of *laissez-passers* issued, we have discovered that on 28 August 1967, under the number 895, a *laissez-passer* was issued to Seko Barthélemy.

The father of the victim has filed a complaint against the officer who shot his son. This is what he said: ‘My son, after having obtained [his] *laissez-passer* for Kikwit, had not been able to find a place [in the Kikwit schools, where he had gone to register]. At that moment [when he was shot], he was waiting for an opportunity to return to Idiofa and from there to Mangaï. He was with his friends at the river. While he wanted to draw water in a pot, part of his documents—including his *laissez-passer*—fell into the water. He was left with only his school certificates. On his way back, he was caught by the *militaires*. He was shot dead [because he failed to prove that] he had obtained a *laissez-passer* [before he had gone to Kikwit] [...].’

[I believe that] the presence of his school documents was [a clear] reason why the military should have accepted his explanation. [Unfortunately], this did not happen. Elia’s son got killed. The purpose of this letter is to help you have additional information according to the request of the child’s father. Located

⁹³ L. Kumuseke, “Rapport sur l’évolution du mouvement jeunesse dans le secteur Kipuka. 3 mars 1964,” reel 12, box 8, folder 8, file I, doc. B0175. Archives Conseil National; and A.D.G. Malu, “La mort du nommé Seko Barthelemy en date du 16 septembre 1967 par les militaires,” reel 11, box 8, folder 4, file F, docs. G67/20A-20B. Archives Conseil National.

⁹⁴ L. Kumuseke, “Rapport sur l’évolution du mouvement jeunesse dans le secteur Kipuka. 3 mars 1964,” reel 12, box 8, folder 8, file I, doc. B0175. Archives Conseil National.

126 km away from Idiofa, we cannot give any further information. I am sure the regional of Idiofa, the head of the region, the commander of Idiofa, as well as all the ATAP (Administrateur Territorial Assistant Principal) have been made aware of the situation; with the items stated in legal terms, they can guide the father of the deceased as to where he can plead the cause of his late son.⁹⁵

From this discussion, we can see how the contested region was effectively transformed into a securitized grid, by both the government and the rebel forces, using technologies of surveillance, documentation, identification and verification that seemed to mirror each other, and which turned any traveller into an enemy or traitor on both sides.

Fleeing the conflict: “Schizophrenia,” dreams, imagination, and “bestiality”

The ongoing battle between the rebels and the *militaires* for effective and absolute control of the contested space led people to flee from their homes at their own risk and peril and to seek refuge in the forests. Accustomed to living in villages, people were now forced to adopt new forms of life. For most of them, it was the first time to embrace this kind of living. Palmie Andiang, who spent three years in the forests between Ingundu and Mukedi, recounted the hardships she endured:

We were sleeping in rags, having nothing to cover ourselves. The cold would penetrate our body, you have no idea. Ants and mosquitoes crawled onto us. We had no beds. We were sleeping on the ground with all the moisture in the soil. [...] Mosquitoes were dancing in our ears. They were biting us as they wanted. What could we do? If only to pretend as if there was nothing. In the morning, we would wake up and look for another place to hide ourselves. It was very hard. Sometimes I would feel like the sky and the earth joined together. [...] It was really hard.⁹⁶

In the everyday experience by the inhabitants of the area, fleeing the conflict was a combination of several movements on the landscape. While movement was linear at the beginning, it could become curvilinear or even circular in places, only to fall back into a

⁹⁵ A.D.G. Malu, “La mort du nommé Seko Barthelemy en date du 16 septembre 1967 par les militaires,” reel 11, box 8, folder 4, file F, docs. G67/20A-20B. Archives Conseil National; and L. Kumuseke, “Rapport sur l’évolution du mouvement jeunesse dans le secteur Kipuka. 3 mars 1964,” reel 12, box 8, folder 8, file I, doc. B0175. Archives Conseil National. Paragraphs added to the quote to enhance readability.

⁹⁶ Palmie Andiang (75 years old), oral interview, Idiofa, 24 November 2013. She joined the *maquis* as most of the villagers. In 1964, at the age of 26, she had two children.

linear format again.⁹⁷ Movement consisted of leaving one location and settling in another place, only to be dislodged from there by terror and unexpected events.⁹⁸ This used to happen on a regular basis, so that people were continuously moving around. At intersections, they would even turn around, sometimes without noticing what they had done.⁹⁹ Life itself took the form of a continuous journey during which people discovered not only their own vulnerability, but also an entire negation of their being. Marie Nzamba illustrates this point in her testimony:

My mother was sick at the time we were fleeing. [...] She also had a baby. We fled [as] six persons in general. [...] It was around Banda. During the war, it was completely forbidden to use the road. The bush was the only way we could use. [...] One morning we heard the crackling of bullets at a few meters from where we were hiding. [...] Abruptly we left our camp. [...] We began to run away. We went to hide away in the swamps. [...] We thought that by going to hide ourselves there, we would be safe from danger. Unfortunately, a group of rebels, furious to have been attacked by the military, came to remove us. We were forced to return to where we had been before. When we arrived there, we were surprised to find that everything had been burned by the *militaires*, even our little bivouac which had served as our shelter. This is the kind of life we lived [between 1964 and 1966].¹⁰⁰

While Marie Nzamba's account refers only to the particular location she found herself in, the experiences of fleeing the conflict were not different in other parts of the territory. In many ways people fleeing followed the same patterns: leaving one place, settling down in another location, to only being dislodged by unexpected events in this new location. The following extensive account drawn from administrative communication between officials in the north of the region shows this movement:

On Tuesday, 28 January [19]64, seeing that the situation was getting worse; having no means of defense with [me], and finding that there was no way to defend myself, I decided to depart from the city of Dibaya-Lubwe. [At the beach, the fishermen help] me cross the river. [And from there] I wanted to go either to Kikwit or Banningville [...] by mail boat [...]. At 6 in the morning, at that place, I saw [...] Faustin Kamime, the acting agronomist of the territory. [...]. He suggested that we seek refuge at Antoine Baluki's place in Miti-Miti. [...]. On Wednesday, 29 January 1964, the day the mail boat was expected,

⁹⁷ I draw my inspiration from Mudimbe's conception of line. See V.-Y. Mudimbe, *On African Fault Lines: Meditations on Alterity Politics*, Pietermaritzburg, University of KwaZulu-Nata Press, 2013, p. 29.

⁹⁸ Marie Nzamba (60 years old), oral interview, Kinshasa, 26 March 2013. A woman from Banda, she was 10 years old when the rebellion broke out.

⁹⁹ Palmie Andiang (75 years old), oral interview, Idiofa, 24 November 2013.

¹⁰⁰ Marie Nzamba (60 years old), oral interview, Kinshasa, 26 March 2013.

[...] [Faustin Kamime] suggested that we postpone our departure. At the end of the same day, Antoine Baluki was attacked by the [the rebels] for hosting us at his home. [...]. He did not have any other option but to chase us from his place. [...].

We continued our journey up to Pangu. After our arrival at Pangu, we were informed that the [rebels] were planning to follow us. [...] [Faustin Kamime suggested that] [...] we go to Fidèle Tuku's place in Bendi-Bendi, in the province of Mai-Ndombe. [...] On Thursday 30 January 1964, on the other side of Kasai river, [...] at [a village called] Mpombé, we experienced the worst. [...]. Around 5 pm, between Mpombé and Mbombi, 45 km from the Kasai river, seven Basakata warriors [...] pursued us at an unprecedented pace. [...] They wanted to behead us [...]. They were armed with spears, machetes, and sticks. [...] [Faustin Kamime] fled into the bush. [...] I was stopped by the [Basakata] warriors. [...] After having asked several questions, they demanded that I give them everything I had, such as money and other goods, otherwise I would have been executed. They took 1500 francs of mine. [They took] my wristwatch, a Parker pen, an ordinary pen and a handkerchief. [...] I had to walk back to Dibaya-Lubwe beach.¹⁰¹

While this man's movements were similarly disrupted like Marie Nzamba's, his escape is infused with a proliferation of detours and delays.¹⁰² This can be explained by the intensity with which the events unfolded, and the exact geographical location of each person. Marie Nzamba and her family were located at the centre of the contested region. The war was very intense in this area compared to where the man was in the north of the region. In Nzamba's own words, this is the reason why she and her family avoided all kinds of delays and detours in their escape in order to get out of the battle lines as quickly as possible. Yet both escapes or movements produced the same consequences: the discovery of one's life as the negation of being. This conclusion led many of those fleeing the rebellion to experience forced displacement in a deterministic way, and the pain it produced as inevitable. This way of thinking, which demonstrates the extent to which people became helpless in situations of extreme violence and terror, brought many of them to remain where they were at the moment when the conditions became terrifying. Innocent Yamb, a son of a local administration officer, remembers these moments:

¹⁰¹ Anonymous, "Rapport administratif," reel 12, box 8, folder 7, file H, doc. B0158. Archives Conseil National. Paragraph added to the quote to enhance readability.

¹⁰² Among others.

In June 1965, we were in the forest around Lubwe. [...] The forest was surrounded by the *militaires*. We were completely stuck. We could not do anything. My mother said to us: 'There is no need to run away.' She had adamantly refused to flee. [...] She said sadly: 'No matter what happens here, we will no longer run away. The the skin is already on the bones. Let them come and kill us once and for all. [...] Even if we had to run away, what will we gain? We are already caught up in the middle of the forest.'¹⁰³

These are the conditions in which people found themselves during the rebellion. Frederique Yembele, a student of the Catholic Mission of Itshwem from 1959 to 1964, compares the experience of fleeing the war to that of "schizophrenia:"¹⁰⁴ painful, complex and very confused moments during which one could hear a multiplicity of voices, while in reality there were none; moments during which the "body," terrified by war, would begin to lose its physical and mental balance in a very dramatic way; a time during which people would be killed because they were drunk by "war" and its "madness;" a moment during which going and staying overlapped each other and meant the same thing, as the price to pay was the same either way.

I still remember the day when the *militaires* showed up in Kasembe. [...] It was unexpected. [...] They were wearing civilian dress. They accused the people of the village of supporting and maintaining the rebels. [...] At their arrival, everyone panicked. [...] You could see how people were running away. [...] There was no difference between them and being crazy. They were running without control. [...]

While people were fleeing and screaming, a man by the name of Kabanga came suddenly out of his house. [...] Firstly, as you can understand, he was abruptly pulled from his sleep. [...] Secondly, he was completely unconscious like a crazy man because he was light-headed. [...] Then he had to find the right direction to flee. Unfortunately, in his panic and dizziness, like a fool he ended up falling into the hands of a *militaire*. He asked the *militaire* to kindly tell him from which direction the *militaires* were coming from. The *militaire* to whom he was talking believed immediately that he [Kabanga] was a rebel. All of a sudden, the *militaire* began to mutilate Kabanga. His arms were cut off. [...] He died sometime later as he was bleeding. [...] It was the end of story for this man. [...]

Fleeing during the rebellion was terrible. [...] It is something I would never want to experience again. You are somewhere sitting; and then you hear all of a sudden someone screaming: 'They are here!' You stand up and begin to run

¹⁰³ Innocent Yamb (56 years old), oral interview, Kinshasa, 29 September 2013.

¹⁰⁴ Here "schizophrenia" is used metaphorically, not as a pathology.

away like a mad person, sometimes without even knowing where you are going. That is the kind of life that people lived through during the rebellion.¹⁰⁵

The “schizophrenic” equation that leaving or staying both meant the same thing was also experience by Léon Samuyala, a man who was working for the Institut National pour l’Etude Agronomique du Congo Belge (INEAC) station at Kiyaka in 1964,¹⁰⁶ after deciding to leave his work place when this was being surrounded and attacked by the rebels. A report drawn up by the human resource manager of the INEAC in February 1964 on Samuyala’s experiences gives a clear understanding of the overlap between the phenomena of leaving and staying during the rebellion:

Regarding [...] Léon Samuyala, he died [...] approximately 20 km from the station on Saturday 4th January on his bike. He was fleeing to his village. In the bend of the road, he came upon a truck full of well-armed *militaires*. In his panic, he threw his bike to the ground and fled into the bush. The *militaires* [...] assumed that he was one of the criminals and immediately shot him down.¹⁰⁷

This was the “fate” of staying or leaving during the rebellion. The echoes of this man’s killing and the assassination of many others spread across the region.¹⁰⁸ The population was terrified. In this context of widespread panic and “madness,” it became unavoidable that people were separated. Men, women, and children would come from the south as a unified and solid group, only to be separated at a particular location because of the intensity of the war.¹⁰⁹ They would flee from the centre of the region to the north, only to be separated at a particular place because of the acuteness of war. In most testimonies, these separations are described as some of the most painful moments of the experience of fleeing. Many people found themselves in new forms of solitary life

¹⁰⁵ Frédérique Yembele (60 years old), oral interview, Kinshasa, 3 October 2013. Paragraphs added to the quote to enhance readability.

¹⁰⁶ The INEAC was officially closed in 1962 after Congo had achieved independence and was transformed into the Institut National Pour l’Etude et la Recherche Agronomiques (INERA). Archival evidence suggests that administrative officers continued to refer to the new institution as INEAC when the rebellion broke out in 1964.

¹⁰⁷ Joseph Bolowa, “Lettre: situation à Kiyaka,” reel 12, box 8, folder 6, file H, doc. B0120. Archives Conseil National.

¹⁰⁸ L. Kumuseke, “Rapport sur l’évolution du mouvement jeunesse dans le secteur Kipuka. 3 mars 1964,” reel 12, box 8, folder 8, file I, doc. B0175. Archives Conseil National.

¹⁰⁹ Frédérique Yembele (60 years old), oral interview, Kinshasa, 3 October 2013. See also Innocent Yamb (56 years old), oral interview, Kinshasa, 29 September 2013.

because of these separations.¹¹⁰ Isolated from the rest of the world, many began to confine themselves to the imaginary world. Within this refuge, fleeing itself gained new meanings. Dreams and ecstasy became the ways and means by which the suffering body would reinvigorate itself, while the rational mind struggled to escape the pain caused by the rebellion.¹¹¹

Georgine Mankieta, whose separation from her siblings affected her psyche, remembered how often her parents got tired. They often suffered from headaches. Her mother's blood pressure steadily increased. Each day brought more bad news: she heard about the loss of an uncle and sometimes of the killing of a close relative. All the sad news became embedded in her dreamlike world. Instead of continuing to be the site on which the rebellion imposed pain and from which her suffering body needed to seek refuge, dreams became the *lieu* of the production of suffering. They were dominated by dark images of descent into the depths of life. The imagination of the trip and the departure from home without hope of a return took shape in those dreams. In addition, her body was captured by stress and anxiety. More and more often she experienced the smell of death. Her dreams were increasingly "colonized" by the image of falling trees. During the nights of 24 and 25 June 1965, this network of metaphors intensified and expanded in her dreams. Images of rivers and bathing, dominated by drowning, became abundant in her nightmares. From an entry point, such as a walk in the water, or getting onto a ferry, emerged a maze of tensions: blood, drowning, guns, legal proceedings, wailing, reprobation and the presence of the *militaires*. The chaos would not stop coming closer. It was punctuated by loincloths of mourning, snake bites, shadows of the dead and the prosecution of the insane. "My dreams," she said sadly, "were about [the sequences of forces] of nature. I found myself sometimes in places where winds blew; [...] the winds that uproot trees. [...] There were insurmountable earthquakes and the presence of ghosts who came to pick me up [for the eternal dwelling]."¹¹²

¹¹⁰ Palmie Andiang (75 years old), oral interview, Idiofa, 24 November 2013; Frédérique Yembele (60 years old), oral interview, Kinshasa, 3 October 2013; and Innocent Yamb (56 years old), oral interview, Kinshasa, 29 September 2013.

¹¹¹ Palmie Andiang (75 years old), oral interview, Idiofa, 24 November 2013; and Georgine Mankieta (67 years old), oral interview, Kikwit Sacré Coeur, 6 August 2015.

¹¹² Georgine Mankieta (67 years old), oral interview, Kikwit Sacré Coeur, 6 August 2015.

The presence of death, blood, mourning, snake bites, winds, and drownings as a network of metaphors, and their multiplication in dreams, was the result of what people experienced on an everyday basis. It shows in many ways the extent to which “waves of terror” penetrated “the corners of life.” In these metaphors one can see the transposition of “refracted experiential forms of disturbing force.”¹¹³ Reinhart Koselleck, writing about “dreams of terror” and “dreams in terror,” states that when “conventional behavior” is “confronted with the terror,” this confrontation “is transposed into an oppressive response within the dream.” In such conditions, “terror is not simply dreamed; the dreams are themselves components of the terror.”¹¹⁴ He contends that these kinds of dreams “testify to an initially open, then later insidious, terror, and anticipate its violent intensification. [...]. They are not simply dreams of terror; they are, above all, dreams in terror; terror which pursues mankind even into sleep.”¹¹⁵ This is particularly true for the rebellion in Congo since the space in which people were fleeing during the uprising was so violent. The degree to which terror escalated in this “bewitched”¹¹⁶ landscape was incommensurable.¹¹⁷ One example of the incommensurability of terror in the rebellion was an event witnessed on 21 August 1964 by Doctor Cantarelli when he made official the results of the autopsy performed on the corpse of Onésime Diolo. Diolo had been murdered by the *militaires* when he attempted to prevent them from raping his wife. To eliminate traces of the murder, the rebels threw Diolo’s body into the Kwilu river. In Cantarelli’s letter to the administrative officer, whose purpose was to investigate and document alleged “brutality” of the *militaires* sent for peacekeeping missions to the contested zone, one reads:

On the basis of Mr. Loso’s request, we performed an autopsy, on 14 August 1964, on the corpse of [Onésime] Diolo.

We have made the following observations: The corpse was in a good state of conservation. Outward signs of drowning: distribution of the hypostasis, skin

¹¹³ Reinhart Koselleck, *Future Past: On the Semantics of the Historical Time*, trans. Keith Tribe, New York: Columbia University Press, 2004, p. 210.

¹¹⁴ Ibid.

¹¹⁵ Ibid., p. 211.

¹¹⁶ This word is used figuratively.

¹¹⁷ Georgine Mankieta (67 years old), oral interview, Kikwit Sacré Coeur, 6 August 2015; Palmie Andiang, (75 years old), oral interview, Idiofa, 24 November 2013; and Bastin Bembo (66 years old), oral interview, Idiofa, 16 December 2013.

characteristic, but lack of fungus mucous membranes in the nostrils and in the mouth. Maybe it was removed prior to transportation of the corpse to the hospital. [There are] contusions in different parts of the body, especially in the fronto-parietal right zone [of the chest]. The legs are closely bound together at the ankles. The testicles [...] are tied so tightly at their base with a lace that they are strangled. When we opened the rib cage, we found acute emphysema of the lungs, hyperaeria, and hematoma in the right fronto-parietal region, as well as swelling of the brain. [...]

Basically, Onésime Diolo died by drowning. Before his death, he suffered several blows and abuse.¹¹⁸

If for some people the imaginary world became the site *par excellence* of the production of suffering because of the embodiment of terror in their dreams, for others it remained the site from where they could project themselves into a free world, the imagined world, a world without terror; where one could walk from one location to another without being harassed.¹¹⁹ Being able to place oneself mentally in a free world was foremost a movement of the mind. It was, to use Eyal Amiran's vocabulary, "the geographical combination of" the "self" and "the world."¹²⁰ In this movement, the mind would leave "home," the head, the closed space. It would move to the world outside "home," into an open space, and make itself a new territory, a new shelter, a place giving temporary protection to the mind, while the body remained attached to the landscape, the actual world, the violent space, the space of the rebellion. After this wandering, the mind would return to its original location, the "home," the head, only to leave it again and return to the world outside "home," the peaceful world, the imagined world, the world free of terror. At the end, it would find itself trapped in this backwards and forwards between deterritorialization, reterritorialization and deterritorialization.

The "geographical combination of self and" the "world"¹²¹ and the continual alteration between "home," the head, and the outside world is exactly what Placide Ngay, a former supporter of Mulele between 1964 and 1966, expresses in this testimony:

¹¹⁸ Dr. Cantarelli, "Autopsie Nsolo Onésime," reel 12, box 8, folder 9, file I, doc. B0207. Archives Conseil National. Paragraphs added to the quote to enhance readability.

¹¹⁹ Placide Ngay (77 years old), oral interview, Idiofa, 17 November 2013. He was 28 years old when he joined the *maquis* at Nkata Kalamba. Today he is a supporter of the Parti Lumumbiste Unifié (PALU) in Idiofa.

¹²⁰ Eyal Amiran, *Wandering and Home: Beckett's Metaphysical Narrative*, Pennsylvania: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1993, p. 57.

¹²¹ Ibid.

The situation was getting worse. [...] I did not know where to go. [...] All I could do was to dream about the free world. [...] I found myself in Leopoldville [Kinshasa] without even knowing how. [...] When the time came to rest after having fled the whole day, I would feel distracted and lost. [...] I would find myself in Leopoldville knowing that I had not been there before. [...] I would see myself talking and chatting to people in that [city]. After a certain amount of time, I would realize that it was not something real. It was my imagination. [...] This was my world. It is hard to share this with those who did not live through the rebellion. But it is exactly what we went through. [...]. Physically people would see that you are here, but [mentally] you were absent.¹²²

To this “geographical combination of self and” the “world”¹²³ it is important to add the world of the unconsciousness. The unconscious state of mind was in some ways even more insidious for it transformed the space of fleeing into a sacrificial space.¹²⁴ Children, often without intention and in a situation of traumatization, said things that would denounce their parents to the *militaires* and rebels.¹²⁵ The latter would kill the parents with an extraordinary violence as if they were only figurative corpses.¹²⁶ They would seize them and shoot them, only to show the inutility of the human life principle. Eugenie Mpungu [Figure 5], mother of two children in 1964, remembers the killing of people in Lukamba, between 1964 and 1966:

One day, in the middle of the day, the rebels suddenly arrived in the village. [...] They began to shoot. [...] That was the beginning of the war. [...] The rebels were all over the village. The *militaires* were running after them as hunters. We, however, [...] were scattered. Some of us were in the bush, others in the forest. [...] The *militaires* followed the partisans from Lukamba to Ingudi. [...] When they [the *militaires*] got to Ingudi, they began to shoot at those they found in the village. [...] They killed a lot of people that day. [...] A woman named M. was also killed the same day. She had a four-year-old son. The child, after having noticed the blood that flowed around his mother, ran [...] to the *militaires* and said to them: ‘You have killed my mother, why did you leave my father?’ The *militaires* asked him where his father was. The child said: ‘My father is hiding in the kitchen, on top of the manioc shelter. Let us go. I will show you where he is [...].’ The *militaires* got into the kitchen with brutality. They found the poor man on top of the shelter. They asked him

¹²² Placide Ngay (77 years old), oral interview, Idiofa, 17 November 2013.

¹²³ Amiran, *Wandering and Home...*, p. 151.

¹²⁴ Placide Ngay (77 years old), oral interview, Idiofa, 17 November 2013; and Bastin Bembo (66 years old), oral interview, Idiofa, 16 December 2013.

¹²⁵ Eugenie Mpungu (75 years old), oral interview, Kwanga Carrefour, 20 October 2013. She was 26 years old when the rebellion broke out. She passed away in 2014. See also Anonymous, “Lettre, le 7 juin 1964,” reel 2, box 1, doc. [s.n]. Archives Conseil National.

¹²⁶ Bastin Bembo (66 years old), oral interview, Idiofa, 16 December 2013.

to come down. He obeyed. They made him lie down and shot him dead. [...] They took the child with them. He became their best friend and the main whistleblower of others.¹²⁷

Figure 5: Eugénie Mpungu¹²⁸



The space became sacrificial, saturated by bad news. On 19 January 1964, rebels executed the head of the Mukoko sector.¹²⁹ Three days later, they assassinated three missionaries of the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate in Kilembe.¹³⁰ On 24 January 1964, they looted Cardoso Frères' post in Pomongo and destroyed the bridge on

¹²⁷ Eugénie Mpungu (75 years old), oral interview, Kwanga Carrefour, 20 October 2013.

¹²⁸ Photo by author, Kwanga Carrefour, 20 October 2013.

¹²⁹ Anonymous, "Rapport," reel 12, box 8, folder 7, file H, doc. B0151. Archives Conseil National.

¹³⁰ Ibid.

the Kikwit-Idiofa road.¹³¹ Towards the end of January 1964, the rebels assassinated Sergeant Joseph Mbetenzadi in Kisenzele village.¹³² In February 1964, they killed refugees who were fleeing from Gungu to Lukamba at Mukulu.¹³³ By late February 1964, the rebels monitored all the roads leading to Ngoma village in Mukoso sector.¹³⁴ In April 1964, the *militaires* killed the inhabitants of Kisenda and burnt down their village.¹³⁵ On 10 May 1964, women and children were burnt alive in their houses in the same area by the *militaires*.¹³⁶ Fourteen days later, the rebels killed the inhabitants of Mbumba village with sticks and machete blows.¹³⁷ On 31 May 1964, they arrested the inhabitants of Mbata Katiti and accused them of complicit with the *militaires*.¹³⁸ On the same day, women and children in the same area were arrested by the *militaires* while fleeing¹³⁹ and shot down in cold blood. Between April and June 1964, both the rebels¹⁴⁰ and the *militaires* burnt several villages.¹⁴¹ On 15 June 1964, the *militaires* attacked Ifwanzondo and murdered half of the population.¹⁴²

¹³¹ Anonymous, "Rapport," reel 12, box 8, folder 7, file H, doc. B0151. Archives Conseil National.

¹³² Ibid.

¹³³ Ntumu (71 years old), oral interview, Lukamba, 2 November 2013. He is a teacher at Lukamba Primary school since 1950s.

¹³⁴ Benjamin Ngolo and Damien Mulay, "Rapport équipe n° 1283," reel 1, box 1, doc. 00334-T. Archives Conseil National.

¹³⁵ B. Ibuizza and B. Weneze, "Rapport mois d'avril 1964," reel 1, box 1, doc. 340-T. Archives Conseil National.

¹³⁶ Luzio and Cibisio, "Rapport," reel 2, box 2, doc. 1253-T-C. Archives Conseil National; Kindalo and Masende, "Rapport," reel 4, box 3, doc. 2429-T. Archives Conseil National; and Lundonsi and Kamanda, "Rapport," reel 6, box 4, doc. 4855 NX. Archives Conseil National.

¹³⁷ B. Mbumba and Mungula, "Lettre," reel 1, box 1, doc. 327. Archives Conseil National.

¹³⁸ B. Ngono and P. Museki, "Lettre," reel 1, box 1, doc. 00330A. Archives Conseil National.

¹³⁹ Kusenge, Kusakana and Ngumbu, "Rapport," reel 1, box 1, doc. 278-T. Archives Conseil National.

¹⁴⁰ Anonymous, "Lettre," reel 6, box 4, doc. 4414. Archives Conseil National; Benjamin Ngolo and Damien Mulay, "Rapport équipe n° 1283," reel 1, box 1, doc. 00334-T. Archives Conseil National; and B. Mbumba and Mungula, "Lettre," reel 1, box 1, doc. 327. Archives Conseil National.

¹⁴¹ Donatien Nkasa and Léonar[d] Bakala, "Lettre," reel 1, box 1, doc. 00350. Archives Conseil National; Anonymous, "Lettre," reel 1, box 1, doc. 148. Archives Conseil National; André Kilondi and Banda Kasamba, "Lettre," reel 2, box 1, doc. 00930. Archives Conseil National; and Anonymous, "Lettre," reel 6, box 4, doc. 4371. Archives Conseil National.

¹⁴² Kakezo and Yumba, "Lettre," reel 6, box 4, doc. 4801 T-C. Archives Conseil National. See also Lapima, "Lettre," reel 6, box 4, doc. 4367. Archives Conseil National; and Abwamasa and Mudiakapi, "Lettre," reel 6, box 4, doc. 4371. Archives Conseil National.

This is the spatial framework within which people fled during the rebellion. Most of my informants compared their experiences to “bestiality.”¹⁴³ The first characteristic that this metaphor highlights is the loss of emotional life. According to Domenico Jervolino, emotional life is “the real territory of the existential realization” by human beings.¹⁴⁴ It is also the territory in which men and women “are exposed to passions as well as to the triple lust of possession, power, and will.”¹⁴⁵ It is precisely in the deprivation of this triple lust of possession, power, and will that humans become equal to animals. The very concept of the right of doing something stood as a void. As beasts, they were not allowed to possess but were rather possessed both by the rebels and the *militaires*.¹⁴⁶ Their relationship with both was one of master to slave. Their bodies were constantly objectified. As in every civil war, their humanity was denied by both sides.¹⁴⁷ Having lost their will and power, they deferred themselves to the will and power of the rebels and the *militaires*.¹⁴⁸ They found themselves between the rebels and the *militaires* in the very same way in which animals get caught up from both sides by wildfire.¹⁴⁹

The second characteristic expressed in the metaphor of bestiality is submission. The main locus of the manifestation of this submission was the regime of communication. Communication between the rebels and the population in this space took place in the form of a restricted register of command. The overarching goal of this register was to transform people into docile animals. Like animals, or the prototype of animals, people subjected to rebel hegemony could not speak for themselves.¹⁵⁰ The relationship between them and the rebels was one of violence and domination. Critical to this relationship was

¹⁴³ Adolphe Kuma Kuma (74 years old), oral interview, Kikwit Sacré Coeur, 22 November 2013; Georgine Mankieta (65 years old) oral interview, Kikwit Sacré Coeur, 22 November 2013; Prospère Mbwisi (66 years old), oral interview, Kikwit Sacré Coeur, 22 November 2013; Paul Muyenzi (64 years old), oral interview, Kinshasa, 16 September 2013, Ntumu (71 years old), oral interview, Lukamba, 2 November 2013; Innocent Yamb (56 years old), oral interview, Kinshasa, 29 September 2013; and Prospère Yamba (62 years old), oral interview, Kikwit, 24 October 2013.

¹⁴⁴ Domenico Jervolino, *Paul Ricœur: Une herméneutique de la condition humaine*, Paris: Ellipse, 2002, p. 20.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid.

¹⁴⁶ Paul Muyenzi (64 years old), oral interview, Kinshasa, 16 September 2013. He was 15 years old when the rebellion broke out. He spent two years (1964-1966) in the bush. After the exit of the bush he pursued his studies in Idiofa.

¹⁴⁷ Adolphe Kuma Kuma (74 years old), oral interview, Kikwit Sacré Coeur, 22 November 2013.

¹⁴⁸ Paul Muyenzi (64 years old), oral interview, Kinshasa, 16 September 2013.

¹⁴⁹ Adolphe Kuma Kuma (74 years old), oral interview, Kikwit Sacré Coeur, 22 November 2013.

¹⁵⁰ Paul Muyenzi (64 years old), oral interview, Kinshasa, 16 September 2013.

that they were denied all rights of producing any critique of the rebellion.¹⁵¹ The sole possibility that was left to them was to provide only answers to the questions that were put to them.¹⁵² Under such conditions of domination, they had no other choice but to obey.¹⁵³ Because they were considered as tools subordinated to those who made them and could use them at will, they lost all autonomy and became unintelligible.¹⁵⁴

Transformation of people into docile animals also entailed a process of domestication. In this space, the domestication of people was carried out gradually. Anyone arrested was placed under a regime of surveillance.¹⁵⁵ The arrested persons underwent political lessons to inculcate them with a new ideology.¹⁵⁶ If the arrested person did not die with the bad treatment received, he or she would be assigned to take on tasks in the *Equipe*¹⁵⁷ or in the battles themselves¹⁵⁸ as a security guard or intelligence officer.¹⁵⁹ All attempts to escape from the rebel positions were followed by a punitive expedition. Many who tried to venture or take lightly the rebel injunctions paid heavily.¹⁶⁰ In early December 1964, for example, the relatives of Crispin Buliong, Gaspard Lonoko, and Jean Munakongo were arrested when the three men fled from the

¹⁵¹ B. Mbumba and Mungula, "Lettre," reel 1, box 1, doc. 327. Archives Conseil National.

¹⁵² Adolphe Kuma Kuma (74 years old), oral interview, Kikwit Sacré Coeur, 22 November 2013.

¹⁵³ Anaclet Kimbamba (65 years old), oral interview, Kinshasa, 7 October 2013. He joined the *maquis* while he was 16 years old. He identified himself as a "small rebel."

¹⁵⁴ Paul Muyenzi (64 years old), oral interview, Kinshasa, 16 September 2013; and Anaclet Kimbamba (65 years old), oral interview, Kinshasa, 7 October 2013.

¹⁵⁵ Barthelemy Ilo (62 years old), oral interview, Kikwit, 19 October 2013. He was taken to Mulele in 1964 at the age of 13. He was assigned the task of carrying Mulele's bag every single time the headquarter was attacked by the *militaires*.

¹⁵⁶ Paul Muyenzi (64 years old), oral interview, Kinshasa, 16 September 2013. See also Bubulu, "Lettre," reel 2, box 1, doc. 00913. Archives Conseil National. On the content of these lessons, see Anonymous, "Cons. Liberation Nationale. Malongi ya politique," reel 4, box 3, docs. 2477, 2480-2489. Archives Conseil National; and Anonymous, "Leçon politique, le 15 Juillet 1964," reel 4, box 3, docs. 2490-2493 and 2495. Archives Conseil National.

¹⁵⁷ Barthelemy Ilo (62 years old), oral interview, Kikwit, 19 October 2013.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid. See also Vincent Kisungu, "Rapport d'activité de la mission de pacification de la région de Kipuka, 23 novembre 1964," reel 12, box 8, folder 9, file I, doc. B0225 (81). Archives Conseil National; Catherine (Sr.), "Rapport pour les deux sœurs religieuses, le 4 mai 1964," reel 6, box 4, docs. 4201-4202. Archives Conseil National; and Anonymous, "Rapport pour la soeur Catherine de Kisandji," reel 6, box 4, docs. 4218-T, 4219, 4220 and 4221. Archives Conseil National.

¹⁵⁹ Mikolo, "Lettre, le 1 mai 1964," reel 3, box 2, doc. 3711-T. Hoover Institution. Stanford University, California, United States; and Kanga and Mukoso, "Lettre, le 7 mai 1964," reel 3, box 2, doc. 3708. Hoover Institution. Stanford University, California, United States.

¹⁶⁰ Bastin Bembo (66 years old), oral interview, Idiofa, 16 December 2013.

rebel area to the *militaires*' positions. In mid-December 1964, an administrative officer reported:

Having learned about the escape of four [people from their positions], the rebel leaders from Bethany, especially Abraham Adelin and Valère Mukabi, dispatched thirty rebels to Ikiemo and Lulemba to arrest and punish the family members of the four fugitives. Crispin Buliong's mother, Gaspard Lonoko's uncle, and the wife and uncle of Jean Munakongo were arrested and taken to Bethany. Family members of the [other one] have also been deported to Bethany.¹⁶¹

This was the consequence of escaping from the rebel positions. More important is the kind of life that people were subjected to, both in the space of domestication and more broadly in the space contested by the rebel and government forces which my informants described with the metaphor of bestiality.¹⁶² They described a precarious life in so far as it was primarily the affirmation of nullity.¹⁶³ People lacked almost everything that could help them build their bodies and maintain their existence; that would help them protect themselves against the weather;¹⁶⁴ or even that would help them hide their nudity.¹⁶⁵ With the intense display of their nudity, their bodies became the object of a "pornography of representation."¹⁶⁶ One could look at their ribs and count their bones because the flesh had disappeared as a result of starvation and loss of weight.¹⁶⁷ Under such conditions, individuals moved from being continuous beings to becoming regressive and dis-continuous beings. From a morphological perspective, there was little that allowed the differentiation between adult and child, were it not for the beards of men

¹⁶¹ B. S[...], "Evolution de la situation à partir du 13 décembre 1964 dans le secteur Bulwem (16 décembre 1964)," reel 12, box 8, folder 9, file I, doc. B0231. Archives Conseil National.

¹⁶² Anonymous (64 years old), oral interview, Kwanga Carrefour, 27 October 2013; Ntumu (71 years old), oral interview, Lukamba, 2 November 2013; and Paul Muyenzi (64 years old), oral interview, Kinshasa, 16 September 2013.

¹⁶³ Anonymous (64 years old), oral interview, Kwanga Carrefour, 27 October 2013; and Ntumu (71 years old), oral interview, Lukamba, 2 November 2013.

¹⁶⁴ Anonymous (64 years old), oral interview, Kwanga Carrefour, 27 October 2013; and Ntumu (71 years old), oral interview, Lukamba, 2 November 2013.

¹⁶⁵ Paul Muyenzi (64 years old), oral interview, Kinshasa, 16 September 2013.

¹⁶⁶ My interpretation. On the "pornography of representation," see Rosi Braidotti, *Nomadic Subjects: Embodiment and Sexual Difference in Contemporary Feminist Theory*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1994, p. 57-74.

¹⁶⁷ Ntumu (71 years old), oral interview, Lukamba, 2 November 2013.

and the breasts of women.¹⁶⁸ This is the kind of life that people lived in the contested space.

Periphery as a friction zone

The precariousness of life in the conflict zone, the continuous battles between rebels and *militaires*, and the tensions that the politics of domestication and bestiality raised in the contested space led those who could, at their own risk, to seek refuge in the periphery¹⁶⁹—particularly in Kikwit, Masi-Manimba, Bulungu, Lac Leopold II, Feshi, Mapangu, Tshikapa and Brabanta; the two latter located in the province of the Unité Kasaienne [Figure 6]. A first flow of refugees towards the periphery had already taken place in January 1964 when the rebellion broke out.¹⁷⁰ As a result, the provincial authorities were fully aware of the situation. They knew that refugees fleeing rebellions anywhere raises complex issues for the country.¹⁷¹ The biggest problem that arose for the authorities in the periphery was not the well-being of the refugee civilians but rather the security threat they were seen to represent after crossing into the periphery.¹⁷² It is this this fear of the other that motivated the authorities to mobilize to put in place a “policy of containment.”¹⁷³ Its goal was to set barriers to screen “bodies” moving from the contested zone to the periphery.

The implementation of the policy of containment in the periphery depended largely on the authorities’ capacity for coercion. As in the case of the rebels and the *militaires* in the contested zone, it was the key way in which law and authority could be inscribed onto space. This is the reason why, on 9 January 1964 after the Molotov cocktail

¹⁶⁸ Anonymous (64 years old), oral interview, Kwanga Carrefour, 27 October 2013.

¹⁶⁹ Placide Ngay (77 years old), oral interview, Idiofa, 17 November 2013; and Bastin Bembo (66 years old), oral interview, Idiofa, 16 December 2013. People invented a variety of techniques that enabled them to move smoothly within the contested space. These techniques mostly relied upon the metaphor of chameleon. As chameleons, people would refashion their political identities in front of the rebels or the *militaires*. They create and recreate new forms of identification. They could use false information at their own risk and peril to construct unstable selves.

¹⁷⁰ Anonymous, “Procès verbal de la réunion du 9 janvier 1964,” reel 13, box 9, folder 4, file O, doc. F64/17 A. Archives Conseil National.

¹⁷¹ Ibid.

¹⁷² Ibid.

¹⁷³ Daniel Palambwa (83 years old), oral interview, Kinshasa, 23 September 2013. He was a member of the provincial government in the 1960s.

bombing of the INEAC station at Kiyaka and the murder of two police officers in the rebel controlled parts of Mulembe, the *préfet* of Bulungu, which shared a common border with Idiofa, introduced a “policy of barricades:”

The Mulele youth [meaning the rebels] have seriously undermined the economic life of the prefecture of Idiofa. The movement of this vandalism spreads like wildfire. It may infiltrate all prefectures. It is time to stop this movement. With regards to the prefecture of Bulungu, it is necessary to take preventive measures. [...] It must be noted that for the prefecture of Bulungu, the infiltration zone is Nkara, Imbongo, and Kikongo [see Figure 7]. A powerful set of security measures must be set up there. [...] [Another] measure is to monitor the points where the ferries and canoes cross the river. Any unregulated crossing is prohibited. [...] The PLC [Plantations Lever au Congo] zone requires an intervention force that would be based at Leverville. At the smallest warning sign, it must act firmly. It is also necessary to give the order to the villagers not to host anyone in their villages. Any subversive movement should be reported to the police.¹⁷⁴

The letter shows clearly that the Bulungu prefecture experienced the fluidity of the borders as a direct threat. To deal with this, the authorities strengthened their security measures, an indispensable means for ensuring effective control and surveillance over the prefecture’s strategic locations [Figure 7]. This strategy was seen to be crucial for the prefecture’s security. It would help the authorities fulfil their mission of protecting the people under their jurisdiction.¹⁷⁵ It would also help them “decompose and recompose” the movement of people coming to the prefecture, thus enabling their effective regulation.¹⁷⁶ Deleuze captures these measures well in his assertion that “each time there is an operation against the state [such as] subordination, rioting, guerilla warfare or revolution as act, [...] the response of the state [...] is to striate space.”¹⁷⁷ It sets barriers, fixes paths, defines directions “which restrict speed, regulate circulation, relativize movements and measure in detail the relative movements of subjects and objects.”¹⁷⁸

¹⁷⁴ Anonymous, “Procès verbal de la réunion du 9 janvier 1964,” reel 13, box 9, folder 4, file O, doc. F64/17A. Archives Conseil National.

¹⁷⁵ Ibid.

¹⁷⁶ Daniel Palambwa (83 years old), oral interview, Kinshasa, 23 September 2013.

¹⁷⁷ Deleuze and Guattari, *Nomadology...*, p. 60.

¹⁷⁸ Ibid., pp. 59-60.

Figure 6: The war zone and the periphery. (White: war zone; Green: Periphery)

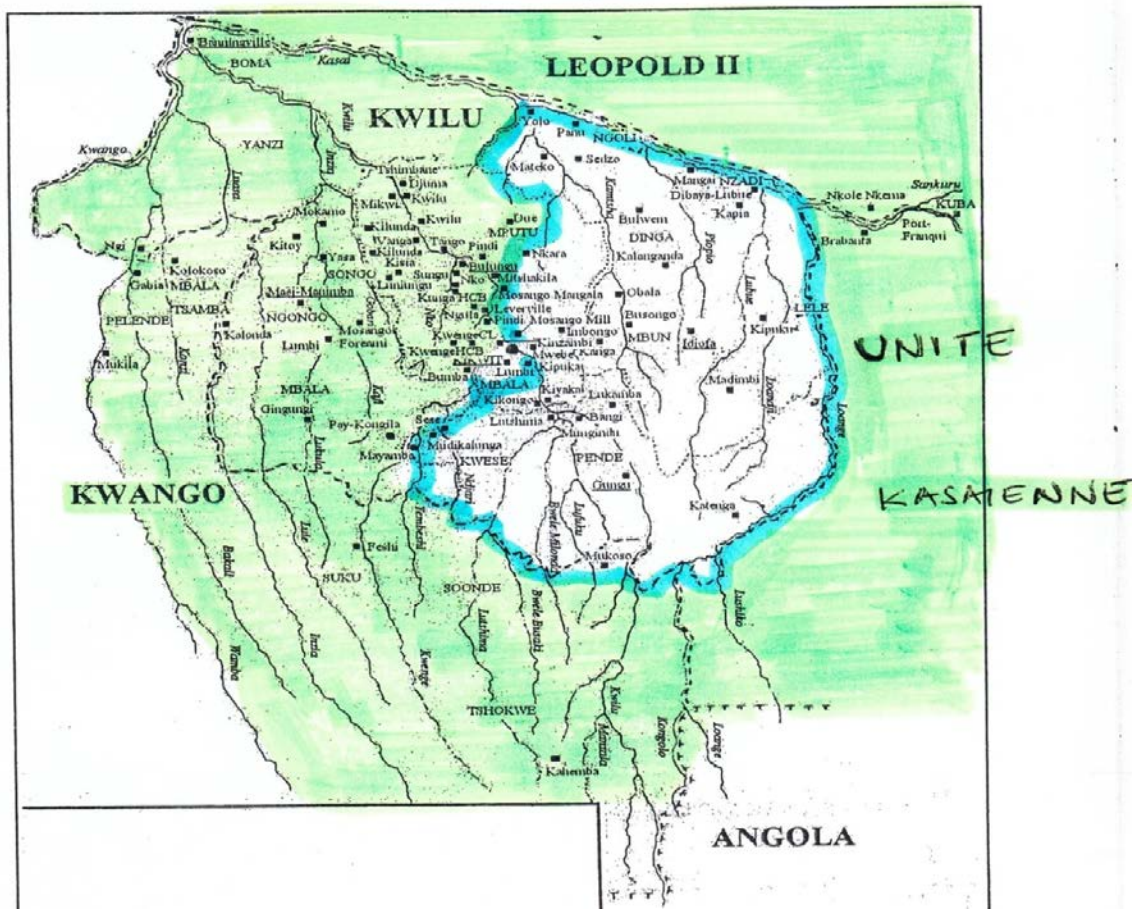
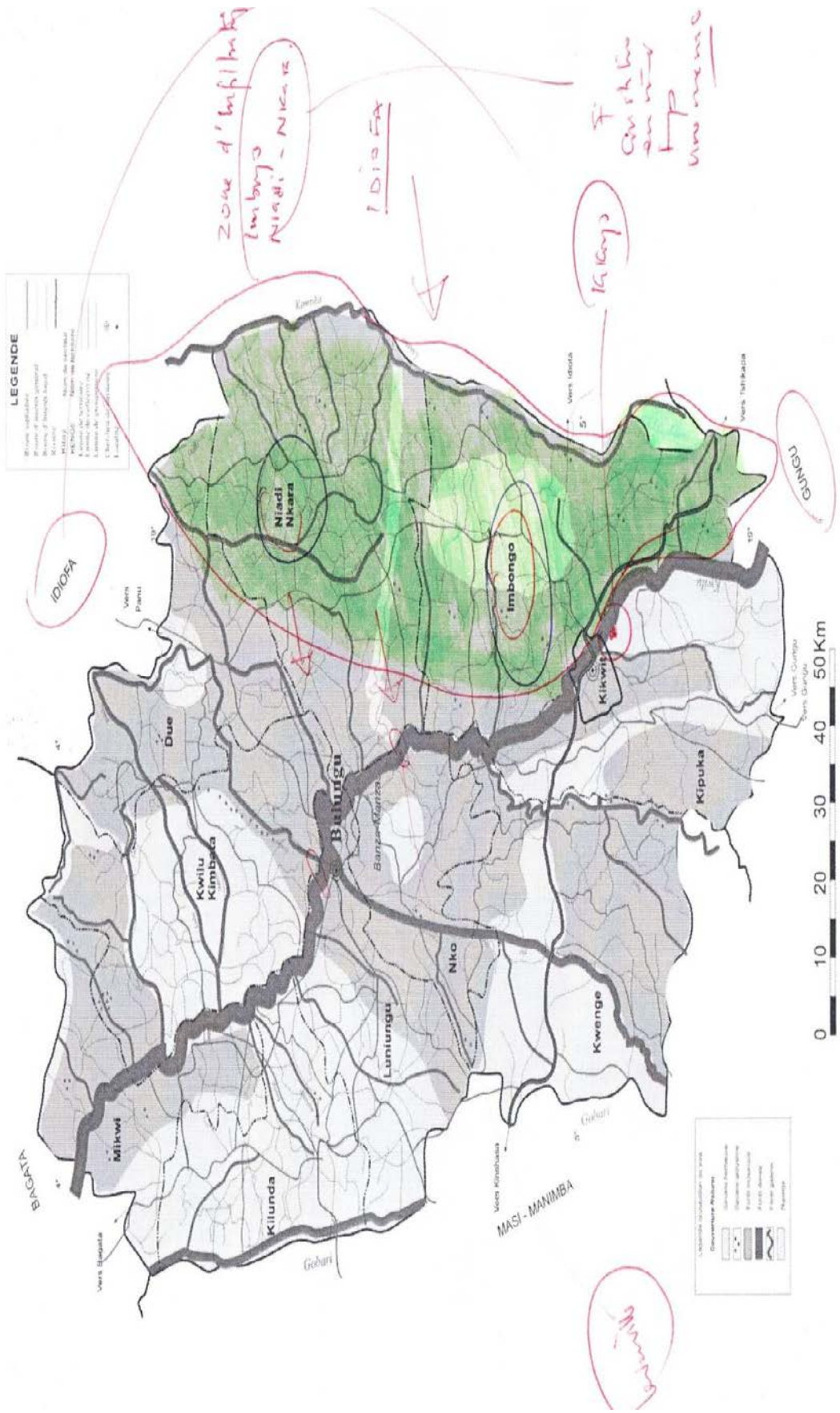


Figure 7: Prefecture of Bulungu: Strategic locations to be monitored with tact (green)



© I.U.E.S. CO - Source: Atlas de l'organisation Administrative de la RDC et Données géographiques (BLOU - Décembre 2009)

As one can see from this letter, other modalities of control emerged in addition to this set of measures, including the strict prohibition for villagers to allow anyone into their villages.¹⁷⁹ On 29 January 1964, new elements of control were added to the list. They ranged from surveillance of strategic locations to the definition of those who were required to submit to these measures. In a confidential letter from the *préfet* of Bulungu to the mayor of Bulungu municipality, one can get a sense of these modalities of control:

Mr. Mayor, I have the honour to put you on guard against the infiltration of foreign individuals who are liable to endanger public peace by trying to establish the terror of the private militia in the city of Bulungu. In fact, on 28 January 1964, [...] a man of the ‘*mubunda*’ race [a cultural-linguistic group to whom most rebel leaders belonged], a suspected member of the [Mulele] youths, entered the town of Bulungu, I do not know how. When I received the news, the police was immediately alerted, in order to apprehend him. [...] The reason for the arrival of this murderer is, as is their duty, to try to create youth gangs everywhere where peace reigns. If we have the youths here in Bulungu, there is no reason for them to come from Idiofa or Gungu. [...] Rather, the core of the youth [rebels] is made up of town dwellers. They contact their *Bampangi* [relatives] who live in the town. These are the people who make up the youths. [...] If we do not want to have this unfortunate situation in our city, it is necessary to pay close attention to the arrival of unknown people in the town. Please draw the attention of the population to this to ensure that the infiltration of unknown persons is monitored at all times. Suspects must automatically be brought to my office.¹⁸⁰

In this manner surveillance led to the categorization of people. The concepts of “foreign” and “unknown” were emptied of their primary social meaning. The foreigner ceased to be the one who needs hospitality and became *a priori* an enemy, an alien and a person who needed to be monitored. The foreigner was singled out and identified in terms of cultural-linguistic and ethnic identifications. All those who arrived in the region were labelled as Mbuun,¹⁸¹ “the brothers of Mulele” and as a “dangerous race.”¹⁸² The emphasis placed on ethnicity introduced a dividing line into the domain of life under the control of the authorities. It drew a sharp distinction between those who had the right to free movement and those subjected to monitoring. The foreigner, identified as Mbuun,

¹⁷⁹ Anonymous, “Procès verbal de la réunion du 9 janvier 1964,” reel 13, box 9, folder 4, file O, doc. F64/17A. Archives Conseil National.

¹⁸⁰ A. Voiture, “Lettre confidentielle,” reel 13, box 9, folder 4, file O, doc. F64/10A. Archives Conseil National.

¹⁸¹ *Mbuun* is the Gallicization of the word *mubunda* (plural *babunda*).

¹⁸² In Kikongo, the word *mpusu*, which means skin, is used to describe the skin colour—and to express the idea of race.

was seen as the holder of violence. He/she was the subject and the object of violence and, at the same time, a threat to the periphery. The foreigner's body, as it belonged to "the most dangerous race," was considered a site from which violence emanated. The foreigner was not only defined as a rebel, but also as someone predisposed to rebellion and obsessed with sowing rebellion throughout the region.

The identity construction and ethnic hatred conveyed in the periphery resulted from the depths of colonial history. Ernest Kiangu, whose doctoral dissertation was on this issue,¹⁸³ traced the contours of this enduring theme:

It was the result of the battle that was operating at the highest level of political leadership. [...] It should be said that prior to independence, mobility was highly regulated. Everyone was secluded in their area. Moving around entailed the mandatory carrying of a travel pass. In addition to this law, there were all kinds of regulations that stipulated that: 'to be a leader of an extra-customary centre [*centre extra-coutumier*]¹⁸⁴ one should come from the majority cultural-linguistic and ethnic group.' [...] In order to maintain power over a long period, those who ruled important agglomerations ensured that their cultural-linguistic and ethnic group remained in the majority. From 1931 to 1954, all of the leaders who led Kikwit—the seat of Kwilu bureaucracy, which also borders Bulungu—were Mbuun. [...] The Mbala [another of Kwilu's cultural-linguistic and ethnic groups], on the other hand, were excluded from leadership. [...] For more than two decades they not only remained in the shadow of the Mbuun, but were also confined to their villages. The Mbala experienced this exclusion and fragmentation as a form of colonization, to the extent of forcing a change in their representation in municipal politics. [...] As soon as they had obtained the changes, no Mbuun returned to head the city. These were the things that people spoke about behind closed doors, but that the colonial context did not allow them to express openly. After the acquisition of independence, this struggle became visible within the political parties.¹⁸⁵ At the time of the rebellion, all leaders who managed the state of emergency in Kikwit were from Bulungu. They led the people under their jurisdiction to rise up against the Mbuun, the latter being perceived by the people as the leaders of the rebellion and, therefore, the troublemakers.¹⁸⁶ [...] They also enforced the

¹⁸³ It was published in 2009 as *Le Kwilu à l'épreuve du pluralisme identitaire (1948-1968)* by l'Harmattan. See also Martens, *Abo...*, pp. 248-249.

¹⁸⁴ A centre not subjected to customary law.

¹⁸⁵ See Mutamba Makombo Kitatshima, *Du Congo Belge*, pp. 409–419; and Herbert Weiss, *Political Protest in the Congo: The Parti Solidaire Africain during the Independence Struggle*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1967.

¹⁸⁶ See also Martens, *Abo...*, pp. 248-249.

law by strengthening the modalities of control and surveillance over mobility in the region.¹⁸⁷

But these modalities of control and surveillance were not only the prerogative of the prefecture of Bulungu. They were, to a large extent, a feature of Congolese life. This is the reason why, in few days, many administrative entities in the periphery were very quick to march in step with the provincial policy of regulation of mobility. On 13 January 1964, following instructions from Kikwit, the Masi-Manimba *préfet* ordered his administrative body to strengthen and tighten control over mobility across the prefecture. In a remarkable note, he instructed that everyone be subjected to the same terms and conditions of control and surveillance.

Due to the tense situation in which our province finds itself, I appeal for your collaboration and draw to your attention that it is necessary to fully control all of the entry and exit points across the entirety of your districts and sectors. No citizen can travel from the *Circonscription Indigène* or the *arrondissement* [neighbourhood] without a *laissez-passer*. I hereby request all heads of *Circonscriptions Indigènes* to open a register for each village, which will be used on a daily basis by the chief of the village. Each day every villager has the duty to report the reason for his exit. All entries must be reported to the designated persons. Please choose two or three trustworthy citizens in each village who will be instructed to provide information to heads of *secteurs*. Please insist on the control and monitoring of entry and exit by citizens throughout the area of the prefecture. Make sure all the heads of villages are held responsible if the registers are not up to date.¹⁸⁸

In addition to the strict monitoring of strategic locations, the Masi-Manimba *préfet* re-instituted the colonial requirement of carrying passes. The aim of this procedure was threefold. Firstly, it would underline the risks of travelling to the prefecture. Secondly, it would increase the protection of the prefecture against all attempts of importing the rebellion into its area. Lastly, it would allow the prefecture to fully exercise state sovereignty in this part of the region.¹⁸⁹ In addition to the passes, the prefecture put in place a number of strategies to clandestinely control and monitor the movement of

¹⁸⁷ A. Voiture, "Lettre confidentielle," reel 13, box 9, folder 4, file O, doc. F64/10A. Archives Conseil National.

¹⁸⁸ Bernard Kambembo, "Lettre," reel 12, box 8, folder 6, file H, doc. B 0121. Archives Conseil National.

¹⁸⁹ Ibid.

people.¹⁹⁰ Those who came to seek refuge in this area were remotely controlled by what came to be called “invisible hands.”¹⁹¹

In the prefecture of Bulungu itself the authorities decided to raise the bar even higher, by tightening its existing security strategies and centralising where the rivers could be crossed [Figure 8]. They wanted to add to the existing modalities of control new forms of knowledge about the self, the body and the right to pass. People were now required to identify themselves through the biological. It was strongly believed that taking anthropomorphic features into account in the process of identifying people was of great importance. Despite having only scarce means at their disposal, a result of the weakness of the administration and the postcolonial bureaucracy, they nevertheless succeeded in implementing their project. They distinguished themselves by putting the burden of this arbitrary work of sovereignty on the shoulders of police officers. In a confidential letter to ferry inspectors at Mikwi, Tango, Pindi, Bulungu, Leverville, Kwenge and Mosango Mil in the prefecture of Bulungu [Figure 8 and Figure 9], the *préfet* of Bulungu gave firm instructions:

I have the honour of informing you that, as of the present, any illegal crossing on private canoe is strictly prohibited. You have the authority to stop any and all canoes. Please force everyone to cross on the ferry. A strict monitoring of passengers is strictly prescribed. Anyone who appear suspicious to you must be arrested and escorted under close supervision to Bulungu. ID verifications are required. All persons not in possession of their identity documents must be arrested. The reason for crossing must be clearly explained to you. If you feel like a crossing is unnecessary, you must return the person [to his home village]. In such cases, you must remember the individual’s face. In cases where a person tries to cross three times, giving you false reasons, you must arrest the person and lead him to Bulungu.¹⁹²

From these instructions it is clear that ferry inspectors became the incarnation of sovereign power. At the point where they met travellers seeking to cross the river, they alone had the power of taking “arbitrary” decisions, characteristic of sovereignty. They could check people’s identification documents, and read their faces and minds as experts

¹⁹⁰ Bernard Kambembo, “Lettre,” reel 12, box 8, folder 6, file H, doc. B 0121. Archives Conseil National.

¹⁹¹ Sévérin Kambembo (68 years old), oral interview, Gungu, 14 January 2014. He was three times identified as a rebel in the prefecture of Masi-Manimba.

¹⁹² A. Voiture, “Lettre confidentielle,” reel 13, box 9, folder 4, file O, doc. F64/ 16. Archives Conseil National.

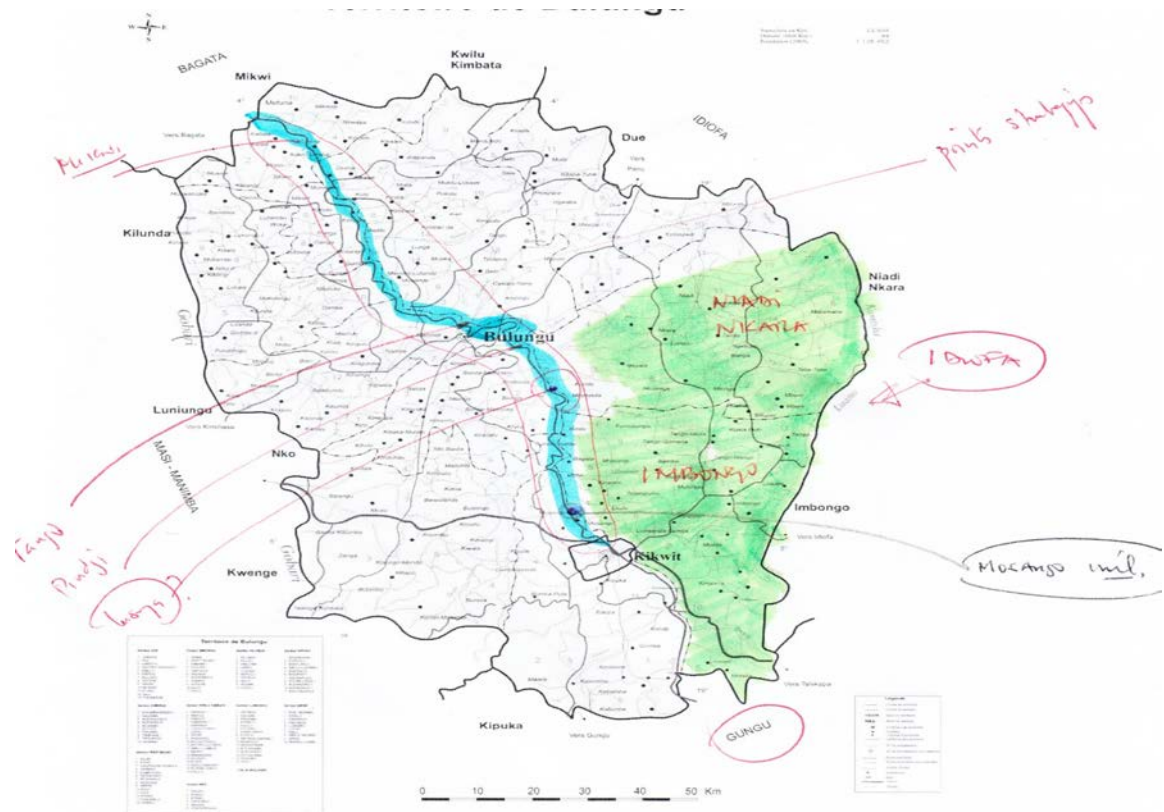
in the “psychology of lying.” They had the power of making final judgements. Their power acknowledged no other power if only the one carried by their direct supervisors.

In 1967, the persistence of the rebellion led to the intensification of control and surveillance by the local authorities over strategic locations. The authorities ordered the erection of barriers in the entire periphery. In a letter from the district Commissioner of Kwilu to the administrator of Bulungu, the modalities of the new rules were clearly expressed:

In order to prevent a possible crossing by Mulele—who, it seems to me, wants to reach the left bank of the Kwilu river and create the situation that other parts of the Kwilu region have lived through—I demand that you urgently inform the heads of the Niadi, Kipuka, Nko, Luinungu and Kwilu sectors about the measures to take: ‘the erection of barriers between sectors and villages; the checking of identity by the police of *Circonscriptions Indigènes* which will stay in front of each barrier; the removal after usage of all the canoes along the Kwilu river from Tango to Kiyaka-Mosango.’ The heads of these sectors are required to meet with the sector council in order to let them know about these measures and to warn the population. The villagers must denounce the presence of rebels in their villages. They must, without delay, erect barriers on all routes that have access to the left bank of Kwilu river, such as Kintwala, Bulungu, Kibongo, Ambura, Ngwari-Ngwari, Kibundji, Kibongo, Mitshiakila, Mosango-Mangala, Ngweme, Mosango-Mazinga, Kimpata, Kikongo PLC, and Kiyaka-Basongo. The leaders must use all power at their disposal to obtain the cooperation of the population in order strongly to fight off this scourge which has been devastating the province for three years now.¹⁹³

¹⁹³ F. Malanga, “Lettre: traversée Pierre Mulele,” reel 11, box 8, folder 4, file F, doc. G67/5. Archives Conseil National. See also P. Maimasa, “Lettre: mesures sécuritaires, Bulungu, 5 novembre 1966,” reel 11, box 8, folder 3, file D, doc. G66/53. Archives Conseil National.

Figure 8: Prefecture of Bulungu: security barrier along the Kwilu river (blue) and zone monitored by the rebels (green)



Theoretically, all the authorities insisted on the peaceful regulation and monitoring of people at checkpoints in the periphery.¹⁹⁴ But the reality proved to be the opposite. In most cases, inspections in these areas were conducted brutally. Torture, punishment, and death as well as harm, injury, and pain inscribed themselves into the monitoring process. Pascal Atum, who fled from Mangaï to Kikwit via Leverville in 1965, remembers the ways in which these inspections were carried out between Mangaï and Leverville:

Our trip from Mangaï to Kikwit was marked by death threats. All along the journey, we were told that the rebels would not spend an hour without attacking a boat. As a result of these frequent attacks, the police decided to impose tight control over passengers moving from one location to another. Before we got to Leverville, we were told that the police officers had inspected a boat that was a few miles ahead of us. They had arrested some people whom they strongly believed to be rebels. These people were violently beaten up. After that, they were thrown into the river by the police officers. [...] To avoid

¹⁹⁴ A. Voiture, "Lettre: Affaire Mulele," reel 13, box 9, folder 4, file O, doc. F64/11. Archives Conseil National; and A. Voiture, "Lettre: traversée clandestine," reel 13, box 9, folder 4, file O, doc. F64/16. Archives Conseil National.

falling into the same trap, we were advised to get travel permits at Bilili. When we arrived at Leverville, we were checked one last time before our arrival in Kikwit. It was a firm and tight control.¹⁹⁵

During the rebellion Leverville was known as the site for the production of death.¹⁹⁶ At all checkpoints the *militaires* were driven by an obsession with seeing blood.¹⁹⁷ Nobody in this location could wake up in the morning without being notified of a murder that had occurred during the night.¹⁹⁸ No one could go to bed at night without having heard about such an assassination.¹⁹⁹ And nobody could spend the day without being notified of slaughters of innocent people by the *militaires*.²⁰⁰ When the atmosphere turned from bad to worse, the population decided to report its grievances to the provincial authorities. On 17 August 1964 they wrote:

Mr. Special Commissioner, a platoon of G.D. [*Gendarmerie*] from Kikwit, which is now located in Leverville since 5 April 1964 and led by warrant Mboliko, massacred many innocents. Among these are PLC workers. First, they killed four traders who were passing in two trucks and took their money. The two trucks are still here in Leverville. Second, they killed three PLC palm oil cutters who were bringing food to their wives at Leverville hospital. They said that these cutters were accompanied by a Mulelist [rebel] who, all of a sudden, fled [and disappeared into the bush]. Third, they killed two young men who came from Kikwit because, according to them, these people were Babunda. Fourth, on 13 August 1964, a T.O. [*Travailleur Ordinaire*, unskilled worker] PLC was killed at night and his body thrown into the Kwilu river because he was preventing several of them from raping his wife. In conclusion, [...] the military are here in Leverville [only] to kill and not to protect [the population]. Moreover, [...] they often say that they came [to Leverville] to protect the PLC facilities and not the population. [...] The same *militaires* have imposed a curfew in Leverville from 7 pm to 5 am, from 22 April [1964] until today, 14 August [1964]. During the curfew hours, every man they find is [...] killed and thrown into the Kwilu river. Who should be feared, the Mulelists or the *militaires*? We do not have any protection in

¹⁹⁵ Pascal Atum (67 years old), oral interview, Kinshasa, 2 October 2013. See also Baudouin-Gauthier Kyhila, "Rapport sur la jeunesse muleliste – arrondissement d'Elomo 8 février 1964," reel 12, box 8, folder 8, file I, doc. B0168 (no 220 affaire Mulele), p. 4. Archives Conseil National; and Verhaegen, *Rébellions...*, p. 76.

¹⁹⁶ Pascal Atum (67 years old), oral interview, Kinshasa, 2 October 2013.

¹⁹⁷ Ernest Kiangu (57 years old), oral interview, Kinshasa, 20 September 2013.

¹⁹⁸ Nganguila and B. Nsampwele, "Lettre: Massacre des innocents à Leverville par les G.D. de Kikwit. Leverville le 17 août 1964," reel 12, box 8, folder 9, file I, doc. B0208. Archives Conseil National.

¹⁹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰⁰ Ibid.

Leverville. We ask the authorities to take the necessary measures to prevent such massacres and change the curfew to 10 o'clock in the evening.²⁰¹

Figure 9: Centralising where the river can be crossed: a passage across Kwilu river monitored by the police²⁰²



Two months before, grisly scenes had already occurred in Leverville.²⁰³ Traders holding identity documents and passes in good and due form were brutally slaughtered.²⁰⁴ They had been accused of being in contact with the rebels, “financing” rebel activities and sabotaging the efforts undertaken by the government to re-establish peace throughout the region. They were accused of being Mbuun, those who incarnate violence, because they were foreigners to Leverville, as this account shows:

²⁰¹ Ngangula and B. Nsampwele, “Lettre: Massacre des innocents à Leverville par les G.D. de Kikwit. Leverville le 17 août 1964,” reel 12, box 8, folder 9, file I, doc. B0208. Archives Conseil National.

²⁰² Photo by Reverend Father Albert Dussard, ca.1964. Ernest Kiangu’s private collection, Kinshasa.

²⁰³ Innocent Loso and Jean-Roger, “Procès verbal sur l’assassinat Bapi Marcel et consort,” reel 13, box 9, folder 5, file O, doc. F64/41A. Archives Conseil National.

²⁰³ Ibid.

²⁰⁴ Ibid.

After arriving at Bukiombo, Mr. Mungwele, without saying any word, got into his vehicle and headed to the ferry where he came from. A jeep full of *militaires* was ahead of him. His [vehicle], however, was following right behind the *militaires'* jeep. On board was an unknown lieutenant, Warrant Sumbili, and Augustin Mungwele. Mr. Mungwele presented to the *militaires* merchandises he had confiscated from the traders. He told the *militaires* that the merchandise was designed to feed the youths [rebels]. He added that these traders [who held all the passes required, issued by the Special Commissioner and countersigned by the National Army], were themselves youths. All of a sudden, instructions were given to the *militaires*. First, they had to beat the four merchants. Then they had to take them with them. [After beating] Marcel Bapi, Nestor Banga, the driver and Nestor Banga's conveyor, they [the *militaires*] forced them to get into the jeep. They took them with them. [...]. [They] followed the road up to the ferry. From there they took the Kikwit road. When they arrived at the Mission Bea cemetery, they left their driver behind. One of the *militaires* drove the jeep into the unknown. After few minutes, they came back, picked up their driver [...] and returned to Leverville. The four men were gone [they had been killed].²⁰⁵

This is how the lives of “others,” those who were foreigners to a location, were easily eliminated, thus transforming the entire area into a site of friction: a site wherein forces of low magnitude were continuously swallowed up by forces of powerful magnitude. Borrowing from the repertoires of ideas and stereotypes which arose and spread widely across the region because of Mulele, the forces of powerful magnitude could construct and re-construct at will the forces of low magnitude, the foreigners. These ideas were based, most extensively, in the equation: foreigner=Mbuun=rebel=Mulele supporter. This mode of reasoning echoed, to a certain degree, what Eric Fassin and his colleagues have called “the politics of scapegoating” in the context of the Romani in Europe.²⁰⁶ The above account from the Kwilu administrative archives shows that the traders were killed in the periphery not because they lacked identification papers, but because they were, at first glance, identified as foreigners,²⁰⁷ a radical otherness. They were foreigners in so far as they were Mbuun, the brothers of Mulele. This is the reason why the *militaires*, as well as the authorities, treated them “inhumanly” without losing their own sense of

²⁰⁵ Innocent Loso and Jean-Roger, “Procès verbal sur l’assassinat Bapi Marcel et consort,” reel 13, box 9, folder 5, file O, doc. F64/41A. Archives Conseil National.

²⁰⁶ See Eric Fassin and al., *Roms & riverains: Une politique municipale de la race*, Paris: La Fabrique, 2014; and Jean-François Arnichand, “Eric Fassin: Les Roms servent de boucs émissaires,” <http://www.lamarseillaise.fr/bouches-du-rhone/societe/32182-titre-par-defaut>. Accessed on 27 April 2016.

²⁰⁷ Innocent Loso and Jean-Roger, “Procès verbal sur l’assassinat Bapi Marcel et consort,” reel 13, box 9, folder 5, file O, doc. F64/41A. Archives Conseil National.

humanity.²⁰⁸ When the “Mbuun thesis” was no longer acceptable, the *militaires* and the authorities brought to life new ways of constructing the other: they are the traders, those who came to the periphery.

The suffering inflicted on others in the periphery was conducted not only by the authorities and those it called on to implement the arbitrary rights of sovereign power. Local populations also contributed to the suffering through the policy of the “collective hunt.”²⁰⁹ Imposed by local administrations, this policy to a large extent resembled colonial counter-insurgency practices pursued by the British in Malaysia²¹⁰ and Kenya,²¹¹ and the French and the Americans in Vietnam in the 1950s and 1960s. It consisted in organizing armed patrols in the immediate surroundings of rebel-controlled areas.²¹² All the “villagers” of Bulungu, Kikwit and Masi-Manimba were forced to

²⁰⁸ Eric Fassin, “La question rom,” in Eric Fassin and al., *Roms & riverains: Une politique municipale de la race*, Paris: La Fabrique, 2014, p. 40.

²⁰⁹ L. Fumuseke, “Lettre: lutte contre les milices privées,” reel12, box 8, folder 6, file H, doc. B0099. Archives Conseil National. See also Mumb, “Lettre, 21 mai 1964,” reel 1, box 1, doc. 332. Archives Conseil National; Raphael Kuteba, “Lettre,” reel 2, box 1, doc. 00870. Archives Conseil National; David Lenda, “Lettre, 18 mai 1964,” reel 4, box 3, doc. 2324. Archives Conseil National; and Venant Subadi and Bernard Kubekela, “Lettre,” reel 4, box 3, doc. 2315. Archives Conseil National.

²¹⁰ See Tim N. Harper, *The End of Empire and the Making of Malaya*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999; Walter C. Ladwig, “Managing Counterinsurgency: Lessons from Malaya,” *Military Review* 87, 3 (2007), pp. 56-66; Thomas R. Mockaitis, *British Counterinsurgency: 1919-60*, London: Macmillan Press, 1990; Richard Stubbs, *Hearts and Minds in Guerrilla Warfare: The Malayan Emergency 1948-1960*, Singapore: Oxford University Press, 1989; and R. Thompson, *Defeating Communist Insurgency: The Lessons of Malaya and Vietnam*, New York: F. A. Praeger, 1966.

²¹¹ See John A. McConnell, “The British in Kenya (1952-1960): Analysis of a Successful Counterinsurgency Campaign,” Master thesis, Defense Analysis, Naval Postgraduate School, June 2005, <http://www.dtic.mil/dtic/tr/fulltext/u2/a435532.pdf>; Patricia Owens, *Economy of Force: Counterinsurgency and the Rise of the Social*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015; and Huw Bennet, *Fighting the Mau-Mau: The British Army and Counter-Insurgency in the Kenya Emergency*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013.

²¹² L. Fumuseke, “Lettre: lutte contre les milices privées,” reel12, box 8, folder 6, file H, doc. B0099. Archives Conseil National. The idiom of “collective hunt” was later used in the Rwandan genocide in 1994 to mobilize people. See Charles Mironko’s works on this topic: “Ibitero: Means and Motive in the Rwandan Genocide,” *African Safety Promotion* 4, 2 (2006), pp. 59-77; “Social and Political Mechanisms of Mass Murder: An Analysis of Perpetrators in the Rwandan Genocide,” Ph.D. thesis, Yale University, 2004.

participate in these “collective hunts.”²¹³ The heads of sectors and chiefs of villages who refused to get involved were deported, as during the colonial period.²¹⁴

“Collective hunts” led to the construction of barriers at strategic points controlled by the local population. In these locations, the interception of the enemy relied on the principle of belonging or non-belonging to the contested zone.²¹⁵ Energies were constantly mobilized to contain the other, the “foreign body.” Those who passed through these checkpoints were metaphorically called “contagious people.”²¹⁶ Jules Bipele, whose parents suffered terrible abuse in the vicinity of Kikwit in 1964, remembers these logics of interception:

One day we saw people coming in a hurry from Mosango-Mangala to Mitshiakila. Everyone wanted to go home, so were we also obliged to flee. At the time, we were four children. My mother was pregnant and was about to give birth. We folded up our luggage and fled. [...] We got to Kikongo only to find that the villagers had erected a firm barrier to filter out all those who passed through. My mother said to me: ‘There is no other alternative here. Let us go face them.’ We went through the barrier as all other people. To our great surprise, my mother was arrested while other people passed through smoothly. Those who were checking people at the barrier said to my mother: ‘Look at you, the teacher’s wife. You are a rebel like your own husband. [...] Today, we will not let you pass through.’ [...] They did not want to let my mother pass through because of my father. My father was a teacher at Mitshiakila. And for the Mitshiakila people and those of the vicinity, my father was a rebel.

²¹³ L. Fumuseke, “Lettre: lutte contre les milices privées,” reel 12, box 8, folder 6, file H, doc. B0099. Archives Conseil National; Directeur provincial chargé de l’intérieur, “Lettre du 8 septembre 1964. Milices privées,” reel 12, box 8, folder 9, file I, doc. B0204. Archives Conseil National; and Donatien Nagadala, (71 years old), oral interview, Kinshasa, 1 October 2013. Donatien Nagadala was in charge of “collective hunts” in Kisunzu in the prefecture of Masi-Manimba.

²¹⁴ L. Fumuseke, “Lettre: lutte contre les milices privées,” reel 12, box 8, folder 6, file H, doc. B0099. Archives Conseil National. On deportation during the colonial era, see Nancy Rose Hunt, *A Nervous State: Violence, Remedies, and Reverie in Colonial Congo*, Durham: Duke University Press, 2016, pp. 70-72; Ndaywel e Nziem, *Histoire générale du Congo...*, pp. 416-428; Anne Mélice, “La désobéissance civiles des Kimbanguistes et la violence coloniale au Congo Belge (1921-1959),” *Les temps modernes* 2, 658-659 (2010), pp. 218-250; Anne Mélice, “Kimbangu,” in Prem Poddar et al. (eds.), *A Historical Companion to Postcolonial Literatures in Continental Europe and its Empires*, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2008, pp. 33-35; Jean-Luc Vellut (ed.), *Simon Kimbangu, 1921: de la prédication à la déportation. Les sources*, vol. 1, Bruxelles: Académie royale des sciences d’Outre-Mer, 2005; M.-M. Munyani, “La déportation et le séjour des kimbanguistes dans le Kasai-Lukenie (1921-1960),” *Zaire-Afrique*, 119 (November 1977), pp. 555-573; P.-L. Plasman, “Le gouvernement bicéphale de l’Etat indépendant du Congo et le *red rubber*,” in P. Van Schuylenberg et al. (eds.), *L’Afrique belge aux XIXe et XXe siècles. Nouvelles recherches et perspectives en histoire coloniale*, Bruxelles: Peter Lang, 2014, pp. 131-144; and Simon Verreycken, “Exilé dans son propre pays. Autour de la colonie agricole d’Ekafera, 1945–1960,” *Parentèses* (17 August 2015), <http://parentese.hypotheses.org/929>, Accessed on 1 May 2016.

²¹⁵ Jules Bipele (55 years old), oral interview, Kikwit, 15 October 2013. He was six years old when the rebellion broke out.

²¹⁶ Ibid.

[He was a rebel] because he was from [the contested] zone. [...] They wanted him killed, as well as my mother. [...] It took a long time to convince the people at checkpoint. [...] This is what we experienced. [...] After having released my mother, we walked up to Nsama Nsama. [...] While we were getting ready to sleep at Nsama Nsama and go the next day to Nkara, where we belonged, a group of late-comers told my mother that the Kikongo inhabitants were about to follow us. [...] They said they should not have let my mother go, because she was the teacher's wife, the rebel. Instead of sleeping at Nsama Nsama and continue the next day to Nkara, we walked up to Kwilumpia, the last village that bordered the area under the rebel control. A few days later, we were obliged to cross the forest and get to the rebel zone.²¹⁷

This is how the others, the foreigners, were constantly objectified in the periphery, because they belonged to the contested zone.

“Refugee camp” as a site of exclusion

Collective memory in the Kwilu region does not recognize the existence of any organized “refugee camps.” It does, however, recognize the presence of reception facilities that were called “welcome centres.”²¹⁸ Located mainly in the Catholic and Protestant missions, these centres were strewn across the periphery from early January 1964 onwards when the rebellion broke out. As the government was regaining control of the region, these centres became part of the contested zone, thanks to their mission of pacification and the National Army's assistance. In the prefecture of Gungu, refugees were gathered at Kingabunene, Kikombo, Kasamba, Kasandji, Mangole, Mukwatshi, Kabala, Kilembe and Kikunga.²¹⁹ In the prefecture of Idiofa, however, two centres have inscribed their names in provincial history because of their bad reputation: Kimpata Eku and Mbantsamba.

²¹⁷ Jules Bipele (55 years old), oral interview, Kikwit, 15 October 2013.

²¹⁸ Refugee camps existed, but under the name of *Centre d'Accueil* (welcome centres). See Laurent Monnier, “La province de Bandundu,” in B. Verhaegen and al. (eds), *Congo 1966*, Bruxelles: CRISP, 1967, p. 301. In this chapter, I use refugee camp and welcome centre interchangeably.

²¹⁹ The list is not exhaustive. See R. M[b]onge, “Lettre: situation confuse,” reel 11, box 8, folder 2, file D, doc. G65/9. Archives Conseil National; Ph. Makulu, “Lettre: distribution alimentaire aux sortants du bois de Kazamba (15 mai 1965),” reel 11, box 8, folder 2, file D, doc. G65/11. Archives Conseil National; Philippe Makulu, “Rapport succinct relatif à la mission de pacification dans la région de Mulikalunga,” reel 11, box 8, folder 2, file D, docs. G65/ 12A-12B. Archives Conseil National; and B. Labakuwana, “Rapport du 1er quinzaine relative aux sortants de bois du 1 au 15/ 4/ 1965, Kazamba, le 15/ 4/ 1965,” reel 11, box 8, folder 2, file D, doc. G64/15. Archives Conseil National.

The living conditions of the refugees in these welcome centres were appalling. In a report of July 1964 on the situation of the Mulelists in the Mulikalunga sector, the delegate of the mission of pacification for this region noted with indignation that the physical relocation of people during the rebellion posed serious problems. He strongly deplored the lack of consideration for the suffering experienced by these refugees. Speaking of 700 refugees from Mulikalunga who were relocated to Kisunzu, a camp of about eleven large houses,²²⁰ the delegate reported in March 1964 that they were claiming their right to being treated humanely, in light of being subjected to drudgery and public works without payment.²²¹ The same delegate wrote another letter to the special commissioner about the same refugees in September 1964, pointing out the continuing degradation of their living conditions. The refugees put forward a proposal for how they could best be divided and distributed across the government area so that they would be living close to related clans, and thus not be regarded as strangers and treated with indifference or hostility:

I have the honour to present to you this brief but accurate report, for which I would like your support to save lives. During the peacekeeping mission in the prefecture of Gungu, I took the opportunity to go up to Kisunzu, accompanied by Mr. *Préfet* of Gungu. When we arrived at Kisunzu, the capital of Mayamba sector, I found that there were 653 refugees from the Mulikalunga villages [living there]. These refugees were concentrated in the capital of the sector. When I approached them, they said this to me: ‘Here we are four clans, which are Mbanza, Kaseme, Kingulu and Mbwishi. It would be great if you distribute us as follows: the Mbanza clan goes to the villages Sese-Kidinda and Wenze, in the Muliwamba sector, [...] where there is peace. The Kaseme clan goes to the Kaseme clan in Mungamba village in the Muliniati sector. The Kingulu clan goes to the Kingulu clan in Kingulu village in Kibongo sector; or a part of this clan goes to Sese Kidinda, another to Mungamba and Mbata-Kapokoto or Kanga-Ndjari. Finally, the Mbwishi clan goes to the Wenze village in the Muliwamba sector where there is peace.’²²²

Some of them said to the same delegate:

²²⁰ Each of them had one to twelve beds. See Eugène Kanga, “Rapport administratif,” reel 12, box 8, folder 8, file I, doc. B0199. Archives Conseil National.

²²¹ Ibid. At Lutshima, for example, the refugees were requisitioned for road maintenance. See Urbain Gimafu, “Rapport administratif sur les événements des milices privées au mois de mars 1964 dans l’arrondissement de Lutshima/ Gungu,” reel 12, box 8, folder 8, file I, doc. B0178. Archives Conseil National.

²²² Anonymous, “Rapport administrative,” reel 12, box 8, folder 9, file I, doc. B0205. Archives Conseil National.

If we are split in this way, we will be saved from death which is at our doorstep. At Kisunzu, we are told that they do not want us. Therefore they cannot take care of us when it comes to medication and food. In Kikwit, there are also refugees. Are they treated the same way we are being treated here? Please save us. We were not the rebels. [...] We are refugees from Mulikalunga sector. [...] We were 730 when we were brought here. Now our number has decreased because we are dying. The living conditions that are being imposed on us [...] do not allow us to hope for life. By this we mean that we are suffering significantly from our brothers who are in authority here. It is very hard to find something to eat. We are refugees, we lack everything, but the people of the region sell manioc to us very expensively. We do not even have money to buy it. [The local authorities] arrest us every day for unjustified reasons. They handcuff us. They tie us up [...], legs and arms linked together. We build houses for the sector without getting paid. Only the few of us who know how to pick fruits are allowed to go and pick them at Sampendro. We are suffering from all kinds of abuse. Many of us are sick, but they do not receive medical care. [...] The children are very weak. They are no longer showing any sign of life. Seeing all this suffering, we are asking the higher authorities to help us once and for all. We ask that they split us in the brother villages listed above. There we will be able to live in small numbers. We will freely find our way and enough to eat, instead of leaving us crammed in here without taking care of our eating and our health.²²³

From these long accounts, one conclusion in particular can be drawn. The violence of the rebellion burst the mental, spatial, and temporal frameworks by which refugees used to make sense of their lives and introduced ruptures, a process accompanied by physical displacement. The exclusion that they were subjected to in Kisunzu shows, in many ways, how deep these ruptures were. To be a refugee in this location was synonymous with having no value as a human being.²²⁴ It was synonymous with being viewed as quintessentially untrustworthy. As we can see from the accounts above, displaced people were discredited, both by local authorities and by the wider population. They were treated as rubbish, as things intended to be thrown away. They were relegated to the bottom of the “economy of waste,” as if their lives belonged to the scrap heap. The following words from the refugees themselves are clear enough to show the extent of this relegation: “we are told that they do not want us.”²²⁵ As a result, “they cannot take care of us when it comes to medication and food.”²²⁶

²²³ Anonymous, “Rapport administrative,” reel 12, box 8, folder 9, file I, doc. B0205. Archives Conseil National.

²²⁴ Ibid.

²²⁵ Ibid.

²²⁶ Ibid.

The situation of the refugees in Kisunzu was significantly different from that of the Nazi extermination camps in Europe.²²⁷ What was at stake here was a “bio-politics of exclusion,” a concept that emerges from the “the logic of disguised disposal,” of which the driving principle was “never letting them live, without letting them die” (*ne pas laisser vivre, sans pour autant faire mourir*).²²⁸ A close reading of the refugees’ accounts shows that there was no need for the authorities and local populations to chase them physically from their town. They acted in such a way that they made life unbearable for the hundreds of refugees living in their town so that the latter, after becoming aware of the harshness of life, would willingly return to where they had come from. The townspeople did not want to give the refugees any food.²²⁹ When refugees wanted to buy goods, prices went up.²³⁰ When they got sick, they could not get any treatment, because their status as refugees automatically excluded them from the medical system. Faced with these forms of exclusion, the refugees could do no better than exclude themselves from Kisunzu. First they gave up their initial project of reconstructing the logics which, *a priori*, would help them domesticate the situations in which they found themselves and live accordingly. Secondly, they decided to articulate a proposal for how they could best be distributed over the landscape so that they would no longer be subjected to hostility. This is to show how, in this region, the refugees were foremost, in Foucault’s words,

²²⁷ On the Nazi camps, see Kim Wünschmann, *Before Auschwitz: Jewish Prisoners in the Prewar Concentration Camps*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2015; Jürgen Graf and Carlo Mattogno, *Concentration Camp Stutthof and its Function in National Socialist Jewish Policy*, Chicago: Theses and Dissertation Press, 2003; Jane Caplan and Nikolaus Wachsmann (eds), *Concentration Camps in Nazi Germany: The New Histories*, London: Routledge, 2010; Giorgio Agamben, “The Camp as the Nomos of the Modern,” in Hent de Vries and Samuel Weber (eds), *Violence, Identity, and Self-Determination*, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997, pp. 106–118; Giorgio Agamben, *Remnants of Auschwitz: The Witness and the Archive*, trans. Daniel Heller Roazen, New York: Zone Books, 1999; Karyn Ball, *Disciplining the Holocaust*, New York: State University of New York Press, 2009; Ian Kershaw, *Hitler, the Germans, and the Final Solution*, New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2008; and Maria Muhle, “Biopolitique et pouvoir souverain,” *Lignes* 3, 9 (2002), pp. 178–193.

²²⁸ See Fassin, “La question rom,” p. 70.

²²⁹ Anonymous, “Rapport administrative,” reel 12, box 8, folder 9, file I, doc. B0205. Archives Conseil National.

²³⁰ *Ibid.* A decision was taken by the High Commissioner according to which manioc should have been harvested in all the villages for the refugees. The villagers, however, were reluctant. They saw in this decision a new form of “colonization.” On 13 January 1965, Roger Kikungulu, one of the villagers, asked: “Do we have any other wealth than these maniocs that you are taking for free? How are we going to pay taxes if you take them for free?” See P. Soluka and Boniface Fils Musumary, “Procès verbal de la réunion d’entente des ressortissants du secteur de Kipuka en sa séance du 3 janvier 1965,” reel 12, box 8, folder 10, file I, doc. B0236, p. 5. Archives Conseil National.

“animal(s)” whose politics continuously placed their “existence as [...] living being(s) in question.”²³¹

According to Eugenie Mpungu, who went through a similar experience in Lukamba, the project of life she dreamed of became increasingly unrealizable in such conditions of exclusion and rejection. The new forms of injustices that were systematically placed on her and her fellows in the welcome centres made all vital strategies difficult. As a result, she constantly projected herself into her imagination, thinking and re-thinking the pain she was facing in the centre to which she had been forced to relocate. She questioned the meaning of her existence and would show feelings of desolation and psychological breakdown. But above all, she would think, exactly as the Kisunzu refugees, about the possibilities and hopes of a better life elsewhere:

It was so hard to live there. [...] Suffering was stuck on my skin. From time to time I wondered if those who had sought refuge in Kilembe, Kisandji, Kikombo, [...] Mbatsamba, Kimpata Eku, Gungu or Kikwit also lived in the same conditions as we were living.²³²

One question that should be asked here is to what extent these welcome centres, to which Eugenie Mpungu alluded, constituted exceptions or were the rule. There is evidence that the living condition of refugees in these centres was not better than elsewhere. At the time an economic crisis that was hitting the country as a whole grew dramatically in the Kwilu region.²³³ Provincial revenues were continuously decreasing. There was also significant mismanagement of the province which had an additional impact on the provincial finances. In 1966, for example, the provincial revenues

²³¹ Michel Foucault, *The Will to Knowledge: History of Sexuality*, trans. Robert Hurley, vol.1, London: Penguin Books, 1998, p. 143. See also Fassin, “La question rom,” p. 67.

²³² Eugenie Mpungu, (75 years old), oral interview, Kwanga Carrefour, 20 October 2013.

²³³ Monnier, “La province de Bandundu,” p. 300. On the effects of this crisis on a national level between 1960 and 1965, see Hugues Leclerq, “La situation financière et monétaire au Congo,” *Présence Universitaire*, 11 (April 1962), pp. 30-32; Jean-Philippe Peemans, *Le Congo-Zaïre au gré du XXe siècle. Etat, économie et société*, Paris, L’Harmattan, 1997, pp. 226, 230, 232-233; Anonymous, “Editorial,” *Présence Universitaire*, 11 (January 1963), pp. 3-10; F. Herman, “La situation économique et financière de la République du Congo depuis l’indépendance,” *Etudes Congolaises*, 1 (mars 1961), pp. 13-19; F. Herman, “La situation économique et financière de la République du Congo durant le premier trimestre de 1961,” *Etudes Congolaise*, 2 (May-June 1961), pp. 15-25; M.-L. Nkuba, “Aventures et mésaventures de la bourgeoisie nationale,” *Présence Universitaire*, 15 (mars-avril 1964), pp. 33-48; B.Z., “Traitements, grèves et politique d’austérité,” *Etudes Congolaises*, 5 (1962), pp. 1-32; and Z. Mukwakani, “Réflexions sur le mouvement des salaires au Congo depuis 1960,” *Congo-Afrique*, 36 (June-July 1969), pp. 350-355.

amounted to roughly 3 million Congolese francs per month.²³⁴ Yet 86 million Congolese francs were required per month to pay the political institutions and all the public servants, whose actual numbers overflowed, while the monthly available amount of resources of the province was only about 53 million Congolese francs.²³⁵ It followed from this situation that the province was not even able to pay all of its staff on a monthly basis.²³⁶ To take care of the refugees, the authorities had to rely on the central government and on international institutions such as the Red Cross or Caritas-Congo.²³⁷ Aid from the central government consisted mainly of salted fish, clothing, and medicines.²³⁸ Yet, back in 1965, the head of the Kilembe *circonscription* (district) wrote a letter to the physician-director of Gungu to report that there had been a disruption in the distribution of clothes and food to the refugees of his jurisdiction. He strongly denounced the forms of exclusion that the refugees were subjected to:

Mr. Director of the hospital, who among you has the animal attitude that leads them to ignore the meaning of the word “refugee”? I am truly appalled to see the ways in which you are treating the population of my C.I. [*Circonscription Indigène*]. [...] Long before, the refugees were receiving all kinds of goods which they could use: clothes, including something to live for. But now they have virtually received nothing. We must again charge them 10 francs before their daily treatment. This practice shows how lightly you treat the refugees. While the same population is wearing raffia in place of clothes, [...] it makes soap with potash, [...] eats poorly, you, however, have no pity for them! In such shabby conditions, Mr. Director of the hospital, [...] I would ask you to suspend sending medication in my district because I understand how much these refugees are subjected to exclusion.²³⁹

In Kasamba and Kasandji, two large welcome centres held a total of 2,285 refugees in 1965; 445 of them (19.5 %) were weak. Most of them suffered from swelling of the feet and bloated stomachs. It was also reported that they were malnourished.²⁴⁰ In

²³⁴ Monnier, “La province de Bandundu,” p. 300.

²³⁵ Ibid.

²³⁶ Ibid.

²³⁷ Philippe Lepage, “Quelques données sur la situation familiale et sanitaire des réfugiés et sortants de la forêt de mission Kikombo, le 26 avril 1965,” reel 13, box 9, folder 7, file M, doc. [s.n]. Archives Conseil National; Anonymous, “Rapport administratif,” reel 11, box 8, folder 2, file D, docs. G65/12A-12B. Archives Conseil National; and Monnier, “La province de Bandundu,” p. 301.

²³⁸ Monnier, “La province de Bandundu,” p. 301.

²³⁹ Anonymous, “Lettre,” reel 11, box 8, folder 2, file D, doc. G65/24. Archives Conseil National.

²⁴⁰ Anonymous, “Rapport administratif,” reel 11, box 8, folder 2, file D, docs. G65/12A-12 B. Archives Conseil National.

Kazamba, a welcome centre located in Gungu, there were at least five deaths per day.²⁴¹ In Mbantsamba, where the population of Lukamba was concentrated, many families suspected to have contacts with the Mulele clan were exterminated.²⁴² In Kimpata Eku, where most refugees were from Matende, Banda, Kimbanda and Yassa-Lokwa, starvation and military abuse killed many of them.²⁴³ In Kikombo, a welcome centre located in the south-west of Lukamba, the conditions were dismal. The findings of a survey conducted between March and April 1965 by Reverend Philippe Lepage of the Kikombo Catholic mission were not encouraging. He recorded that the physical and psychological conditions of the refugees were bad and severe respectively.²⁴⁴ In February, March and April 1965, 239 patients were transported to the hospital in Kikwit, many of them in desperate condition. Lepage anticipated the death of thirty of them shortly after their arrival at the hospital.²⁴⁵ At the mission, the mortality rate reached alarming proportions. Most deaths took place in the last term of 1964 and during February and March 1965. This led to the assumption that the people of this region had reached the limits of their physical resistance.²⁴⁶ In 1966, a report by students of the Université Lovanium who spent time in the region was heartbreaking:

Seeing this army of living skeletons, one feels like in the country of bad dreams, or on a planet other than earth. In the seemingly uninhabited huts, a poignant spectacle awaits you: here the whole family lies on the mat; there a widow sits on the floor, holding a baby in her arms; and there, a couple lives

²⁴¹ Anonymous, "Rapport administratif," reel 11, box 8, folder 2, file D, docs. G65/12A-12 B. Archives Conseil National.

²⁴² Martens, *Abo...*, p. 207.

²⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 147.

²⁴⁴ Philippe Lepage, "Quelques données sur la situation familiale et sanitaire des réfugiés et sortants de la forêt de mission Kikombo, le 26 avril 1965," reel 13, box 9, folder 7, file M, doc. [s.n]. Archives Conseil National. At Imbongo, the situation was not better either. On 5 January 1965, Barthelemy Banganga, the head of peacekeeping mission for the Imbongo, wrote this to Francis Mangala, the provincial director of AIPRO (Affaires Interieures Provinciales): "Today, 148 people are here at the capital of secteur Imbongo. Unfortunately we are running out of medicines to treat the patients. [...]. It is pitiful to see how people are sick here, especially children[!]." Barthelemy Banganga, "Lettre de Barthelemy-G. Banganga," reel 12, box 8, folder 10, file I, doc. B0235. Archives Conseil National.

²⁴⁵ Philippe Lepage, "Quelques données sur la situation familiale et sanitaire des réfugiés et sortants de la forêt de mission Kikombo, le 26 avril 1965," reel 13, box 9, folder 7, file M, doc. [s.n]. Archives Conseil National.

²⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

their last moments. When they saw us, these starving people dragged behind us, their last hope.²⁴⁷

In 1967 and 1968 it was this same “army of living skeletons” that was summoned by the *militaires* for the construction of military camps. When the administrator of Gungu refused this, the commander of the 19th Battalion of the 7th Military Company wrote a letter of complaint on 14 December 1967 in which he threatened to replace the *militaires* on the front line with local authorities:

Mr. Administrator, in response to your letter no.2012/67 of 4 December 1967, I cannot see any reason why you should forbid the regional of Lozo from sending the villagers to Kilembe to build houses for the *militaires*. Is it because the *militaires* do not do anything [?] [...] You should understand and know unwaveringly the importance of the mission we are called to fulfil here. If the camp had already been built, I would not come back to this. Tell me whether it is fair or not to accommodate the *militaires* and their families outdoor or in houses not yet covered with straw. If we are here, it is because we want to maintain order, peace, justice and ensure that freedom is guaranteed to everyone. [...] I urge to say to the heads of sectors and the regionals [...] to erect barriers temporary or a period of two months only [and contain the rebels]. After they have erected these barriers, I am going to withdraw all the *militaires* and ask them [the *militaires*] to come build their houses and put their families at the shelter. Once the construction of the camp is over, they will regain their operational positions.²⁴⁸

Following this threat, the chief of Kilembe sector wrote to his counterparts in Gudi and Lozo on 9 January 1968. He asked them to put at the disposal of the military of Kilembe four villages of their jurisdictions to repair the military houses.²⁴⁹ On 13 January 1968, the head of Lozo sector responded affirmatively to his counterpart in Kilembe:

Mr. Head of sector, I write with reference to your letter no. 6/L. 21/68 of 9 January 1968, addressed to his Excellency Head of Gudi sector, whose copy was reserved. I have the honour of putting at your disposal four villages from my area to repair the military houses at Kilembe [...]. The people in the villages designated for this work have to work for one week only [...] [because

²⁴⁷ Isidore Ndaywel è Nziem, “La vie quotidienne à Lovanium (1963-1969),” in Isidore Ndaywel è Nziem (ed.), *Les années Lovanium: La première université francophone d’Afrique subsaharienne*, vol. 2, Paris: L’Harmattan, 2010, p. 70. On the Lovanium student mission in the region, see Isidore Ndaywel è Nziem, “L’université et les rebellions mulélistes: lectures d’un vécu,” in Isidore Ndaywel è Nziem (ed.), *L’université dans le devenir de l’Afrique: Un demi-siècle de présence au Congo-Zaïre*, Paris: L’Harmattan, 2007, pp. 89-92.

²⁴⁸ Patrice Epengola, “Lettre,” reel 11, box 8, folder 4, file F, doc. G67/40. Archives Conseil National.

²⁴⁹ Anonymous, “Lettre,” reel 11, box 8, folder 4, file F, doc. G68/1. Archives Conseil National.

they] are also used for the activities of their sector, which is also in the midst of reconstruction.²⁵⁰

In Kikwit the situation was not any different. As in most welcome centres across the province, the treatment of refugees relied, firstly, upon the notion of exclusion. Secondly, it relied upon the conspiracy theory that they were deliberately conspiring to destroy the region and the country as a whole. They were treated as sub-humans, people without any rights, not even the right of movement.²⁵¹ The most striking case is that of the workers of Madail Firm who were refugees in Kikwit in 1964. Based on a conspiracy theory put forward by the very owner of the company, the urban administration denied them the right of movement in the city. In a confidential letter by the police commissioner of Kikwit to the chief of police commissioner, one can see how these theories were constructed below the surface:

Mr. Commissioner of Police-in-Chief, I have the honour of bringing to your attention that today, around 11:15 a.m., I received a delegation of workers of Madail, refugees from Lutshima, who was represented by Mr. José Oliveira. Mr. Oliveira asked me, on behalf of all the worker refugees, to give them certificates that would allow them to move freely within the city of Kikwit, given that during the disturbances at Lutshima some refugees had left their identity documents and other documents in their houses. [...]

To [this] request I replied that I could not issue a certificate to any of them because [...] many of their colleagues were among the [rebels] who [looted] Lutshima on 8 January 1964. They had themselves clearly noticed [that some of their colleagues belonged to the rebels] [...], but they did not do anything to stop them [their colleagues]. [...] They [these workers] were stupid enough to prefer to come to Kikwit and to ask for refuge, while those [...] who remained in Lutshima have never been attacked by the [rebels] until this day. [...] This proves, in many ways, that they knew in advance that the [rebels] would attack Lutshima. [...] Instead of arresting the [rebels] immediately—the number of rebels was lower than that of the workers: 60 [rebels] against 200 workers—these workers stupidly preferred to escape and seek refuge in Kikwit. [...]

For the problem of hunger experienced by these workers, [...] I myself went to the management of Madail Establishments. [...] Mr. Madail has categorically refused to provide any assistance to these workers [...]. [He] accused all of [them] [...] of complicity because they have refused to stop the [rebels], their own fellow workers, whom they themselves recognized very well. [...] In addition, he reminded his workers that ‘this is the reason why some of their colleagues on leave in Kikwit did not want to return to Lutshima at the end of

²⁵⁰ Pierre-Simon Mubunduku, “Lettre,” reel 11, box 8, folder 4, file F, doc. G68/2. Archives Conseil National.

²⁵¹ M. Lakubu (57 years old), oral interview, Kinshasa, 21 September 2013.

their leave.’ This corroborates the thesis of complicity put forward by Mr. Madail. That is the reason why I have categorically refused to issue any certificate of movement to any of these workers.²⁵²

This shows how the lives of refugees in this space were normalized on the basis of exclusion. What was striking in this process of exclusion was the way in which the supporting arguments were constructed to justify these forms of exclusion. In the case of the Madail workers, two logics were strongly played out. The first was a liberal logic according to which capital was worth more than workers: “Mr. Madail has categorically refused to provide any assistance to these workers that he describes as being bad because they have left his post at Lutshima to the [rebels] and his vehicles were then burnt by these [rebels].”²⁵³ The second logic, which seemed even worse than the first, was an attempt to justify the use of forced labour on the grounds of a state of emergency. The fact that workers were unpaid and allowed to starve to death was justified in terms of their moral culpability and intellectual inferiority.

The refusal to grant permits to these workers was, to a certain extent, a form of strategic elimination. Not only did this refusal make the refugees vulnerable, it also exposed them to the possibility of death. As in Kisunzu where the same forms of exclusion were enacted, the refugees in Kikwit were subjected to arbitrary arrests. Since they did not have identifying documents, they were submitted to multiple forms of capture in a city that lived under the regime of a curfew from December 1963 onwards.²⁵⁴ Eugide Kasay and M. Lakubu, former students of Catholic schools in Kikwit at the time of the rebellion, remember the curfew regime as well as the forms of capture that people were subjected to:

Kikwit was under a state of emergency. There were a lot of curfews. Nobody could walk after 6 pm. Those caught after 6 pm were arrested. They were put in a big truck called ‘marmot’ [...]. There was insecurity across the whole range of the city.²⁵⁵

The military swept away all those they found without papers. They would display their dead bodies around the city of Kikwit. This was to alert people

²⁵² Anonymous, “Rapport administrative (mécontentement firme Madail),” reel 12, box 8, folder 6, file H, doc. B0115. Archives Conseil National. Paragraphs introduced to enhance reading.

²⁵³ Ibid. Paragraphs introduced to enhance reading.

²⁵⁴ Gerard-Libois and Van Lierde, *Congo 1964*, p. 12.

²⁵⁵ Eugide Kasay (55 years old), oral interview, Kikwit, 14 October 2013.

that they should be wary of the rebellion. Everyone had to be with their family by 5 and 6 pm. My brother-in-law, José Labata, and my father, Lakubu, were arrested in Kikwit. They were violently beaten up. They were released thanks to Fernand Kompani who was the mayor in Kikwit during the rebellion.²⁵⁶

But paradoxically, being granted a permit of movement, which in legal terms promised official status as “refugee” and offered the possibility of inclusion, did not in itself guarantee inclusion in the city. It only gave a refugee the right to move throughout the city, despite being continuously exposed to all kinds of social exclusion. In other words, being given the official designation of “refugee” in this part of Congo was synonymous with becoming more vulnerable to abuse and social exclusion. The “bodies” of refugees were considered as sites *par excellence* that could be marked by inhumanity. Refugees could be approached and insulted easily.²⁵⁷ They could be seized and treated like objects without guilt or shame.²⁵⁸ They could be treated as unruly and outlawed without remorse.²⁵⁹ They could be treated as uprooted people or vagrants.²⁶⁰ They could be laughed at without compunction, as if they belonged to a different world, a world of nightmares.²⁶¹ They could be singled out and labelled as Mbuun without any problem.²⁶² Baudouin Matalatala, who spent almost his entire youth in Kikwit during the rebellion, remembers this dehumanizing treatment that refugees were subjected to:

Those who came from the [contested zone] were easily recognizable. Mostly they were people who spoke almost the same language: the Mbuun and the Pende. It was easy to identify them. [...] Most were people in a pitiful state. Children with bloated stomachs, completely pale and unable to consume the food they were given. I was wondering if some of them have died because of eating (*à force de manger*). It was hard to look at them twice. They lacked everything. They were like beasts. They had nothing, not even soap. When they wanted to bath, they would use leaves [...] Being considered a refugee was extremely pejorative. When they treated you like a *jeunesse* [youth], a refugee, [...] it meant to say that you were a rebel, an unruly, an outlaw. Everything was in there: someone without a mark; someone considered with

²⁵⁶ M. Lakubu (57 years old), oral interview, Kinshasa, 21 September 2013.

²⁵⁷ Viviane Dema (75 years old), oral interview, Kikwit, 1 November 2013. She was a long-term Kikwit resident when the rebellion broke out.

²⁵⁸ Prospère Mbwisi (66 years old), oral interview, Kikwit Sacré Coeur, 22 November 2013.

²⁵⁹ Baudouin Matalatala (57 years old), oral interview, Kinshasa, 30 September 2013.

²⁶⁰ M. Lakubu (57 years old), oral interview, Kinshasa, 21 September 2013, and Baudouin Matalatala (57 years old), oral interview, Kinshasa, 30 September 2013.

²⁶¹ Prospère Mbwisi (66 years old), oral interview, Kikwit Sacré Coeur, 22 November 2013.

²⁶² Baudouin Matalatala (57 years old), oral interview, Kinshasa, 30 September 2013.

pity; someone without value. I do not even want to elaborate more on that. But it was exactly that. [...] A refugee was someone who had no attachments; someone who came from somewhere and who was brought into another place. A refugee was [...] someone extremely thin, who lacked everything and who was ill-clothed. [...] They were uprooted people. [...] Psychologically, the term refugee used to harm people.²⁶³

The concern attached to the word refugee on the basis of banishment and exclusion led to horrific acts being perpetrated in most refugee centres. The major premise behind this argument was: “these people came from dark villages and, as such, they do not have any right of existence.” In 1964, an administrative officer at Niadi, a village located in the Bulungu prefecture, was confronted with this paradox. In his administrative report on the actions of the police on mission in Nkara, he showed clearly how refugees were subjected to cruel treatment because of their status as people from the contested zone:

In the morning of 13 July 1964, some inhabitants of Kwilumpia came to warn me that rifle shots had been heard on the side of Mosenge [...]. We were all curious and we were waiting for someone from Mbila to give us good details. At 3 p.m. precisely Jean Paulin [Kwiluandongo] of Kwilu-Milundu, a village occupied by the rebels, arrived. Kwiluandongo was a refugee at Mbila for more than three months. I preferred to meet him in person to find out if he knew anything about these noises. This man had all his papers available and in order: He paid his identification tax for 1964. [...]. I gave the order to the brigadier of the *Circonscription Indigène* to bring this man to my office so that he could tell us exactly what had happened at Mbila. [...]. Arthur Mayele, the police officer, violently pulled this man from the hands of the brigadier [because he was a refugee]. [...] Immediately [...] he began to investigate the house of this man.

On their return from Nkara, [...] at Mbila, the police officer had arbitrarily arrested the wife of the *capita* of Kwilu village, who was a refugee together with her husband. While travelling to Longo, [...] Arthur Mayele and Crispin Bikaya, [...] arrested a girl who lives at Longo with her big sister. [...] The two sisters are from Bodwa, a village affected by the rebellion. Mayele [...] raped this unfortunate girl who had not yet reached her puberty. After having been raped, the girl was injured [in her vagina] [...]. At 5 p.m. the same day, [...] Mayele [...] said publicly: ‘If I have raped this girl, it is because she comes from one of the villages affected by the rebellion. Nobody can say anything to me.’²⁶⁴

²⁶³ Baudouin Matalatala (57 years old), oral interview, Kinshasa, 30 September 2013. See also M. Lakubu (57 years old), oral interview, Kinshasa, 21 September 2013, and Viviane Dema (75 years old), oral interview, Kikwit, 1 November 2013.

²⁶⁴ A.D. Tabal, “Rapport administratif,” reel 13, box 9, folder 5, file O, doc. F64/46A. Archives Conseil National. The italics are mine.

This is what it meant to be refugee in this region during the 1960s.

Conclusion

This chapter deals with the relationship between space, control over mobility, and displacement in the context of the dramatic Mulele rebellion that took place in the 1960s in Congo. It showed the ways in which suffering was embedded in space, through the forms and structuring of continuous movement of people within that space. The phenomenological understanding of what it was like for people to live under the conditions of forced mobility; contingent and extreme exposure to violence (and the ways in which this was registered in dreams); social estrangement and exclusion; and the double bind of not being able to present oneself and testify to one's innocence (or loyalty) without arousing suspicion that one is hiding complicity with the other side, are all key components for understanding the embodiment of suffering in the context of the Mulele rebellion. The bio-political strategies deployed by the government administration, the police and armed forces, inherited in part from a long colonial heritage, including road and river check-points, camps, and the use of permits and various kinds of identification documents, all contributed to the production of suffering. The third component to grasp the centrality of space and displacement in the production of suffering is the question of how bio-political forms, offices, terminologies and techniques were transformed in the context of the rebellion and extreme disorder, with each side—the rebels and the government forces—drawing upon a shared repertoire drawn from the colonial state, and the practices of the rebellion against it.

The Mulele rebellion, as a violent conflict, shattered the mental, temporal and spatial frameworks which people used to make sense of their lives. Not only were the bodies of people affected, their relationship with the environment was also disturbed as physical movement introduced ruptures in the previous logics of daily life from which people used to make sense of their lives.

Chapter Two – Bodily Pain and the Politics of Death

This chapter moves from space—as actual or physical “material”—and its centrality in the production of suffering to the people and the ways in which suffering penetrated their bodies. Firstly, it is about various acts of giving death during the rebellion. It is also about the pain and suffering that such acts caused, as well as the politics underpinning them, as remembered by some survivors. It is an attempt at analysing and exploring the memories of death and suffering, either by the people who were forced to give death to others, or those who were forced to receive death that was given to them but who, too, survived and can tell the story of these defining moments, a long time after the events.

The basic argument driving this chapter is that the rebellion, in its extreme manifestation, had a particular way of inflicting pain and suffering on people’s bodies. This way of administering pain and suffering relied strongly upon the triple logic of cruelty, excess, and sadism. It consisted of seizing people, torturing them, violating their bodily integrity, and following them beyond all suffering. The torture humiliated not only the dead bodies, but also those who remained in the world.

The chapter is divided into three parts. The first reflects on the act of putting to death, as well as the penetration of suffering into the body. The second focuses on the relationship between the crowd and the act of torturing. The third and final part deals with the death of the corpse, that is the ways in which the *militaires* treated the dead bodies in the process of inflicting pain and suffering, as well as the return of the dead among the living.

Putting to death

Papa, it is really hard to recall these stories.¹ [...] I swear in the name of God that it was horrible. [...] I was arrested by the *militaires*. They fired a bullet at me here [on the cheek]. [...] After that, they stabbed me with their bayonet. As I am talking to you, I no longer have several parts of my body. [...] They took out one of my testicles. They burned it [...] and they forced me to eat it, while I was still staring at them. [...]. After treating me like an animal, they seized Inspector Metela’s old brother who was among us. This man was interrogated

¹ On stories that are difficult to remember, see Nancy Rose Hunt, “Espace, temporalité et rêverie: écrire l’histoire des futurs au Congo Belge,” *Politique africaine* 3, 135 (October 2014), pp. 115-136.

for about six hours. After these six hours of intensive questioning, he fell down. I am sure he had a cerebral hemorrhage. [After that,] the *militaire* shot and killed him immediately. [...] Papa, that's what we went through.²

With these painful words one of the survivors of the rebellion began his testimony on the morning of 1 November 2013 at Kikwit. Such shocking testimony emphasizes not only different ways of administering death, but also what Achille Mbembe refers to as “the burden of arbitrariness involved in seizing from the world and putting to death what has previously decreed to be nothing.”³ The purpose of this “burden” was the production and incorporation of suffering in the bodies of “negated subjects;”⁴ “people pushed even further away, to the other side, behind the existing world,”⁵ or more precisely, “out of the world.”⁶

Once surrounded by the arbitrary power of this “burden,” subjects were driven almost everywhere, to the point that the production of violence on their bodies became the normal state of things. In his narrative, Eugène Kitoto describes this “normal state of things” as follows:

[Early in 1965,] I arrived in Gungu at director Dosithé Amwatsha's house. [...] Suddenly I heard people knocking on the door. There were up to 180 *militaires*. They said: ‘Open the door, otherwise we are going to break everything.’ The house was closed, but it was surrounded everywhere by the *militaires*. [...] When the doors fell down, they struck at me. I was sitting in an armchair and was reading the newspaper. They began to beat me up. [...] They beat me up very hard. They seized director Amwatsha. He was very short. They beat him to death. [...] I begged them and told them to leave this man. They refused. [...] They pushed him against the wall. They slapped him on the head. The man fell down and bled to death. [...] They got back to me. They beat me up again. One among the *militaires* said to me: ‘Don't you know that today I am going to kill you?’ I replied to him: ‘No problem.’ He hit my back with the butt of his gun. I fell down. He raised me up. Another *militaire* came and slapped me. Sparks seized my eyes. [...] Papa, I cried. [...] They then put us in their vehicle for an unknown destination. They kept on beating us in their vehicle as if we were not human beings. Ten to fifteen *militaires* walked on us and began to punch each of us. They were sharp blows! One of the prisoners had even broken his jaw because of these blows.⁷

² Eugène Kitoto (78 years old), oral interview, Kikwit, 1 November 2013.

³ Achille Mbembe, *On the Postcolony*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001, p. 173.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Eugène Kitoto (78 years old), oral interview, Kikwit, 1 November 2013.

This “burden of arbitrariness” related to the production of death in this space was experienced in different ways dependent on whether one was arrested by the rebels or the *militaires*. Although both carried out death violently, the death administered by the rebels differed fundamentally from that given by the *militaires*. The form of death carried out by the rebels occurred mostly at night and was based entirely on secrecy. The subject, reduced to nothingness, was forced through the torture to identify with—and participate in the production of—the death that was being assigned to him, as this former rebel explained in a long testimony:

To kill someone in our team of Mungay [...] first, we had to make sure that this person was given food. [...] He had to eat until he got full. We would ensure that he eats a special food: meat, especially pig, beef, goat or chicken. Once full, we would give him some wine. And then, together with other detainees, we would line them up and bring them to the place where they would be executed. [...] Once there, we would remind them why we were killing them: ‘You betrayed the land for which we are fighting. You must return to the same earth which you betrayed.’ After this ceremony, we would ask them to dig a hole themselves. We would then tie them all: arms and legs behind, chest thrown out. [...] We used to call this type of torture ‘air mail’ [*commande par avion*].⁸

⁸ In 1965 and 1966, many survivors recounted their experience of this torture known as “air mail” (*commande par avion*), highlighting its monstrous character. Fabien Nako, Gaston Ilunga, Etienne Mumbutshi, and two other people wrote respectively:

30 January 1964 was the day of my conviction [by the rebels]. [...] They beat me up. [...] Hands tied behind, they took me to their camp, where I was subjected to inhumane treatment [...]. After seven months of abuse, I tried to escape from the prison, unfortunately I did not succeed. I fell back into their hands. I was beaten half-dead. (Fabien Nako, “Lettre: Justification de mon absence au service,” reel 12, box 8, folder 9, file I, doc. B0218. Archives Conseil National)

They tied me with ropes, hands and legs behind, like a goat. [...] They left me in the midst of the forest. (Gaston Ilunga, “Rapport du bois de Mr Ilunga Gaston, [membre du collège permanent], [de] janvier 1964 à [juillet] 1965,” reel 13, box 9, folder 4, file O, doc. F64/4. Archives Conseil National)

I cried out until 3 o’ clock [in the morning]. [...] I spent three hours without eating. [I was just] vomiting blood. (Etienne Mumbutshi, “Rapport individuel, 21 janvier 1966,” reel 13, box 9, folder 3, file M, doc. Q33. Archives Conseil National)

At Kapia, [the rebels] had handcuffed Richard Ngunakubu tightly. He became unconscious and his arms were half-paralysed. [...] The population of the region is no longer at peace as a result of these disruptions. (Ev. Menaba and

He continued:

It meant nothing to us seeing these people suffering. We would hit each of them on the neck with a stick. Once they fell, we would push them slowly into the mass grave. We would then cover them with earth.

Others we used to kill them with a technique called '*commande par epiempe*' [Order by *epiempe*]. You take two sticks. You connect them [...] with a wire. Then you pass them over the head of the prisoner. Afterward, you press them strongly so that the nerves [on the head] can be affected. The eyes would pop out of their orbits. And suddenly death would follow. We would then bury all of them in the hole that they had dug in advance.

I remember there were some people that we killed like pigs. We brought them into the bush at night. We asked them to dig a hole. They were ten. The circumference of these holes had to correspond to the size of their breasts and the depth shouldn't exceed the hips. [Then] we caught them. We tied them up, arms attached to the body. [...] We threw each of them in the hole, the head downwards, and legs stretched upwards in a straight line with the body. We put tree branches all around them to support their legs. We filled the ground to the hips. [...] It was funny to see how the earth was moving! We were watching them. Before they died, these people would shit. First there would be '*tufi ya mubisu*,' a very hard shit, and then a green diarrhea, '*tufi ya masa masa*.' Over. They died of suffocation.⁹

On the military side, execution was also a terrifying and horrible act. It consisted of taking the captive's life by administering increasingly painful suffering on the body. The *militaires* would seize people "by the throat and squeeze them to the point of breaking their bones, making their blood pop out of their sockets," and "making them weep blood."¹⁰ They used to make sure that, in the act of killing, there remained "only a terrifying statue, a recipient of pain, an exhausted strength, and a disguise that no longer seem[ed] the sign of anything substantial—if not the apotheosis of sadism, an abject death, deeply threatened with being a signifier [and] without a signified,"¹¹ as shown in these two fragments of testimony:

My brother in-law, Sem David, said that one day the *militaires* arrived suddenly at their bivouac. They arrested people. [...] Do you know how they killed them? First they forced them to take off their clothes. Then, they took

M. Kutameka, "Envoi troisième rapport," reel 11, box 8, folder 1, file G, doc. 6032. Archives Conseil National)

⁹ Bonaventure Bongongo (70 years old), oral interview. Idiofa, 16 December 2013. This is a pseudonym.

¹⁰ Mbembe, *On the Postcolony*, p. 201.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 223.

their genitals; they cut them off with a knife that had no cutting edges. They [the *militaires*] did not want the knife to cut the genitals but the knife to scrape the genitals like a saw because, as they used to say, these people should really feel that their genitals were being cut. The *militaires* then attacked the right hands of these people. They cut them off. They took their eyes out of their sockets. [...] They attacked the ears. They cut the nose and the right legs. They then made them drink gasoline in front of the rest of those [...] who were there. They asked them to open their mouths. They lit a fire. Finished. Everyone was consumed by fire.¹²

They then arrested a child near Lutshima. [...] Instead of killing him far away, they preferred to kill him in the presence of his father. They took the bayonet. They began to stab the child. The child fled. They ran after him. They caught him. They opened his eyes widely. Two blows of the bayonet into the right eye: '*kiek, kiek.*' The eye burst. Blood [...] flowed. They grabbed him again. They bayoneted him at the neck, '*kiek, kiek.*' They began to turn the bayonet [in the neck of the child]. They moved the bayonet. The child shouted: 'Ah, ah, *munu!*' They pulled the bayonet out [from the neck of the child]. They gave him another blow to the chest, '*kiek, kiek.*' *Imene* [over]. The child gave up his soul [*azenga ntima*].¹³

It is of this death, "perceived as embracing nothing," a "death of a purely negative essence without substance" that Kitoto together with his colleagues was going to die in the bush of Lutshima.¹⁴ This death was not very different from the death given to animals in a butcher shop, where they cut the throats of the animals to shed the blood and then process the flesh through a series of procedures, such as dissection or the cutting into quarters, to transform it into meat. It was a death imposed by force. The *militaires* considered the people's lives and people's bodies as foreign matter to their bearers and something that needed to be destroyed. They should be annihilated because those who carried the bodies and the lives were only scaffolds, just as the slave's bodies and lives had been during the slave trade. Kitoto recalled the correlation between killing a human being and an animal during the rebellion:

They approached me. They took the bayonet. They wanted to kill me with their bayonet. I said to their leader: 'Pardon, pardon, [...] Lieutenant Nguya.'¹⁵

¹² Ernest Kiangu (59 years old), oral interview, Kinshasa, 23 March 2015.

¹³ Eugène Kitoto (78 years old), oral interview, Kikwit, 1 November 2013.

¹⁴ Mbembe, *On the Postcolony*, p. 200.

¹⁵ Lieutenant Nguya is known in the region as one of the cruelest military leaders. [See also Philémon Lozo, Elie Kakesa, Nestor Mukwangu, and Delphin Kupani, oral interview, Gungu, 12 January 2014]. In September 1965, the head of the prefecture of Gungu wrote this against him:

I am begging you. Please shoot me. Don't kill me with your bayonet [...]. The *militaire* replied: 'No, you spent so much time deciding. You must die by bayonet as your comrades were. If you do not want to, you will die suffocated the way we killed the other recalcitrants. [...] You saw how we washed our weapons in the Lutshima stream. They will serve to kill Mulele. But you, you must die by bayonet as we killed your comrades.' [...] It was so said. I began to cry. But none of them would listen to me. I began to ask myself so many questions: 'Oh my God. Why? [...] Why all of this?'¹⁶

In the suffering he described, Kitoto projected himself into the imagination. He tried to lean on the reservoir of memories and images that appeared to have been fixed for many years, but which in reality were vague in his mind. He leaned on them while at the same time forgetting them, and placing them in relation with things other than themselves, things that were vague and complex at the same time. Under such conditions, even if the imagination's projection was able to relieve the suffering mind, it becomes groundless. Jean-Paul Sartre, writing on these issues, explained in 1943 that: "In order to imagine, consciousness must be free from all specific reality and this freedom must be able to define itself by a 'being-in-the-world' which is at once the constitution and the negation of the world."¹⁷ "This means that consciousness must be able to affect the emergence of the unreal [...]. The unreal is produced outside of the

the situation becomes more and more bad within the prefecture. [...] There is not even one week, Lieutenant Nguya has just killed 3 people living in the city of Gungu. He said that they were [...] leaders of the *equipés* in forest. He killed: misters Nidi Alphonse, local councilor, father of 13 children; Kutumbama Alexandre, joiner, father of 9 children, and Sabanga, teacher, single man. [...] On 13 September [19]65, three people have just been arrested under the order of Lieutenant Ignace Nguya. From my return of Kilamba, [...] [at about] 12 am in the night, madam, my wife, told me about this problem as well as the mistreatment that these people underwent. [...] The next day, 14 September [19] 65, early in the morning, [...] I went to the prison where these [people] had to be. [...] unfortunately, and in my biggest surprise, the lieutenant had killed them all [...] at 6:30 a.m. on 13 September [19]65. What a suffering, what an emotion and what discouragement to notice that our efforts are systematically being sabotaged by unconscious people. In spite of my presence, [...] other people were arrested [...]. I would like to know once and for all if a watchword [was] really given so that the survivors can be [killed] as hens. (B.H. Kambembo, "Lettre: sévices," reel 11, box 8, folder 2, file D, doc. G65/23A and B. Archives Conseil National)

¹⁶ Eugène Kitoto (78 years old), oral interview, Kikwit, 1 November 2013.

¹⁷ Jean-Paul Sartre, *Being and Nothingness: An Essay on Phenomenological Ontology*, trans. Hazel E. Barnes, Secaucus: Philosophical Library, 1956, p. 269 and p. xiv.

world by a consciousness which stays in the world, and it is because he is transcendently free that man can imagine.”¹⁸ In the shadow of this instability, a new character is created, who is unable to control and master his own body:

Papa, I remember that it was during the dry season. It was cold that day. The wind was blowing. [...] I can still see how the nostrils of this tailor quivered, while I, on the other hand, I could not feel anything, not even my own body. My mouth was wide open. There was sweat all over my body. [...] I was completely wet, like somebody who had just been plunged into water. [...] Papa, I could not feel anything. My hands were paralysed. [...] The tailor was by my side. He was short. I still remember he was wearing black trousers that day. [...] This man pissed in his pants. Lieutenant Nguya came brutally and asked him why he had pissed in his pants. He [the man] denied everything. He said to Lieutenant Nguya: ‘[...] I didn’t piss, lieutenant. Come and touch my pants. I myself cannot feel anything,’ while everybody knew exactly that he had pissed.¹⁹

We thus see how, during difficult times, the relationship of the self with its own body may become shattered, and at the same time ambiguous. This is particularly reminiscent of what Sartre wrote in *Being and Nothingness*:

My body, as it is for me, does not appear to me in the midst of the world. [...] [I]t is much more my property than my being [...] I am the other in relation to my eye. I apprehend [my body] as a sense organ constituted in the world in a particular way, but I cannot [...] apprehend it in the process of revealing an aspect of the world to me.²⁰

To master the corporeal form from the accentuation of this instability, the dying body developed strange behaviors: “It joins its image as a silhouette in a purely ambiguous relationship of subject with the world of reflections.”²¹ In his incapacity to change the painful situation imposed on him, the person seeks to accomplish a parallel result in a kind of magical transformation, while relying on his emotional state. Emotion, as the philosopher reminds us, “is a transformation of the world [...]. When the paths traced out become too difficult, or when we see no path, [or when] we can no longer live, [...] we try to change the world. [...]. [We] live as if the connection between things and their

¹⁸ Sartre, *Being and Nothingness...*, p. 271.

¹⁹ Eugène Kitoto (78 years old), oral interview, Kikwit, 1 November 2013.

²⁰ Sartre, *Being and Nothingness...*, pp. 303-304.

²¹ Achille Mbembe, *Critique de la raison nègre*, Paris: La Découverte, 2013, pp. 201-202.

potentialities were not ruled by deterministic processes, but by magic.”²² He further purports that: “we construct new ways and relationships; but since we cannot do this by changing the world, we change ourselves.”²³

Caught up in the heart of this emotional state, the man began to face the death to which he was being subjected with anticipation. He felt increasingly drawn to this death, as if, to use Derrida’s vocabulary, “one, whose proper name” is Kitoto, “is already awaiting, at the edge of the world, at the border of seashore for what is still remaining, what is to come.”²⁴ He could see “what one [could not] see coming [...] in a pure and simple way.”²⁵ Finally, he was plunged into a double relationship of presence-absence, non-power and non-capacity, which can be qualified, following Maurice Blanchot, as the “impossibility of all possibilities.”²⁶ He was overtaken by anxiety, anguish, and desolation. Surrounded by madness and fear, he had not only already experienced “the damage that [would] end his life,”²⁷ but, in Elaine Scarry’s words, “he has begun to experience the body that [would] end his life, the body that [could] be killed, and which[,] when killed[,] [would] carry away the conditions that allow him to exist.”²⁸ The person was strongly confronted with the impossibility of accepting responsibility for this death; a form of death that he, first and foremost, tried to understand, but which was completely incomprehensible. As Achille Mbembe says: “[in the postcolony], there are so many deaths. One no longer knows which one [is about] to die.”²⁹

When I saw how the *militaires* had dissected the four girls whom the rebels sent as messengers, [said Kitoto,] I was completely frustrated. [...] I thought myself that the time of my death had arrived. There was nothing to suggest that I was going to get away from this. Papa, I am telling the truth. I had gone mad. I thought it was over for me. I saw my chance of survival diminish

²² Sartre, *Being and Nothingness...*, p. 58.

²³ *Ibid.*, p. xv.

²⁴ Saitya Bra Das, “(Dis)Figures of Death: Taking the Side of Derrida, Taking the Side of Death,” in *Derrida Today* 3 (2010) 1, p. 2.

²⁵ Jacques Derrida, *The Gift of Death*, trans. David Wills, Chicago-London: University of Chicago Press, 1995, p. 40.

²⁶ Maurice Blanchot, *The Writing of Disaster*, trans. Ann Smock, Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1995, p. 70.

²⁷ Elaine Scarry, *The Body in Pain: The Making and Unmaking of the World*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1985, p. 31.

²⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁹ Mbembe, *On the Postcolony*, p. 197.

because these *militaires* could not forgive. [...] Tears spilled from my eyes. My whole body was shaking. I started talking to myself. [...] I raised both arms overhead and brought them down. I touched my neck. I felt like something was missing in my body. I even shat. [...] They gave me rice and forced me to eat. I refused. Papa, if they want to kill you and then they ask you to eat, where will you get the courage to eat? [...] It was really hard. Sometimes my hands would go to my cheeks. I felt like my head was becoming heavier. I said to myself: 'This is the end.' Papa, I saw my death approaching. When I thought about what my body was going to become, I was completely devastated by fear. I could feel the injury. I could imagine myself being beaten like they had beaten me before. I kept on whining and yelling. [...] I could feel how pain penetrated into my body. I was unable to keep from scratching and rubbing my skin. [...] I was completely stunned. Papa, the most difficult thing was when I had to imagine myself in the [ruins of] death. I could see how my body was abandoned to the mercy of scavengers. I felt as if they were devouring my body. [...] It was disgusting. [...] I could see how the pieces of my body they left behind would putrefy. Papa, I would see worms coming out [of the ruins of my decay]. [...] And the worst was when I thought to myself that nobody would see my corpse.³⁰

But how long would this agony, this moment of self-reflection and self-questioning, last? It all ended when, through vigorous contact, the operations of inflicting pain on the person's body began. The man was tossed on the ground.³¹ This was followed by torture to his face.³² "They asked me to sleep on the ground. I arched my belly and the *militaires* began to walk on my back."³³ He was then made to be a "sunflower"³⁴: standing, the soldiers told him to put his right index finger on the ground. He then had to turn several times, with his weight on the finger.³⁵ After this, he was tied up and reduced to immobility. In his paralysis, he was condemned to helplessly observe the double capture of his manliness and virility. He was then subjected to "the excremental drive."³⁶ As a "foreign body," he was "beaten and expelled like an abject thing with which [one] needs

³⁰ Eugène Kitoto (78 years old), oral interview, Kikwit, 1 November 2013.

³¹ Ibid.

³² The expression "face on torture" is from Isidore Ngyum. See Isidore Ngyum (73 years old), oral interview, Idiofa, 23 November 2013.

³³ Eugène Kitoto (78 years old), oral interview, Kikwit, 1 November 2013. See also Isidore Ngyum (73 years old), oral interview, Idiofa, 23 November 2013.

³⁴ Eugène Kitoto (78 years old), oral interview, Kikwit, 1 November 2013.

³⁵ Ibid. See also Kapita (55 years old), oral interview, Idiofa, 17 November 2013. Kapita joined the *maquis* at the age of 6.

³⁶ Achille Mbembe, "Essai sur le politique en tant que forme de dépense," *Cahiers d'Etudes Africaines* 44, 173-174 (2004), p. 159.

to abruptly break with.”³⁷ After spending a great deal of energy on his body, the *militaires* proceeded literally to trash his mouth, the organ of speech. They then attacked the rest of the body. They focused most of the torture on his head, limbs and genitals. Kitoto remembers that this took a long time because it was delayed by a series of interruptions: “They left me tied up in the custody of five soldiers. They went away to smoke hemp. They then returned and resumed beating me.”³⁸ His whole body received a new form through the destruction. His jaw was swollen, his face degraded and his genitals reduced to a state of sub-humanity, as he remembers:

Finally, they decided to kill me. They asked me to pass ahead. They tied me up. I was shaking. They shot. The bullet penetrated my cheek. It is then that it came out on the other side. Papa, blood. I was bleeding. They wanted to shoot me again. I closed my eyes. Another *militaire* rushed towards me. He grabbed me. He put his nails in my face. He said: ‘Idiot, open your eyes. Open your eyes wide and see how they are shooting at you.’ I shouted. [...] They grabbed me. They stabbed me everywhere with their bayonets. Blood was shedding, Papa, you have no idea. [...] They sank the bayonet into my leg. They tore. Blood. I screamed, Papa, no one had mercy on me. Another *militaire* grabbed my penis. He gave me blows over my penis. He grabbed my scrotum. With his bayonet, he broke through it. He pulled out one of my testicles like someone who had taken out a goat’s testicles. He lit the fire. He roasted it and forced me to eat it. Papa, it was horrible.³⁹

At this point the pain caused by this monstrous torture finally imploded the whole body. The man lost his consciousness.⁴⁰ He collapsed and rushed again into madness: “I was distraught. I could not recognize anything, not even my body.”⁴¹ Muscular contractions threatened as well. He was not able to manage the pain that was putting his body at risk. Distorted by destruction, his body lost its authenticity and became a formless mass wracked by injury. Under the impact of physical suffering, his selfhood ended up becoming absorbed. He urinated and shat continuously. Destroyed language was replaced by whispers and shouts: “I could not speak. All I could do was cry and scream.”⁴² This recalls Elaine Scarry from 1985: “Physical pain does not simply resist

³⁷ Mbembe, “Essai sur le politique...,” p. 159.

³⁸ Eugène Kitoto (78 years old), oral interview, Kikwit, 1 November 2013.

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Ibid.

language[,] but actively destroys it, bringing about an immediate reversion to a state anterior to language, to the sounds and cries a human being makes before language is learned.”⁴³

To this physical pain, it is important to add the humiliation caused by nudity, which finally led him to draw sharp conclusions, as he goes on saying in this testimony:

They left me naked. I managed to flee. I decided to go find the head of the next village to seek his help. But how could I go? Should I go naked? I took a wire and made a belt. I then took the leaves of *bantundu*. I put them all around my hips. [...] Papa, to leave Lutshima and go to Kakobola, what kind of sun! It was shining. I began to cry like a child. There was itching everywhere. I was scratching. I decided to take off the belt and leaves I wore. [...] I arrived in a village called Yongo, a Pende village. [...] I did not know that the Pende were in the forest and that they saw me while I was coming. Suddenly, they jumped on me. [...] Instead of asking why I was in this state, they chose to attack me. One of them gave me an arrow blow on my leg. I fell down. I was wounded. [I cried]: ‘Pity!’ and asked myself: ‘What have I done to deserve this fate?’ My heart was overheating [...]. Everyone laughed at me as I was naked. [...] I looked at them and said, inside of me: ‘All these people dressed in raffia are still men like me. They will die. If not today, but a bit later than me. Why cannot they understand? [...] All this tract of land between Gungu, Masi-Manimba, and Kikwit, to whom will I leave it? They can kill me today, but they should not forget that they will all follow me to the grave.’ Papa, I regretted having been born.⁴⁴

Despite these conclusions, the embodied suffering multiplied and accompanied the man on his journey, as an inseparable burden, as he remembers:

They finally chased me from their village as if I was a madman. I left. I could no longer walk. My body grew heavier. [...] The flies were following me as if they had seen rotten meat. [...] They sucked my wounds. I did not know what else I should do to get rid of the pain. [...] Should I cover the wound that was on the leg or the one on the cheek? I was distraught. You had to see how my muscles contracted. I was swollen all over. [...] I took the wire again. I made a belt. I cut the leaves. I put them all around my hips, as earlier. Papa, no way to breathe. I could not breathe. The sun was shining. Itching attacked me too. I scratched, but no relief. Added to this was the fact that I had scabies everywhere. I turned, but no relief. I decided to throw these leaves and go naked. But, how could I walk? Should I walk naked? It was hard. Since the flies were sucking my wounds, I took sand and put it in the wounds to soothe the bleeding. Papa, it was as if I had woken the demons. There were small

⁴³ Scarry, *The Body in Pain*..., p. 4.

⁴⁴ Eugène Kitoto (78 years old), Oral Interview, Kikwit, 1 November 2013.

insects in the sand. They started to bite me. I cried. I went quickly and plunged my head into the water [...]. Papa, it was horrible.⁴⁵

These are the conditions into which the “burden of arbitrariness” put the subject, after seizing him and excessively incorporating suffering in his body.

Crowd and torture

A few days ago, hundreds of villagers were taken out of the bush by the *militaires* and gathered in Lukamba Bantsamba. In front of everyone, the soldiers cut off Ebangan’s thumb and forefinger [...] so that he could not shoot a *poupou* [rifle]. Then the *militaires* called for four men of Banda Butini. [...] A soldier ordered the four men to put their foot on a tree trunk. Then his machete, like the butcher’s slicer, cut a leg. [There was a] howl of a slaughtered beast [and] convulsive movements of the members. The soldier placed the bloodied leg on the block. A second shot, and the foot fell in the grass. When the scene was repeated four times, the *militaires* pointing their guns at those crippled, asked them to run off.⁴⁶

It was really horrible. Children, women, men, all, without exception, were supposed to applaud while the *militaires* were attacking [the bodies of their] victims.⁴⁷

These are the testimonies of two men from Lukamba Buzombo and Banda Yansi, collected respectively in the late 1980s and late 2013. On the one hand, they highlight the performance of violence on the bodies of individuals in early 1966. On the other hand, they insistently describe the requisition of local communities in assisting with the deployment of this violence onto people’s bodies. These two elements used to go hand in hand in such situations, so that, as two former soldiers have stated,⁴⁸ the absence of the latter could jeopardize the fulfilment of the former. The soldiers had to ensure that a maximum of people were there to witness what was happening.⁴⁹ The *militaires* brutally forced the public to attend in order to impress on them the realisation that the slightest

⁴⁵ Eugène Kitoto (78 years old), Oral Interview, Kikwit, 1 November 2013.

⁴⁶ Martens, *Abo...*, p. 177.

⁴⁷ Théophane Kambembo (57 years old), oral interview, Idiofa, 18 November 2013. He was 8 years old when the rebellion broke out.

⁴⁸ Mukidi Mbongo (68 years old), oral interview, Gungu, 13 January 2014; and Bokilo Pablo (65 years old), oral interview, Kikwit, 24 October 2013.

⁴⁹ Mukidi Mbongo (68 years old), oral interview, Gungu, 13 January 2014.

association with the rebellion would be punished harshly.⁵⁰ The spectacle of power that fell on the tortured bodies was intended to “provoke a terrifying effect” among those who watched.⁵¹ As Michel Foucault put it, “they should know, they should fear,” and at the same time “take part, as witnesses and guarantees of punishment” to the violence that was being deployed on peoples’ bodies.⁵² It is what Lauria Santiago and Torres observed in San Salvador and Guatemala which they described as “[this was] meant to send a message to the living that the victim could have been anyone.”⁵³

What were the daily conditions under which people were rounded up and forced to witness the performance of violence on the bodies of other people? It is important to state that those who were rounded up were primarily children, women and men who were completely weakened by the on-going hostilities between the rebels and the *militaires* in the area. They were people for whom life itself had proved to a curse or unwanted. They were permanently immersed in an unstable situation that could be qualified as “symptomatic.” One of those captured from Banda Yansi described this “symptomatic” state as follows:

The people that the *militaires* had gathered that day were first and foremost dying [bodies]. It was easy reading the signs of fatigue and the mark of starvation on their bodies.⁵⁴ [...] The *militaires*, without taking into account the poor condition of these people, asked them to dance and move their [bodies] in the sun, while they were torturing Ampendong, a young man accused of complicity with the rebels [...]. I was among the people that the *militaires* gathered at Banda Yansi. I must have been ten years old [in 1965]. I saw how the *militaires* treated them. [...] We were bare-chested. The *militaires* asked us to inflate our chests and raise our shoulders when they were beating Ampendong. [...] Among us, there were people who had swollen lips and cheeks because [...] people had not been in contact with salt for a long time. Many of us had lost hair because of malnutrition.⁵⁵ [...] Some people

⁵⁰ Bokilo Pablo (65 years old), oral interview, Kikwit, 24 October 2013; and Mukidi Mbongo (68 years old), oral interview, Gungu, 13 January 2014. See also Ernest Kiangu (59 years old), oral interview, Kinshasa, 23 March 2015.

⁵¹ Michel Foucault, *Surveiller et punir: naissance de la prison*, Paris: Gallimard, 1975, p. 61.

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ Cecilia Menjivar and Nestor Rodriguez (eds), *When States Kill: Latin America, the US, and Technologies of Terror*, Austin: University of Texas Press, 2005, pp. 16-17.

⁵⁴ See also Clémentine Mabwa (63 years old), oral interview, Idiofa, 23 December 2013; and Innocent Yongo, “Lettre,” reel 1, box 1, doc. 76. Archives Conseil National. Clémentine Mabwa was 14 years old when the rebellion broke out.

⁵⁵ See also Agnès Lakung (55 years old), oral interview, Kikwit, 16 October 2013. She was 6 years old when the rebellion broke out.

were afflicted by an itchy scalp.⁵⁶ If they begin to scratch, you have no idea! [The majority of people] had deteriorating skin.⁵⁷ [...] Many had scabies with unpleasant odors which attracted thousands of flies.⁵⁸ [...] This is the state in which we found ourselves during the rebellion.⁵⁹

Many reports issued in 1964 confirmed this state. At HCB Kikongo, a village located a few kilometers from Banda Yansi, the number of patients grew increasingly from April 1964: 80 people suffered from headaches, 80 others had serious injuries, 74 were suffering from back pain, 40 had fever and two were suffering from amoebic dysentery.⁶⁰ In Kihunda Kihimbe and Kimbudi Kimwizi, villages in the prefecture of Gungu, there were 138 patients in May 1964.⁶¹ Most people eventually died in the following months. In a camp in Banda Butini, a few hundred meters from Banda Yansi, there were 240 patients between May and June 1964: 58 showed cephalic symptoms, 57 suffered from arthritis, 40 were afflicted by scabies and scratching, 36 were infected by malaria, 32 had phagedenic ulcers, 24 had abscesses, 20 were anemic, 10 had a cough and suffered from diarrhea.⁶² In early June 1964, several men wrote:

[I] just amputated the arm of a man on whom the *militaires* had forced to shoot himself. [...] The patient cried a lot [...]. [And] as there is no medicine[,] [...] he died after three hours.⁶³

The situation of the [other] Comrade [is pitiful]. To poop or sleep, we should raise him. I, myself, do not even get any sleep at night.⁶⁴

There are many patients [among us] [...]. Since I arrived here, I have seen two people with gas gangrene and whose thumbs were devoured by gangrene.⁶⁵

Some have simple ulcers, and other phagedenic ulcers.⁶⁶

⁵⁶ See also Agnès Lakung (55 years old), oral interview, Kikwit, 16 October 2013.

⁵⁷ See also Monnier, "La province de Bandundu," pp. 330-331.

⁵⁸ There is a lot of evidence from medical records provided by the rebellion.

⁵⁹ Théophile Kambembo (57 years old), oral interview, Idiofa, 18 November 2013.

⁶⁰ Mbomo, "Rapport," reel 1, box 1, doc. 00333. Archives Conseil National.

⁶¹ Waya-Waya and Poloto, "Rapport," reel 2, box 1, doc. 00676. Archives Conseil National.

⁶² Bula-Bula, Kalaki and Mupa, "Rapport," reel 2, box 1, doc. 00565. Archives Conseil National. The summation of these numbers goes above 240. This is explained by the fact that there were people who suffered from both rheumatism and malaria, and at the same time had injuries and scabies.

⁶³ Timothée-Mathias Kandolo, "Lettre," reel 4, box 3, doc. 2497. Archives Conseil National.

⁶⁴ Martin Biri, "Lettre," reel 1, box 1, doc. 138-T. Archives Conseil National.

⁶⁵ Rigobert Mbimi, "Lettre," reel 5, box 4, doc. 4050. Archives Conseil National.

⁶⁶ Florent Kuvula, "Rapport," reel 1, box 1, doc. 0047-T. Archives Conseil National.

[There is also] a woman among us who is suffering from ascites. It is accompanied by a large ball[,] big [...] [like] a football. The wounds are increasing unbelievably. [...] There are no medicines, much less work tools. I left Mukoko for Nsongo-Piopio in search of medicines. I came back empty-handed. I then went to Mukongo Mukoko, only to find nothing either. [...] We have lost a man [...] because of the lack of medicine.⁶⁷

He received the bullets on one of his buttocks. The bullets cut the [two] buttocks and [the man] fell down. [...]. [He] had lost a lot of blood. He had no more strength. There was [a lot of] sand in the wound. [...] [The wound] was 7 cm long[,] 13 cm wide, and 5 cm deep. Two days after the injury was inflicted, I completely sutured the wound with staples. But it was impossible. [...] [The wound was] infected with gas gangrene. [Because of the lack] of anti-serum gas[,] the infection progressed [onto] [...] the two buttocks. The patient became pale. He had trouble breathing. Suddenly, there was a slow pulse. The patient [died] as he slept.⁶⁸

I, myself, have cardiovascular disease [...]. My heart has really swollen as I am writing.⁶⁹

A close reading of the wealth of correspondence that men and women exchanged between 1964 and 1965 shows that they were living in a contradictory world: a world dominated by weeping and the gnashing of teeth; a world perceived as “a moving horizon, in the heart of a reality whose centre was everywhere and nowhere,” where “each event had the capacity to generate other events,” all at once, painful and unpredictable.⁷⁰ The heart of this reality was so violent that any narrative produced within the space was deliberately marked by traces of suffering. At the end of 1964, a number of people constructed the following accounts:

We are not in good shape. Jeanne Ayaka is currently suffering. She has not yet recovered. [...] My brother suffers as well.⁷¹

I am writing to inform you that I am feeling a little bit better, but not very much. I, myself, almost died. [...] [As I am writing to you], I have no flesh, only bones.⁷²

My feet, [there is] no way to walk. They hurt badly.⁷³

⁶⁷ Rigobert Mbimi, “Lettre,” reel 5, box 4, doc. 4050. Archives Conseil National.

⁶⁸ Rigobert Mbimi, “Rapport,” reel 5, box 4, doc. 4049. Archives Conseil National.

⁶⁹ Damase Mazua, “Lettre,” reel 1, box 1, doc. 00360. Archives Conseil National.

⁷⁰ Mbembe, *Critique de la raison...*, p. 205.

⁷¹ Théophile Kapungu, “Lettre,” reel 2, box 1, doc. 902. Archives Conseil National.

⁷² Pierre Mudimba, “Lettre,” reel 1, box 1, doc. 00292-T. Archives Conseil National.

Brother-in law [...], here [...] mom [...] is still suffering.⁷⁴

Kasimir passed away on 7 May 1964. His wife's young sister died on 29 May 1964. Your wife's mother also passed away [at the same time].⁷⁵

My wife is sick. I am threatened by coughing. [...] It has been several months since I have been wounded. [In any case,] I can no longer bear this suffering.⁷⁶

I left Mbono [...] [as] I began to suffer [on] 28 May [19]64. My heart and my body have been suffering till now.⁷⁷

Matemu's daughter died on 30 May 1964 in the morning. [...] As I am writing to you, Kupanuka is doing a little bit better, but he still has not yet recovered. [...] Iteme Mbumbi's feet are swollen. He can no longer stand up, nor can he walk. I myself still have that pain under my feet. [...] I am too nauseated; you have no idea.⁷⁸

Such was the daily life of those forced by the *militaires* to be witnesses. By looking at their testimonies, it is possible to gain a better understanding of the relationship between torture and crowd within this space:

In June 1964, the *militaires* went to arrest a woman and a man [...] in a village near Mangungu. They brought them into Mangungu and gathered people to witness how they would give a lesson to these two people. [...] Debange, a young soldier who identified himself as someone from Lubumbashi (in Katanga), brutally tortured the two people. [...] Together with his colleagues, they [the *militaires*] began by plunging the man into a bowl of water. Then they tied him firmly [...], legs and arms behind the back. [...] After that, they attached him to a tree branch [...] like a beast. Everyone, short or tall, could see. The *militaires* took turns in [...] stabbing him with their bayonets [...]. They [...] [then] cut his penis off. They tied it to a stick. They showed it to everyone. Debange insisted that the stick be raised up so that everyone could see. [...] Every time they raised it up, we, [the people] who were there, would scream, dance, and give a huge round of applause. They would suddenly ask us to shut up and open our eyes wide to see what this man was going to become. [...]

They tortured the woman in the same way they tortured the man. They tied her up. [...] They beat her [...] to death. [...] Later, she was going to be buried alive. After having been beaten, they untied her legs, while her arms remained tied up and suspended by the tree branch. Debange and another *militaire* went and

⁷³ Manianga Mulabila, "Lettre," reel 2, box 1, doc. 00845. Archives Conseil National.

⁷⁴ E. Palay and J. Ngangungu, "Lettre," reel 2, box 1, doc. 00858. Archives Conseil National.

⁷⁵ Ibuti Mukwamaka, "Lettre," reel 2, box 1, doc. 00864. Archives Conseil National.

⁷⁶ Jos Nzambi, "Lettre," reel 2, box 1, doc. 00865. Archives Conseil National.

⁷⁷ Luwanda, "Lettre," reel 1, box 1, doc. 104. Archives Conseil National.

⁷⁸ Henri Kaleba, "Lettre," reel 1, box 1, doc. 95. Archives Conseil National.

spread her legs. [...] We were then forced to see the genitals of the woman. One of the soldiers took a burning stick. He pushed it into the genitals of the woman. [...] He repeated this operation many times, before stepping aside and letting his friend do the job. They continued, seizing one of the people who was there. They gave him a stick of fire and asked him to push it into the woman's genitals. [...] Every time that the fire was extinguished, we were screaming, dancing, and applauding under the scrutiny of the soldiers who stood around us. [...] They would turn towards us every single moment, to see if there were people amongst us who wept. Lastly, a soldier went on quickly and pulled the stick of fire out of the woman's genitals. He asked us to keep quiet. We were trembling. [...] A few minutes later he took another stick of fire. He asked us to shout loudly and then laugh while he was pushing it into the woman's genitals. He brutally took it out again. [...] He slapped the woman and asked us to stop laughing. We stopped laughing and stared at the woman. We were there, up, both hands along the body, like the *militaires* in front of the flag. We all watched. Those who looked away were beaten. Sometime later, another soldier came to beg his colleagues, asking them to untie the two people. They finally untied them and went immediately to bury them alive behind my grandmother's house, the man on top of the woman.⁷⁹

To cut the phallus, to display it aloft and seek the approval of the crowd, or to take a burning stick and forcefully push it into a woman's vagina and to brutally take it out again under the rhythmic cheers of a moribund crowd; or to take a suffering body, tie it firmly and attach it to a tree branch in front of everyone; both were to some extent a procedure as in a theatre with the directors setting the scene on the one hand—the *militaires* in this instance—and the crowd, those captured and primed to consume the product of this staging, on the other. Since death in this space was intended to permanently mark minds, the theatrical dimension of the performance necessarily had to appear. Kiangu explicitly used this metaphor in an interview in Kinshasa when discussing the assassination of Louis Kafungu, Mulele's Chief of Staff:

Do you know how, at the end of the rebellion, [Kafungu] was killed in Kikwit? [He was killed] in a brutal and vicious way, so that those who saw it could stop thinking about him. [...] He was attached to the military jeep. [...] He was then dragged through the streets of Kikwit. People were asked to attend this spectacle like in a theatre. Nobody could believe it. In fact he was killed like in a [work of] fiction, [with the aim of] really terrorizing others and preventing them from ever returning to this issue again, the rebellion.⁸⁰

If the two executions to a substantial extent imitated theatrical spaces in the way in which they were conducted, they also differed profoundly from actual theatre. The

⁷⁹ Frédérique Yembele (60 years old), oral interview, Kinshasa, 3 October 2013.

⁸⁰ Ernest Kiangu (59 years old), oral interview, Kinshasa, 23 March 2015.

extreme violence enacted on the tortured bodies was in no way staged. It was pure reality, a reality not unlike a photograph in which the photographer, as Roland Barthes put it, “has left us with nothing, where he has shuddered for us, reflected for us, judged for us.”⁸¹ Those requisitioned saw how the subjects were tied up with cruelty and groaned as they were overtaken by suffering. They saw how parts of the bodies of these two people were literally destroyed. They saw how, following systematic destruction, the limbs of these individuals swelled up. They saw blood flowing and spurting under the dazzling violence and then coagulating. They finally saw how the *coup de grâce* marked the formal end of the existence of these individuals and rushed them into the ruins of death.

The most dramatic element in this theatricalization is how the bodies of the witnesses found themselves immersed in a political field where power relations “have an immediate hold upon them.”⁸² In the same way, the bodies of the tortured were being invested by equivalent relations of power. The spectacle was dominated by the logic of “manducation,” a logic that aims to “swallow and incorporate” the witnesses into the act of killing, with the condemned treated in the same way.⁸³ The witnesses were rejected in the shadow of nothingness where, through the horrible spectacle of violence on the bodies of others, they were constantly reminded that to be a requisitioned was also to be under the brutal power and authority of another. The *militaires* seized, harassed, and appropriated their bodies and required them to act in accordance with their instructions without resistance, as a fetish. The extreme violence exercised on the tortured bodies was thus transmitted onto the bodies of the witnesses under the rubric of pleasure.⁸⁴ Such practices summoned up the conditions of slaves in the Americas, where demonstrations of power forced them “to witness the beating, torture, and execution of [other] slaves,” condemning them “to sing and dance for the [slave] owners’ entertainment.”⁸⁵

⁸¹ Roland Barthes, *The Eiffel Tower and Other Mythologies*, trans. Richard Howard, New York: Hill and Wang, 1979, p. 71.

⁸² Foucault, *Surveiller et punir...*, p. 30.

⁸³ Mbembe, “Essai sur le politique...” p. 159.

⁸⁴ By the rubric of pleasure here I am particularly referring to dances, brutal and rhythmic acclamations, mostly interspersed with moments of silence and euphoria, performed by the requisitioned.

⁸⁵ Saidiya V. Hartman, *Scenes of Subjection: Terror, Slavery, and Self-Making in Nineteenth-Century America*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1997, p. 8.

With regard to the Mulele rebellion, sight remained one of the most popular senses by which to transmit suffering from the body of the tortured to the body of the requisitioned. Mambole Mudikanga⁸⁶, a member of the Congolese military in the late 1960s, said that the *militaires* used to operate in a manner that brought suffering to the surface of the execution, so that the requisitioned, without any distinction of age or sex, would consume it entirely with their eyes.⁸⁷ These practices resulted mostly in sensory disorders, both among children and adults, as this woman shows in her testimony:

They [the *militaires*] arrested Celestin Kwas [one of the four rebel leaders who had killed *militaires* during the rebellion]. They arranged a place to put him and kill him. [...] They hit him on the head with a rifle butt. He lost consciousness and fell down. He was frothing at the mouth. [...] The *militaires* began to rip his body. [...]. I was among the people who were watching. I had my daughter here on my shoulders. You had to see how the child would hold on to my neck. [...] She would pass her hands through my shoulders. She would hold on to me very tightly. Papa, she would lift up her eyebrows. She would lower her head on my shoulders when she saw how the *militaires* tore Célestin Kwas. [...] It was painful.⁸⁸

As the transference of suffering from the body of the tortured to the body of the requisitioned in Mangungu village was through vision, it should be noted that in many other places in the contested area this transference occurred by physical contact. The process followed, to a large extent, what Elaine Scarry described in *The Body in Pain*: “Pain [was] inflicted on a person in ever-intensifying ways. [...] The pain continually amplified within the person’s body, [was] [...] amplified in the sense that it [was] objectified, made visible to those outside the person’s body.”⁸⁹ The pain that was orchestrated outside the body of the requisitioned was violently incorporated into their bodies as they were gathered around the execution; thus the private and incommunicable character of suffering enacted on the tortured bodies was transformed and at the same time expanded the “boundaries of the sufferer’s body,”⁹⁰ as this woman from Ingundu recalls:

⁸⁶ This is a pseudonym.

⁸⁷ Mambole Mudikanga (72 years old), oral interview, Gungu, 14 January 2014.

⁸⁸ Palmie Andiang (75 years old), oral interview, Idiofa, 24 November 2013.

⁸⁹ Scarry, *The Body in Pain...*, p. 28.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*

The soldiers arrived suddenly at [Ingundu] looking for Osong Pierre, Albert Olung, Isidore Ngyum, and Celestin Kwass, all of them rebel leaders who held guns [...] during the rebellion. They said to everybody: 'Today, if we catch them [...], we will cook them [...] as one cooks food in the pot.' [...] They saw Pierre Osong. They [...] arrested him. They built a fireplace and said: 'Today, we will dissect you.' They gathered people [...] to attend the dissection. They tore Pierre Osong apart. They then cut him into small pieces like manioc that we spread on the '*mutalaka*.' [...] After tearing Pierre Osong apart, they took all the people they had gathered to watch. They made them stand in one row, men, women, and children. Among these soldiers, there was one who had a big neck. He pulled down a big mattress from their vehicle. He deposited it on the ground. Everyone was forced to sing: 'Mulele, Mulele, um, um! Mulele, Mulele, um, um! Ahahahahaha, Muleleeeee!' [...] This soldier with a big neck arrested a man among the people who were singing. He banged his head against a stone. The man died. Everyone was shaking. [...] Nobody could say anything to the *militaires*.⁹¹

This is how the relationship between crowd and torture was constructed in this space.

The death of the corpse and the return of the dead

In the morning of [30 June 1964], as we were on the run between Impini and Ifwanzondo, the *militaires* arrested a man named Munti. They shot him. He fell down. They went. They cut off his head. They scalped it. They hung the skull on a stick. They then burned his body and left. Sometime later, they saw a young man of your age [20-30 years old] who sought to enter the forest to escape. The *militaires* had expected him. They shot him. The bullets caught his feet. He fell. [...] The young man tried to crawl to hide in the grass, he could not, unfortunately. The soldiers went in running [...]. They could see through the grass where he had fallen. They seized him. They took him out on the road. They said that Mulele was in him. This young man cried, but the *militaires* did not want to leave him alone. They killed him. Then they dissected him into two parts [...]. They left the two parts spread on the road. They then left. [...] They killed a pregnant woman [...]. They tore her stomach with a knife. They released the child. They quickly snatched the intestines of the women. They opened her chest wide. [...]. They notched her bones. They then ripped off her breasts. They were deposited on the side. They took the two parts of the body they had dissected; they tied them to a tree. They then crapped on the intestines, bones, head, breasts and body of the child. All the while, we were still hiding. You should have seen how we were trembling. We were very scared. If they had seen us, they would have treated us the same way. [...]

The soldiers remained for a moment where they had killed the woman. One of them, who seemed to be their leader, ordered them to get off the pieces they had attached to the branch. His colleagues quickly carried out the order. [...] They got them down and spread them on the soil. They dissected the head.

⁹¹ Palmie Andiang (75 years old), oral interview, Idiofa, 24 November 2013.

They cut it in two. They took the body of the child. They placed it into the dissected skull of the woman. [...] Then they burned it at the same time as the other parts of the body of the woman. We could see through the grass. [...] The *militaires* went back to where they came from. They reviewed the pieces of the body of the young man they had killed before, and which they had left spread on the road. They gathered and burned them. [...] They went to Yassa [Lokwa]. They entered a house. The house had a ceiling and a man hiding there. They held their arms up as if they had smelt someone's odour. They searched. There was nothing. Upon leaving, one of them shot the ceiling. The man who was hiding shouted [...]. The soldiers asked him to come down. He descended. The man was shaking. [...]. He came out [of the house]. They asked him to sit on the door. They shot him. He died. They brought his body into the house. They set fire [to the house]. The roof fell on the body of this man. He was burnt. [...] The moment we spent in that forest before fleeing to Kipuku, we could hear Munti coming and crying at night where the *militaires* had killed him [...]. It was hard for us and for his family members to see that he was tormented.⁹²

Here are the bodies, the forms of death, as well as the kinds of treatment reserved for bodies from which life has already been taken. First of all these bodies were killed. Afterwards they were destroyed and subjected to other deaths, multiple deaths. One key conclusion can be drawn from reading this narrative by Palmie Andiang. The deaths she describes were “horrific” deaths; their extreme nature became deeply embedded in collective memory. The imposition of these “thousand deaths,”⁹³ which I here call “the death of the corpse,” proceeded from the double logic of “cruelty and excess.”⁹⁴ Such logic was primarily based on what can be called “the power to do everything.”⁹⁵ Secondly, it was based on the desire of “authoritarianism,”⁹⁶ to which the sadistic element associated with the Congolese state can be added. The *militaires* had to kill right to the end so that the bodily integrity of the victims, or enemies, would be violated. They had to make sure that nothing remained from this act, if only a formless mass, a negated essence. As we have seen, this logic of the systematic destruction of the body had only one goal: to inflict suffering beyond all suffering. In an interview with Kiangu, an expert on Congolese history, it is clear that this way of exercising violence on the bodies of people within this space was the product of hybridization. It substantively borrowed its

⁹² Palmie Andiang (75 years old), oral interview, Idiofa, 24 November 2013.

⁹³ Foucault, *Surveiller et punir...*, p. 18.

⁹⁴ Mbembe, “Essai sur le politique....,” p. 152.

⁹⁵ Ibid.

⁹⁶ Ibid.

materials from both pre-colonial and colonial repertoires, as well as the technologies introduced by the Cold War into post-colonial Congo:

Do not forget that Mobutu himself, to consolidate his power, used to kill people in a rather strange way. Do you know how Matanda and Kudia-Kubanza, authors of the [abortive] coup [of] 1977, were killed? According to what was said to us, they were downright delivered to the leopards that were [in] the Presidential Park. They threw them in. Everyone had to watch them struggling [against the Leopards] until their final end. [People] should be sure that they [Matanda and Kudia-Kubanza] really died [...]. In 1966, Mobutu publicly humiliated [Evariste] Kimba,⁹⁷ [Jérôme] Anany,⁹⁸ [Emmanuel] Bamba,⁹⁹ and [Alexandre] Mahamba¹⁰⁰ by hanging them here [in Kinshasa] at Pont Cabu.¹⁰¹ Already in the early 1960s, [Mobutu] was very active as an element of the CIA. He was trained in the new technologies of death.¹⁰² You know what happened then: the gruesome death of Lumumba.¹⁰³ You should also not forget that Mobutu had a meteoric encounter with Machiavelli's *Le Prince*. It was his bedside reading.¹⁰⁴ [...] He knew the experience and humiliation of the Belgian colonial administration from being in the *Force Publique*.¹⁰⁵ He knew, of course, the story of the red rubber [in Equateur province].¹⁰⁶ He also knew how ancient 'Congolese' warriors and kings

⁹⁷ Former Foreign Minister of Katanga and former "formateur" of the last government of the first republic.

⁹⁸ Former Minister of National Defence of the Adoula government.

⁹⁹ Former Finance Minister of the Adoula government, leader in the Church of Jesus Christ on Earth by His Special Envoy Simon Kimbangu.

¹⁰⁰ Former Minister of Land Affairs in the Lumumba and Adoula governments.

¹⁰¹ On these hangings, see Cléophas Kamitatu, *La grande mystification du Congo-Kinshasa ou les crimes de Mobutu*, Paris: Maspero, 1971, pp. 166-184; Verhaegen and al., *Congo 1966*, pp. 431-444; and Ndaywel è Nziem, *Histoire générale du Congo...*, p. 647.

¹⁰² See Larry Devlin, *Chief of Station, Congo: Fighting the Cold War in a Hot Zone*, New York: Public Affairs, 2007.

¹⁰³ See Jean Omasombo Tshonda, "Lumumba, drame sans fin et deuil inachevé de la colonisation," *Cahiers d'Etudes Africaines* 44, 173-174 (2004), pp. 221-261; Ludo de Witte, *The Assassination of Lumumba*, London and New York: Verso, 2002; Jean-Claude Willame, *Patrice Lumumba: La crise congolaise revisitée*, Paris: Karthala, 1990; and Thomas R. Kanza, *Conflict in the Congo: The Rise and Fall of Lumumba*, New York: Penguin, 1972.

¹⁰⁴ See William T. Close and Malonga Miatudila, *Beyond the Storm: Treating the Powerless and the Powerful in Mobutu's Congo/Zaire*, Marbleton: Meadowlark Springs Press, 2007.

¹⁰⁵ On these forms of humiliations, see Dibwe dia Mwembu, "La peine du fouet au Congo Belge," *Les Cahiers de Tunisie* 36, 135-136 (1986), pp. 127-153.

¹⁰⁶ See Daniel Vangroenweghe, *Du sang sur les lianes. Léopold II et son Congo*, Bruxelles: Didier Hâtier, 1986; Adam Hochschild, *King Leopold's Ghost: A Story of Greed, Terror, and Heroism in Colonial Africa*, Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1998; Nancy Rose Hunt, *A Nervous State...*, pp. 27-60; Nancy Rose Hunt, "An Acoustic Register: Rape and Repetition in Congo," in Ann Laura Stoler (ed.), *Imperial Debris: On Ruins and Ruination*, Durham: Duke University Press, 2013, pp. 39-66; and Osumaka Likaka, *Naming Colonialism: History and Collective Memory in the Congo, 1870-1960*, Wisconsin: Wisconsin University Press, 2009.

treated the bodies of their enemies.¹⁰⁷ So, taking someone during the rebellion and reducing [his body] to nothing[ness] was not surprising at all. It was within the general philosophy of the regime. Mobutu constructed [this philosophy] over the years by incorporating elements from various horizons, temporal as well as spatial.¹⁰⁸ Therefore it was necessary to kill with cruelty with the only goal of seeing the other suffering as much as possible. It was, in fact, to say to the suffering [body] that he was absolutely nothing.¹⁰⁹

The implementation of these hybrid methodologies in the specific context of the Mulele rebellion depended strongly on two elements: the military genius and the ability of the *militaires* to hide reality by projecting death onto the living subjects. Everything revolved around the notion of otherness. The other, as Kiangu puts it, “is everyone in front of me, whom I consider—rightly or wrongly—as participating in the combat of

¹⁰⁷ Before colonization, many tribes in what would become Congo used to dispose of the bodies of their enemies with brutality. In 1880s, the Azande of the Equateur region used to mutilate the bodies of their enemies. After killing them, they would take with them ears and genitals to symbolize their victory (E.E. Evans-Pritchard, “Zande Warfare,” *Athropos* 52, 1-2, 1957, p. 261). In Katanga region, where M’siri imposed his hegemony on most of the tribes, violent treatment was also reserved to the bodies of enemies. In 1887, Frederick Stanley Arnot, a Scottish missionary in visit to the region, wrote this about M’siri:

He is fierce and cruel as a soldier and in his ambition for power and gain [...] Hearing him talk of his wars, and seeing all round his yard human skulls, brought in baskets as a proof of his soldiers’ valour, the sensation creeps over one of being in a monster’s den [...] He has the name of being very kind among his people, but at the same time very strict. He does not stop at taking their heads off. (Ernest Baker, *The Life and Explorations of Frederick Stanley Arnot: The Authorized Biography of a Zealous Missionary, Intrepid Explorer, and Self-Denying Benefactor amongst the Natives of Africa*, London: Seeley, Service, 1921, p. 184)

In 1880s-1890s, the “Bangala” and Baloki of the Equateur region also used to treat violently the bodies of their enemies. Melville Hilton Simpson, British traveller and ethnologist, who visited them in 1890, left significant details in his diary:

While we were sitting at our tea[,] the last part of returning warriors filed past our house, carrying the limbs of those who had been slain in the fight. Some had human legs over their shoulders, others had threaded arms through slits in the stomachs of their dismembered foes, had tied the ends of the arms together, thus forming loops, and through these ghastly loops they had thrust their own living arms and were carrying them thus with the gory trunks dangling to and fro. (John H. Weeks, *Among Congo Cannibals*, London: Seeley, Service, 1913, p. 69)

¹⁰⁸ On these various “horizons” or “ingredients” See Florence Bernault, “The Shadow of Rule: Colonial Power and Modern Punishment in Africa,” in Frank Dokotter and Ian Brown, *Cultures of Confinement: A History of the Prison in Africa, Asia and Latin America*, New York: Cornell University Press, 2007, pp. 55-94.

¹⁰⁹ Ernest Kiangu (59 years old), oral interview, Kinshasa, 23 March 2015.

Mulele and who has in him a portion of Mulele, which multiplies in him, because Mulele as such cannot fight everywhere.”¹¹⁰

When considering the reasons given for the killing of people in this region, one realizes the prevalence of the construction of the other. This idea of “otherness” found its roots in the “Mulele myth,” a belief widespread in the region that revolved around ideas of “multiplicity” and “ubiquity.” It was said that Mulele was, essentially, a dispersive and ambiguous character.¹¹¹ People thought that he was characterized by an excess of the real and that he possessed extraordinary abilities that allowed him to transcend human reality.¹¹² They said that he was immortal, he had many guises and that nobody could apprehend him.¹¹³ People strongly believed that he was an incomprehensible person, a “body” without physicality, a “utopian” character.¹¹⁴ It was generally admitted that Mulele did not lend himself to precise measurement or exact calculation because he was here, there, and elsewhere. People thought that he could transfigure and become someone else; and when necessary that he could take on an animal form,¹¹⁵ change his age and sex, look like anyone, or potentially change only some of his appearance.¹¹⁶

Thus the *militaires*, projecting the existence of Mulele onto the bodies of others, would treat these bodies violently, thinking that these bodies housed Mulele. This is, doubtless, the idea contained in the testimony below. The speaker, Godelieve Akwanga, shows how prisoners would be enmeshed in the imagination of the *militaires* and condemned to carry Mulele’s history, despite the fact that they had their own and unique life stories. The result of being condemned in this way was that people “could not turn their death into their own death” or, in Derrida’s words, “a death that ought to have been their authentic death, their very proper death, their very own death.”¹¹⁷

¹¹⁰ Ernest Kiangu (59 years old), oral interview, Kinshasa, 23 March 2015.

¹¹¹ Ibid.

¹¹² Osam (81 years old), oral interview, Idiofa, 24 November 2013.

¹¹³ Ibid.

¹¹⁴ Innocent Yamb (56 years old), oral interview, Kinshasa, 29 September 2013. On “utopian body,” see Michel Foucault, *Le corps utopique suivi de les hétérotopies*, présentation de Daniel Defert, Paris: Nouvelles Editions Lignes, 2009, pp. 9-20.

¹¹⁵ Innocent Yamb (56 years old), oral interview, Kinshasa, 29 September 2013.

¹¹⁶ Kipoy (78 years old), oral interview, Kwanga Nganzi, 20 October 2013; and Gode Mokwabu (55 years old), oral interview, Kikwit, 17 October 2013.

¹¹⁷ Bra Das, “(Dis)figures of Death...,” p. 4.

Papa, I myself was arrested by the *militaires*. They brought me to Musenge Munene where they threw me in jail. Sometime later they returned to the prison where they threw me. They said to all of us who were in the prison: ‘We can smell Mulele in this prison.’ They suddenly pointed the finger to a boy who was there with us. They said to him: ‘It is you, Mulele! You have Mulele in you.’ The boy protested, in vain, that Mulele was not in him, and that he did not even know him. [...] The *militaires* insisted that he was, indeed, Mulele. One of them said to the boy: ‘Don’t you dare denying that you are Mulele? Can’t you see that your body smells like Mulele? [...] They took the boy outside the prison. They beat him in front of everyone. [...] They killed him. Then they mounted an altar. They placed him above and put him on fire. The boy’s body burnt. [...] They asked everyone to watch how Mulele was burning.’¹¹⁸

The act of putting somebody to death and destroying his/her dead body by dissecting or mutilating it until it is completely annihilated was, to a large extent, an act of “colonizing” death itself. Jean Baudrillard, in *Symbolic Exchange and Death*, writes: “power is possible only if death is no longer free, only if the dead are put under surveillance.”¹¹⁹ The deprivation of liberty in death can be seen in the ways in which putrefaction, the ultimate process in which bones gradually separate from one another as other parts of the body transform themselves “into icons of an exhausted and indeterminable time of death,” was carried out.¹²⁰ In the above examples, it was the *militaires* who determined the decomposition process of the bodies. It was they who had the final word in defining—or redefining—the process of decomposition of the bodies of their victims. The corruption of the body, which generally takes place in a slow and natural way, was precipitated by the *militaires*. The atoms of decay could no longer serve as catalysts. Bones were cut dramatically. Cartilages and joints were brutally separated, as in a metal workshop. The belly and chest were opened in haste, under the blows of bayonets.

The most dramatic part of this process of the “colonization” of death is the new form of suffering that the destruction of dead bodies and the deprivation of burial engendered. Palmie Andiang ends her testimony of hiding in the bush while witnessing the killing

¹¹⁸ Godelieve Akwanga (80 years old), oral interview, Idiofa, 15 December 2013. She was 31 years old when the rebellion broke out. She was arrested in early 1966 by the *militaires* near Idiofa. She spent three days in jail at Idiofa. After having been released, she went back to her village. Nowadays she lives in Idiofa.

¹¹⁹ Jean Baudrillard, *Symbolic Exchange and Death*, trans. Iain Hamilton, London: Sage, 1993, p. 130.

¹²⁰ Mbembe, *On the Postcolony*, p. 200.

and destruction of the bodies of others with a remarkable fact: the permanent return of the “spectre” of Munti, one of the killed victims, to the place of his execution. This idea suggests, in many ways, that in the local universe the tranquility of the spirit after death depended largely on how the body was treated after death. According to my informants, a body systematically destroyed would prevent the spirit from freely crossing the borders of death, and entering the hereafter, the world of the ancestors.¹²¹ The inability of crossing would result in the suspension of the spirit in a “non-place,”¹²² condemning it to wandering.¹²³ In this process of wandering, the powers of the night would take possession of the spirit and drive it as if the powers of night were the master of the selfhood of that spirit. The spirit, armored by the night powers, thus becomes the vessel for evil forces, generally represented by the spirit of death. As an entity orchestrated by the powers of the night, the spirit of death “requires pieces of meat and human bones for its survival.”¹²⁴ Its violence is indescribable because it is both physical and anatomical. It never lets go of its prey, “it invests and surrounds to the point of fracture and suffocation.”¹²⁵

Andiang’s narrative show how the destruction of the body and the deprivation of burial can produce both material and immaterial suffering. That such a conception of suffering falls into mythology or fantasy¹²⁶ does not mean that it has not influenced the way people in this region think about the mediation between the body, death and the afterlife. In general, the reconciliation between the dead and the afterlife depended largely on the treatment of the corpse in its materiality.¹²⁷ Knowing how to dispose of the remains of people killed during the rebellion at the same time enabled the spirits of the

¹²¹ Osam (81 years old), oral interview, Idiofa, 24 November 2013. See also Georgine Mankieta (67 years old), oral interview, Kikwit Sacré Coeur, 6 August 2015.

¹²² Placide Ngay (77 years old), oral interview, Idiofa, 17 November 2013.

¹²³ Palmie Andiang (75 years old), oral interview, Idiofa, 24 November 2013. See also Georgine Mankieta (67 years old), oral interview, Kikwit Sacré Coeur, 6 August 2015.

¹²⁴ Mbembe, *Critique de la raison...*, p. 200.

¹²⁵ Ibid, p. 205.

¹²⁶ Slavoj Žižek writes that, “the dead who return to cry at night, I don’t believe. It’s mythology.” What he calls: “fundamental fantasy of contemporary mass culture” (Slavoj Žižek, *Looking Awry: An Introduction to Jacques Lacan through Popular Culture*, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1992, p. 22).

¹²⁷ Ernest Kiangu (59 years old), oral interview, Kinshasa, 23 March 2015.

deceased to negotiate their entry into the world of ancestors.¹²⁸ Kiangu reflected on this problem of mediation at length:

In the Western world, which was also brought to us, the idea was to say: ‘We must resurrect. But to revive, we need a minimum of our body.’ And they watched absolutely [...] that the body is not totally corrupted. It is the same idea that one gets from [Ancient] Egypt [where the bodies of deceased people were embalmed] [...]. In Kwilu, [...] strictly speaking, when Christianity came, this is not what they taught people. People have not been taught in this way, that for somebody to resurrect he/she needs a minimum of his/her body. If we had to speak in terms of images, it seems to me that it is exactly the same image. When they say that someone dies and will join the ancestors in the Kalunga,¹²⁹ it is his spirit that goes. To allow him/her to make that trip, his/her body must be well buried. [...]

I guess you understand that even if people are strongly convinced that they go to the home of the ancestors, on the final note they only go there because they have a body, even though it is known that this body, which is travelling to the ancestral world, is only in decay. So the body must be well-treated for it to go back in peace to the Kalunga, the kingdom of the dead. [...] When the body is abused, destroyed, dismembered, or burned, in the minds of people it is as if this trip will not be accomplished. As a result, the spirit of the deceased person will be condemned to wandering, or, if you like, to continual suffering which, according to the people, can last up to x number of years.¹³⁰

It is this problem of mediation between the body, death and the afterlife, as well as the kind of suffering that non-mediation could generate, that brought men and women operating in this space to think about the techniques of conserving the remains of bodies destroyed by the *militaires*. According to my informants, the idea that animated these men and women to act in such a way was the redemption of the “wandering” spirits [*esprits égarés*], through the performance of funeral rites. Since the bodies were “brutally” destroyed by the *militaires* and that the chances for these spirits to find rest in the world of the ancestors were compromised, it was necessary to preserve these remains and proceed with the ritual ceremonies in a time of peace. These ceremonies were not

¹²⁸ In January 1964 drivers TPM Théophile Mbakieme, Louis Kayembe, and Michel Ngakasa complained that they had unearthed the bodies of two policemen killed in the Lukamba sector and buried them in Kikwit. They considered this act as a new kind of suffering: “Why [should we] go dig up the bodies of police officers who had already died?” they wondered. See V. Omwele, “Rapport journalier confidentiel commissariat en chef,” reel 12, box 8, folder 6, file H, doc. B0111. Archives Conseil National. The same month, François Nakesa was arrested as he tried to dig up the body of Adolphe Munanga, a policeman who died on the battlefield in January 1964 (Ibid.)

¹²⁹ Cemetery in Kimbala.

¹³⁰ Ernest Kiangu (59 years old), oral interview, Kinshasa, 23 mars 2015.

only intended to reconcile the spirits with the afterlife, they were also thought to inscribe them in the text of symbolic tradition. The idea generally materialized in collecting the nails and hair of the dead.¹³¹ But, in the case of someone like Munti whose body was completely destroyed and annihilated, people found it harder to work for the salvation of the spirit. Georgine Mankieta, who witnessed the destruction of dead bodies by the *militaires*, explained:

When they [the *militaires*] came, they killed my uncle. [...] They cut his body into small pieces. They then burned [it]. When the *militaires* left, my grandparents and my [other] uncles came back to search. They brought the right arm of my uncle. All the time spent in the midst of the forest, my grandparents roasted my uncle's arm over the fire so that it does not rot. At the end of the rebellion, when everyone came out of the bush, they buried it. My grandparents said that their son had to be properly buried to allow him to recover happiness where he had gone.¹³²

If the permanent inability of the spirit to leave the world of the living constituted a new form of suffering, it should be said that in terms of memory and memorialisation any connection between the dead and the living was reduced to suffering. To think of a corpse that had been systematically destroyed was, in the end, to appropriate the type of death that this corpse had been given—and even to identify with it. Under these conditions, “death appears in a sort of material screen that abolished the identity”¹³³ of the person who has undergone several destructions; only “to be melted into an identity that is not his/hers.”¹³⁴ Henceforth, the living, even though they were not murderers, were condemned to carry this heavy burden of endorsing the pain that the dead had endured, not only at the point of death, but also in the afterlife. From this process emerged a new interlacing and overlapping relationship between the living and the dead, a relationship that ultimately extended itself in the *longue durée*. Without doubt it is this idea that Andiang's last sentence (It was hard for us and for his family members to see that he was tormented) captured, and which Kiangu elaborates in more details here:

The corpse, it is already dead. It is true that when you kill it for the second time, its spirit continues to suffer because, as people think, its takes with it the

¹³¹ Georgine Mankieta, (65 years old), oral interview, Kikwit Sacré Cœur, 22 November 2013.

¹³² Ibid. See also Marie Nzamba (60 years old), oral interview, Kinshasa, 26 March 2013.

¹³³ Mbembe, *Critique de la raison...*, p. 212.

¹³⁴ Ibid.

marks of torture that it suffered when it was put to death. But, it should be said that the corpse will no longer be aware of the kind of death it was put to, nor will it remember the torture it was subjected to. It is those who are connected to the deceased person who will suffer in its place. [...] Whenever they think of him [the deceased person], they will only see something they would have never wanted to see in their lives. As you can understand, to think, in such circumstances, becomes a new form of suffering. [...] This kind of suffering is specific in the sense that it stays forever.

Death was given at a particular moment, but it was given with an overwhelming power so that [...] everyone remains with profound feelings of regret, and over time they get to ruminate the same kind of suffering over and over again. [...] As you can see, not only is that person dead, but the others, those who are connected to him, are humiliated because they are condemned to bear this pain [...]. The suffering inflicted in this way is not only inflicted on the deceased body, it is also imposed on all the others, those who remained in the world. [...] So, and I think this is what we should take from all of this, the kind of pain inflicted this way does not go away once and for all. It comes back all the time; and it identifies itself with those who remain in the world.¹³⁵

Conclusion

This chapter deals with the various acts of giving death that emerged in the course of the Mulele rebellion, and the pain and suffering that such acts and the politics underpinning them caused, as remembered by some of the actors who lived through this drama and eventually survived it. It is an attempt at analysing and exploring the memories of death and suffering, both by the people who were forced to give death to others, and by those who were forced to receive death but who, at some point, survived to tell the story of these defining moments, a long time later.

The rebellion, in its extreme manifestation, distinguished itself by its ability of inflicting pain and suffering on people's bodies in specific ways. It relied strongly upon the triple logic of cruelty, excess, and sadism. This consisted in "seizing from the world" the bodies of negated subjects and putting them to death, a death without essence. During the rebellion, the body was a body because it was primarily a target. It was a target exposed to various forms of assault. It was not only at the centre of the act of giving or receiving death, it was the actual subject of this act. The numerous forms of assault it was exposed to aimed at its destruction and dismemberment. If death was given to this

¹³⁵ Ernest Kiangu (59 years old), oral interview, Kinshasa, 23 mars 2015.

body, this giving was not done at random. It was given step by step, the result of a deliberate and at times orchestrated assault on a number of body parts which, with more or less systematic demolition, led to the final end. Conspicuous in this regard are a number of lethal practices. First, practices of perforation which led to the loss of blood. The idea was that the subject would lose blood. Multiple perforations of the body of the subject would accelerate this loss of blood until, ultimately, the person would die. The anatomy of this kind of death differentiated it from death by shooting. Second are the practices of amputation and dissection which also aimed at the loss of blood and the destruction of the body. Third are the practices of self-consummation, which consist of forcing the subject to consume their own bodily organs as a form of punishment. Lastly is the overarching question of pain and suffering and the responses to this question.

The rebellion, in its extreme vivid manifestation, also distinguished itself by its ability to incorporate the crowd—numerous “symptomatic” bodies gathered forcibly to witness the violence that was being deployed on the bodies of the victims—into the very act of killing or giving death. By this it transformed the crowd into “terrifying statues,” “recipients of pain,” and “abject of death,” by transposing onto them, through the politics of seeing the brutality of physical contact, the pain and suffering of the subjects who were being invested by relations of power.

In the last resort, the rebellion distinguished itself by its ability to pursue people beyond all suffering and into death itself: violating their bodily integrity and, at the same time, annihilating both their material and immaterial lives. Such way of proceeding had huge consequences for both the dead and the living. On the one hand it led to the emergence of an overlapping relationship between the dead and the living. On the other hand it resulted in condemning the living to carry the dead along with them through their lives as a heavy and inseparable burden. By seizing the bodies of the victims and inflicting pain and suffering on them until they were completely annihilated they not only destroyed these bodies in their present actuality, but also inscribed pain and suffering onto the future of those who remained in life.

Chapter Three – Scars, Marked Bodies, and Suffering

Papa, [in 1970], when I came out of the bush, the first thing I had to ask for when I got in Kikwit was a mirror. I did not want people to continue telling me stuff about my scars. [...] I wanted to see with my own eyes what my face had become. [...] I wanted to see myself and understand. [...] I asked for a big mirror. Not only that I wanted to see my face, I also wanted to see my back and all the marks that my back was carrying. In the bush, people used to tell me. But I was sick of them always talking about me. [...] This time, I wanted to see myself and understand. [...] I wanted to have a clear idea of what my body had become in its entirety. [...] After locking myself into the house, I took off my clothes. [...] Papa, it was horrible. I assure you that it was horrible to see my face in the mirror. [...] People used to tell me, but now I could see for myself what my face had become. [...] I did not believe at all that it was me, Kitoto. [...] I could see scratches all over my back. [...] On my buttocks, you cannot even tell. Besides, you can see how scars abound on my legs, just to show you these ones. [see Figure 10]¹

These are the memories of Kitoto, the emblematic figure discussed at length in the previous chapter. The morbid spectacle of his being cut up, as we saw, was an indication of the passage of human being into animal, meat, and nothingness. The fragments of testimonies he provides are painful, full of emotions and regret. To a large extent, they shed light on the new form of life that took shape at the moment when disruptions and reductions—aiming to reduce everything that was corporeal to “pieces, fragments, folds” and wounds difficult to seal—were introduced into the continuousness of the corporeal. It is this new form of life, which I deliberately call *the life of scars*, which constitutes the subject of this chapter.

The basic argument of this chapter is that the scars which people bear on their bodies can produce or reproduce suffering in the *longue durée*, as long as those who bear them live. In the first part of the chapter I discuss the production and reproduction of suffering in relation to the self, the image of the self, and the gaze of others. The second part takes up these themes in relation to temporality, and shows how people could make use of scars to project themselves into the future and imagine what was possible in this future.

¹ Eugène Kitoto (80 years old), oral interview, Kikwit, 7 August 2015.

Living with scars: Self, image, others, and suffering

To live with the scars of the rebellion is to permanently live in a state of self-questioning, or self-interrogation, about the transformations that the body has undergone.² It means, to a large extent, continuously and critically looking at one's body as a shapeless mass that has undergone a series of mutilations and destructions, in order to grasp the nature of the terrifying act that led to these bodily reductions.³ As many people from the contested region remembered, this is what was happening in everyday life, both during the rebellion as well as after it had ended and stability returned.

This is exactly what we experienced. [...] My cousin, a very grown and strong man, was arrested by the *militaires* on the night of [30 June 1964]. They cut off his right arm from here [elbow]. [...] And then, they cut off his left hand. [...] One can only imagine the kind of trouble he went through! [...] I can see how he was howling that day. It was not really different from the howling of a beast. [...] All the time we spent in the bush, he could not stop looking at himself. [...] Whenever we got somewhere after many hours of wandering, he would prefer to withdraw and be alone. [...] He would constantly raise the stumps of his arms and look at them. It was painful. One could read the pain on his face. He was always sad. [...] Tears used to run down his cheeks almost every minute. At the end of the rebellion, he could not do anything. He would stay in the village from morning to night, regretting all the time. [...] One day, after having looked at his arms, he turned to me and asked me sadly: 'What did I do to deserve all of this? [...] Is there anyone out there who can give me a clear explanation?' Papa, looking at his body and asking himself a bunch of questions had become his new life. As he could not bear the pain and the humiliation anymore, he died prematurely in 1968.⁴

But, to have a look over one's own body is more than this gesture of self-questioning. Sartre states that this gesture requires one "to stand" in front of someone or something that is being questioned, interrogate this person or thing about his or "its ways of being" and, on the basis of a "pre-interrogative familiarity" with this person or this thing, "expect" an unveiling of his/ "its being" or his/ "its way of being."⁵

² As shown in Kitoto's testimonies at the beginning of this chapter.

³ Osam (83 years old), phone call, Kikwit- Idiofa, 8 August 2015; Evariste Nzonzele (80 years old), phone call, Kikwit-Idiofa, 8 August 2015; Palmie Andiang (77 years old), phone call, Kikwit-Idiofa, 8 August 2015; Placide Ngay (82 years old), phone call, Kikwit-Idiofa, 8 August 2015, and Adolphe Kuma Kuma (76 years old), oral interview, Kikwit Sacré Coeur, 6 August 2015.

⁴ Georgine Mankieta (67 years old), oral interview, Kikwit Sacré Coeur, 6 August 2015. See also Adolphe Kuma Kuma (76 years old), oral interview, Kikwit Sacré Coeur, 6 August 2015; and Ernest Kiangu (59 years old), oral interview, Kinshasa, 14 December 2015.

⁵ Sartre, *Being and Nothingness...*, pp. 4-5.

To have to look at one's own body means turning this body into an object of knowledge and creating a discourse on it. It implies rejecting how others represent my body, even when I know that in situations such as these, whereby I myself cannot see the deformities of my own body, I have to rely on others to describe these deformities to me; or, as Lacan states, "the image of my body passes necessarily through the one imagined in the gaze of the other."⁶

Looking at my own body means also confirming for myself that my bodily disruptions are concrete and cannot be restored by adding up the individual parts of my body that others, those who look at me, describe. Looking finally means that I can only accept the gravity or profundity of the reductions introduced to my body's natural life if I can see these disruptions myself.

This opens the question of how I can appreciate the disruptions introduced to my body while I am unable to see these disruptions myself. How do I make the disruptions of my body the object of my attention when I am unable to see them? How do I get a clear idea of the disruptions when I am deprived of the faculty that would enable me to grasp their essence? These are fundamental questions that most of the people who experienced violent disruptions to the continuity of their bodies posed themselves in the years after the rebellion. A woman from Banda, whose uncle's body underwent a series of mutilations in Mukulu in 1965, remembered this questioning:

He was arrested at night. The *militaires* waited until the first rays of the sun to dissect him. [...] They stabbed his right thigh with the bayonet. The man began to shout like an animal. [...] They seized his right eye. They stabbed it with their bayonet. We were standing in front of the *militaires*, watching and applauding how they were dissecting my uncle. [...] They seized him again. They gave him a blow of the bayonet in the left eye. There was blood. [...] After all of this, they decided to release him. They asked him to run away. [...] How could he run away while he could not see anymore? [...] It was so sad. [...] The man lied down on the ground. His body was covered with blood. [...] He could barely speak. [...] After the departure of the *militaires*, he tried to open his mouth and speak, but he could not. You could tell that the man was deeply racked by pain. In the following months he would ask himself: 'Oh the world, why? [...] Why me? How could they take everything away from me? Even my own body, I cannot see it anymore.' It was really hard. He would not

⁶ Jacques Lacan, cited by Sabine Melchior-Bonnet, *The Mirror: A History*, trans. Katharine H. Jewett, New York-London: Routledge, 2001, p. 6.

let anyone tell him anything about his body. He died five months later because of the pain.⁷

All these questions—the ones this man was asking himself as well as those I raised above—have two implications: firstly, they led the subjects to reject any mediation or evaluation by others, as they considered the comments as nothing more than the product of the others' construction. Phrases such as: “I did not want people to continue telling me stuff about my scars;”⁸ or “I wanted to see with my own eyes what my face had become;”⁹ or “Please stop bothering me with your words, I cannot even see what you are talking about”¹⁰ all illustrate this rejection of the mediation by others.

Secondly, these questions led the subjects to search for tools that could help them receive a visual image of themselves and thus make this mediation unnecessary. Hence there was an increasing desire by victims to get access to a mirror.¹¹ But, what would happen in front of this polished and metallic glass, believed able to capture what one really looks like and place it in front of oneself? It is precisely the “divorce between seeing and touching,”¹² “a discrepancy, a gap between the subject and his/her representation, a space of intrusion and dissonance between the subject and its fictitious double [*double fictive*] represented by the shade”¹³ that these women and men experienced in front of their mirrors. Kitoto's fragments of testimony, which highlight how he saw a new geography of his body represented through the mirror, are evoking. The most difficult part of the engagement with the mirror was, however, confronting the image that appeared in it and its surprising and in appalling appearance. At the moment when the subjects step in front of the mirror, appearances were transcended. The subjects went beyond the boundaries between sight and touch and reached a peak point where

⁷ Marie Nzamba (62 years old), oral interview, Kikwit, 9 August 2015.

⁸ Eugène Kitoto (80 years old), oral interview, Kikwit, 7 August 2015.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Marie Nzamba (62 years old), oral interview, Kikwit, 9 August 2015.

¹¹ Usually, during the rebellion, people used to look at themselves through water whenever they wanted to carry out a self-examination of their bodily disruptions. Bathing, in these conditions, became a moment of self-torturing. Those who had no injuries on their bodies would splash into the stream without wondering, while those with bodily disruptions would stop for a moment, look at their images in the water to see if the wound was healed or not (Ernest Kiangu, (59 years old, oral interview, Kinshasa, 14 December 2015).

¹² Mbembe, *Critique de la raison...*, p. 202. See also Françoise Frontisi-Ducroix and Jean-Pierre Vernant, *Dans l'œil du miroir*, Paris: Editions Odile Jacob, 1997, pp. 222-224.

¹³ Mbembe, *Critique de la raison...*, p. 203.

their psyches cast off their corporeality.¹⁴ They question the images in front of them, and try to grasp the reality¹⁵ that the image in front of them seems to suggest.

Papa, [...] I was surprised when I saw the scratches all over my back. I could not believe that it was me. I thought it was someone else [tears]. [...] People used to tell me, but it is only when I looked at myself in the mirror that I came to understand what I went through. [...] My cheeks were completely distorted. The scars from the stitches were still there. You can see them, can't you? [Figure 11] It was terrible. I remember spending hours and hours in front of the mirror. I was crying. I was saying to myself: 'If only I could change what I see into something else!' Papa, I could not stop wondering if what I saw in the mirror was me. I could not believe. It was so painful for me.¹⁶

We can see how the process of self-examination could also become an act of self-torture. However, the images that the subjects saw in the mirror surprised them. This surprise lies, essentially, in the monstrous character of the image. Yet it also goes beyond this monstrous character. In *The Ground of the Image*, Jean-Luc Nancy writes:

The image disputes the presence of the thing. In the image, the thing is not content simply to be; the image shows *that* the thing is and *how* it is. The image is what takes the thing out of its simple presence and brings it to presence, to *praes-entia*, to being-out-in-front-of-itself [...] The image is of the order of the monster. [...] [I]t is outside of the outside the common sphere of presence because it is the display of presence. It is the manifestation of presence, not as appearance, but as exhibiting, as bringing to light and setting forth.¹⁷

But the image of Kitoto's deformed body, and his encounter with this image, is of a qualitatively greater and different degree than an encounter with any image, as he, himself, shows in this testimony:

I spent hours and hours in front of the mirror. [...] Thoughts began to multiply inside of me when I saw the image of myself in the mirror. [...] What could I do? [...] I was crying. I could not believe that. [...] The hardest part was when I looked between my thighs. I came to understand that I had become worthless [...]. I held my [penis]. [...] I raised it. [...] I looked at it through the mirror. Papa, what a pain! It was terrible. I hit my hands against each other. [...] It is true that when I was in the bush, I would touch my scrotum and my genitals. [...] But in front of the mirror, things were different. [...] I could see that my

¹⁴ On this phenomenon, see Jean Starobinski, *The Living Eye*, trans. Arthur Goldhammer, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1989, p. 4.

¹⁵ A reality whose reading was hitherto only possible through the mediation of the other.

¹⁶ Eugène Kitoto (80 years old), oral interview, Kikwit, 7 August 2015.

¹⁷ Jean-Luc Nancy, *The Ground of the Image*, trans. Jeff Fort, New York: Fordham University Press, 2005, p. 21-22.

scrotum had lost its [normal form]. [...] I could not stop thinking about what the *militaires* had done to me.¹⁸

The surprise caused by what the subjects saw in the materiality of their mirrors was also due to the fact that the images seen brutally interrupted the ignorance in which they had hitherto been able to live with regards to their bodily deformations.¹⁹ And yet, while disturbing and troubling the subjects by taking “the thing out of its simple presence and bring[ing] it to pre-sence,”²⁰ the images also revealed some truths. As the testimonies above show, the truths revealed by the images were disturbing and shocking insofar as they only came out of themselves in order to harm. This is what Kitoto points out:

I was completely horrified. [...] Even though my [consciousness] reminded me all the time that it was me, still I could not believe that [the image] I saw [in the mirror] was me. [...] Tears were spilling from my eyes. [...] [Having a look between my legs] reminded me more than once that it was over. My marital life had no more meaning. A man without [testicles], was he still worth? [...] I cried out: ‘Oh [my testicles], you are [now] gone! I will no longer have you.’ [...] Papa, I cried out. I asked myself: ‘The *militaires*, why did you cut my [testicles] off? [...] Why? And yet you had already stabbed me everywhere, why could not you just leave me my [testicles]?’²¹

The most striking element in this process of revealing the truth is the way in which Kitoko recounted scrutinizing his body as something alien, something strange, something over which he had no power; and, in the process of this self-examination, talking to parts of himself, to fragments, to his genitals: “Oh ... you are gone!” Of course it is common among men to experience the penis as a self-animated subject, distinct, and autonomous from the body that bears it. But here Kitoto described it as a lost possession and an autonomous subject worthy of address, one whose gratuitous, inexplicable destruction at the hands of the *militaires* has rendered him without “worth.” This, as we can see, has some bearing on the question of the “wholeness” and partibility—or even the fragmentation—of one’s body as an object of examination by oneself.²²

¹⁸ Eugène Kitoto (80 years old), oral interview, Kikwit, 7 August 2015.

¹⁹ Jean-Luc Nancy, *Being Singular Plural*, trans. Robert D. Richardson and Anne E. O’Byrne, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2000, pp. 171-172.

²⁰ Nancy, *The Ground of...*, p. 22.

²¹ Eugène Kitoto (80 years old), oral interview, Kikwit, 7 August 2015.

²² Here, of course, it is a question of gender/sexuality as indexed by parts of the body. There is something of value in the literatures on this related to mastectomy following breast cancer. See, for example, S. L. Jain, “Cancer Butch,” *Cultural Anthropology* 22, 4 (2007), pp. 501-538.

The image that the subject perceived through the materiality of his mirror, in which the body appeared in all its nakedness, reminded him that the body has been separated from its original form. It has undergone a becoming, a “radical metamorphosis.”²³ It has become something else, something other than what it previously had been. Hence the shock, regret, loss of will, and negativity, as we can see from the testimonies above. The same image that the subject saw in the mirror revealed the marks that a violent person, in this case the *militaire*, wanted to see on “the thing or being he assaulted.”²⁴ It revealed to the subject how this violent person was only preoccupied with seeing “the internal life principle externalized, with all its colourful and flowing intensity;”²⁵ and how, through this act of externalization, the same violent person wanted to appropriate death, “not by gazing into emptiness of the depths but [...] by filling his eyes with red [...] and with the clots in which life suffers and dies.”²⁶ Kitoto remembers this double act of externalization of his “internal life principle” and appropriation of death by the *militaires*:

When I saw my face in the mirror, I was shocked. [...] My mouth widely opened, I suddenly remembered the young man that the *militaires* killed like an animal in Lutshima.²⁷

Instead of killing him far away, they preferred to kill him in the presence of his father. They took the bayonet. They began to stab the child. The child fled. They ran after him. They caught him. They opened his eyes widely. Two blows of the bayonet into the right eye: ‘*kiek, kiek.*’ The eye burst. Blood [...] flowed. They grabbed him again. They bayoneted him at the neck, ‘*kiek, kiek.*’ They began to turn the bayonet [in the neck of the child]. They moved the bayonet. The child shouted: ‘Ah, ah, *munu!*’ They pulled the bayonet out

²³ On this concept of “radical metamorphosis,” see Catherine Malabou, *The Wounded: From Neurosis to Brain Damage*, trans. Steven Miller, New York: Fordham University Press, 2012; Catherine Malabou, *Le Change Heidegger: Du fantastique en philosophie*, Paris: Editions Léo Scheer, 2004; Catherine Malabou, *Ontology of the Accident: An Essay on Destructive Plasticity*, trans. Carolyn Shread, Cambridge: Polity Press, 2012; Catherine Malabou, *The Future of Hegel: Plasticity, Temporality, and Dialectic*, trans. Lisabeth During, New York: Routledge, 2005; and Adrian Johnston and Catherine Malabou, *Self and Emotional Life: Philosophy, Psychoanalysis, and Neuroscience*, New York: Columbia University Press, 2013.

²⁴ Nancy, *The Ground of...*, p. 20.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 24.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 24-25.

²⁷ Eugène Kitoto (80 years old), oral interview, Kikwit, 7 August 2015.

[from the neck of the child]. They gave him another blow to the chest, ‘*kiek, kiek.*’ Over. The child gave up his soul [*azenga ntima*].²⁸

I was horrified. I could see how the bayonet blows would make the young man urinate. It was painful to remember all of this.²⁹

This is where the obsession with looking at one’s own image in the mirror could lead. But more than that, the image that the subject perceives through the materiality of his mirror revealed to him how violence “denatures, wrecks, and massacres that which it assaults.”³⁰ It also revealed how the same violence, once it has intruded into the body, “takes away [the] form and meaning”³¹ of that which it has assaulted, and makes “it into nothing other than a sign of its own rage, assaulted or violated thing or being,” a thing or being “whose very essence now consists in its having been assaulted or violated.”³²

It [the image] also reminded me of [those terrible moments] when the *militaires* came towards me and caught me.³³

They took the bayonet. They wanted to kill me with the bayonet. I said to their leader: ‘Pardon, [...] Lieutenant Nguya. I am begging you. Please shoot me. Don’t kill me with your bayonet [...].’ The *militaire* replied: ‘No, you spent so much time deciding. You must die by bayonet as your comrades were. If you do not want to, you will die ‘suffocated’ like [...] the other recalcitrant [have been killed]. [...] The weapons [...] will [only] [help] to kill Mulele. But you, you must die by bayonet [...].’ They decided to kill me. They asked me to pass ahead. They tied me up. I was shaking. They shot. The bullet penetrated my cheek. Then, it came out on the other side. [...] I was bleeding. They left me naked. I managed to flee. [...] I took a wire and made a belt. [Afterwards], I took the leaves of *bantundu*. I put them all around my hips. Papa, to leave Lutshima and [reach] Kakobola, what a [...] sun! It was shining! I began to cry like a child. There were itches everywhere. I [began] to scratch. [...] I decided to take off the belt and leaves I wore. [...] I [reached] [...] a village called Yongo [...]. My heart was overheating [...]. Everyone was laughing at me as I was naked. [...] It was painful. I [cried out] and regretted having been born.³⁴

On reading these testimonies, one can see how images from the past, that the subject would not probably want to remember, are being crystallized again and again in his

²⁸ Eugène Kitoto (78 years old), oral interview, Kikwit, 1 November 2013.

²⁹ Eugène Kitoto (80 years old), oral interview, Kikwit, 7 August 2015.

³⁰ Nancy, *The Ground of...*, 16.

³¹ Ibid.

³² Ibid.

³³ Eugène Kitoto (80 years old), oral interview, Kikwit, 7 August 2015.

³⁴ Eugène Kitoto (78 years old), oral interview, Kikwit, 1 November 2013.

memory. But the same image in the mirror, that raised so many questions and thoughts in the subject, reminded him that violence, which unexpectedly intruded into his body, is only “stupidity” “in the strongest sense, the thickest and most irremediable sense.”³⁵ And, as Nancy put it, “it is not the stupidity that comes from a lack of intelligence, but much worse it is the stupidity of the stupid twat.”³⁶ It is “stupidity” for, once it has intruded into the body, it does not want to substitute anything else other than itself.³⁷ It owns the body that it has invaded, and imprints itself on it. Instead of leaving those marks free, it assigns them new functions, that of producing and reproducing suffering.³⁸ A focus on the fragments of memories of those who experienced “the stubborn will”³⁹ of violence, which makes it “concerned only with its own shattering intrusion,”⁴⁰ can help to have a better understanding of how, in the *longue durée*, these marks imprinted on the bodies fulfilled this role of production and reproduction of suffering assigned to them.

If I am miserable today, it is because of what the *militaires* did to me. [...] When I came out of the bush [in 1970], it was very difficult for me. [...] At the time, Mobutu did not want people to speak about the rebellion anymore. Talking about my injuries to strangers was really a problem. Whenever I was in front of a stranger, I would lie about the cause of my injuries, because you never know [...]. I was a man of pride when I was born. But, today, I am worthless. [...] I am now the object of mockery for everyone because of what the *militaires* did to me. My voice, I no longer have it. And it has been years now. Along the way, people make fun of me. [...] They say to me: ‘Look at this “mute” [*espèce de muet*] walking up and down.’ ‘Mute’ is the name they gave me because of my voice. When I tell them that I have not always been so, no one understands me. When they begin to laugh at me, you have no idea! And when I see all of this, [...] pain and sorrow multiplies in me. Even when I politely tell them that I was not born with these deformities, nobody understands me. On the contrary, they laugh out loud at me. This is what I have been experiencing—and still experience—for years. [...] It is painful!⁴¹

³⁵ Nancy, *The Ground of...*, p. 16.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 16-17.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 17.

³⁸ After having seen his image in the mirror, Kitoto said: “I came to the conclusion that the *militaires* cannot be anything else than dogs. They are [...] idiots [...] All they know is to destroy. All they know is to destroy. [...] They do not care about the consequences of their actions” (Eugène Kitoto, 80 years old, oral interview, Kikwit, 7 August 2015).

³⁹ Nancy, *The Ground of...*, p. 16.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

⁴¹ Eugène Kitoto (80 years old), oral interview, Kikwit, 7 August 2015.

Hence, to seize bodies during the rebellion, to torture these bodies until they are marked is to expose these bodies to the perpetual renewal of humiliation, and to crush them into subjectivity across time. It is also to render the mobility of these people vulnerable within a political regime that is essentially preoccupied with liquidating its enemies. By grafting tightly on the skin, the marks imprinted on people's bodies automatically linked them to politics. This was particularly the case in the Mobutu regime which, as the testimonies above suggest, often understood the scars imprinted on a body to suggest that its bearer had been part of the rebellion. The scars could thus lead to the arrest of entire "body" as they betrayed the bearer. People bearing scars could be dragged before military courts and condemned to death, a violent death. They could be hanged in public, in front of everyone, without mercy.⁴² The *raison d'être* of power during the Mobutu regime, as suggested by the previous chapter, was decidedly "nervous." It could "penetrate the bodies of its subjects with nervous energy." Once in the bodies, it would place the subjects "in extremely dangerous and vulnerable situations and [...] arouse in them different orders of sensation." This could go "from physical pain to convulsions." It resulted from this nervousity "bodies that were [...] [violently] spread out," or "shaken by terrible jerks."⁴³ This man remembers what happened in 1965 near Kikwit Airfield:

They [the *militaires*] began [the process of killing] the young man, who was arrested because of his scars, by giving him food. They gave him a lot of food and forced him to eat. [...] [And then] they beat him heavily to the point where he could not rise anymore. [After that] they dragged him in front of the wooden podium that was there. [...] They forced him to say in front of everyone why he was going to be killed. [...] Afterwards, they placed the rope around his neck. They destroyed the plank [he was standing on]. [...] The young boy began to swim in the air. His body was shaking. His tongue came out. The saliva was flowing from both sides of the mouth. The young boy died while he was still urinating and shitting. [...] Papa, watching this scene was really awful.⁴⁴

Beyond this humiliation caused by political power is the form of suffering created by the narrative construction by others. In the specific case of Kitoto, this narrative

⁴² Jacques Kuma Kuma (66 years old), oral interview, Kikwit Sacré Coeur, 6 August 2015.

⁴³ Achille Mbembe, "Variations on the Beautiful in Congolese Worlds of Sound," in Sarah Nuttal (ed.), *Beautiful/Ugly: African and Diaspora Aesthetics*, Durham-London: Duke University Press, 2006, p. 74.

⁴⁴ Jacques Kuma Kuma (66 years old), oral interview, Kikwit Sacré Coeur, 6 August 2015.

construction by others led to the attribution of degrading stereotypes such as “mute.” Other victims were nicknamed “eighteen” or “*diboité*” [dislocated], depending on whether they lacked two fingers or two toes, or they walked with a limp. As this woman recalls:

The *militaires* arrested three young men. [...] Papa, do you know what they did to them? [...] They grabbed the first one. They stabbed his right arm [with the bayonet]. And then they cut his thumbs off. [...] They caught the second one. They beat him up heavily. And then they cut his ears off. [...] They turned to the last one. They beat him as well and they cut his lips off. Afterwards they asked the three young men to walk away to the bush. [...] Do you know how people used to call these three young men? The first one people used to call ‘eighteen’ as he lost both thumbs. The second they used to call ‘*maseke*’ [horns], because he would put his hands around the eardrums to hear better as he was no longer had ear cups. The fact of continuously putting his hands around his ears gave the impression of someone who had horns. That is why he was nicknamed ‘*maseke*’ [horns]. [...] The last one people used to call ‘*aseka kala*,’ meaning someone who always laughs, because he did not have his lips anymore. And having his teeth always visible gave the impression of someone who always laughs.⁴⁵

“Mute,” “*diboité*,” as well as “*maseke*” are primarily words. “A word,” writes Achille Mbembe, “always refers to something. But the word also has a proper thickness, a proper density. A word is made to evoke something in the consciousness of that which it addresses, or who hears it. The more it has a density and thickness, the more it provokes sensation, a feeling, a resentment among those to which it refers. There are words that hurt.”⁴⁶ “Mute,” “*diboité*,” and “*maseke*” are among those words. Worn permanently as an insult, the effects of their weight mark the consciousness of those who are sentenced to bear them unconditionally. As we can see, the words “mute,” “*diboité*,” and “*maseke*” objectify, degrade, paralyse, amputate, and emasculate those who are forced to bear them, as Kitoto went on saying:

When they insult me like that, I do not even know how to answer. [...] Isn’t it that you can only answer with words? I am deprived of those words. What do you want me to do? [...] When I dare to speak, they multiply insults. [...] They say to me: ‘Look at this mute who wants to speak. What is it that he wants to say exactly? [...]’ It is painful. Even my own son-in-law calls me

⁴⁵ Georgine Mankieta (67 years old), oral interview, Kikwit Sacré Coeur, 6 August 2015. Also Adolphe Kuma Kuma (76 years old), oral interview, Kikwit Sacré Coeur, 6 August 2015; and Osam (83 years old), phone call, Kikwit-Idiofa, 8 August 2015.

⁴⁶ Mbembe, *Critique de la raison...*, p. 219.

‘mute.’ Nobody has any idea of what I am going through. [...] Those who cannot make fun of me openly, they do it through gestures. [...] What can I do? When I try to speak, my blood pressure increases, my body gets tired, I suddenly get breathless. And this is even one more reason for them to intensify the insults. [...] How can I live in peace? How should I not be sick all the time?⁴⁷

Apart from these degrading words, the narrative construction by others also led to the use of gestures as a way of making fun of the victims, as Georgine Mankieta explains below. It is within this economy of gestures that the marked bodies could become a fixed idea and, therefore, destroyed. When people could not make use of gestures to fix them, they would make use of metaphors from their web of words. People developed ways of separating words and sentences from their conventional meanings. They would use those words in contradictory ways and, in doing so, offended those living with disruptions inflicted upon their bodies.

Papa, people suffered a lot. [...] You get into a village to only find that some people do not have ears, others do not have legs, and some others do not have arms. [...] You would not even be able to look at them. [...] Once in front of them, all you could do is to pretend that you have not seen anything while actually you are watching them from the corner of your eyes. [...] This is what we used to do. [...] One day, my friends and I sat down on the edge of the road. [...] We saw ‘eighteen’ coming. [...] My friend touched me slightly on my thigh. She said to me in a low-pitched voice: ‘Georgine, look, “eighteen” is coming towards us.’ I lift up my eyes. I saw the man coming. Quickly, I turned my eyes around in order not to give the impression that I was looking at him. [...] My friend insisted. I pretended not to understand and was absolutely not in the mood of lifting up my eyes. [...] She dug her nails into my leg. [...] And when I lifted up my eyes, she stretched her mouth twice in the right direction, as to point the direction from which ‘eighteen’ was coming. I lifted up my eyes again. After a few minutes we saw ‘eighteen’ stopping. [...] He turned towards us and stared at us. [...] We understood that he was aware that we were watching him. For a few minutes he stood in front of us. He shook his head and then left. You could tell that he was very depressed. [...] Everyone had their own tips when it came to making fun of people. [...] One could laugh in front of this man without lips to say that this man had been laughing forever.⁴⁸

Confronted with such humiliation, the marked body could do no better than itself seek refuge in laughter:

I was walking down the street. And all of a sudden they began to laugh at me. [...] I stopped and turned around. [...] I saw them as they were laughing out

⁴⁷ Eugène Kitoto (80 years old), oral interview, Kikwit, 7 August 2015.

⁴⁸ Georgine Mankieta (67 years old), oral interview, Kikwit Sacré Coeur, 6 August 2015.

loud at me. [...] As I could not say anything, I just shook my head [...] and laughed as well. [...] I decided to go away as they were intensifying the insults. But all along the road I could not contain myself. I continued to laugh.⁴⁹

What was this kind of laughter that captured and invested the marked body, maintained and extended itself across time? Certainly it was not the laughter of mutual recognition, the one that happens when one suddenly encounters someone one knows but rarely sees.⁵⁰ It was not even the “cackling carnivalesque laughter,”⁵¹ the one described by Bakhtin and which, in the postcolony, has constantly been used and mobilized by subjects as “a means of resistance to the dominant culture.”⁵² It was not even “a laughter that mocked,”⁵³ the one used by children when they witness “the fall of someone they fear.”⁵⁴ It was rather something closer to what Nancy Rose Hunt calls “the nervous,” the “agonized shaking,” “the trembling laughter”; one that emerges out of “the unknowable” and “anguish,” in so far as “the unknown makes” people “laugh”; and one that comes from “prolonged and diffuse suffering.”⁵⁵ After having erupted, this kind of laughter usually involves a proliferation of thoughts which can no longer be stopped, not even by the person who is laughing.

While I was laughing, I could easily think of the swarms of flies which swirled around the streaming blood of my wounds, when the *militaires* shot at me. [...] I was asking myself if these people who were making fun of me have already suffered. [...] I could not understand why they were taking pleasure in my suffering.⁵⁶

Despite the excessive suffering caused by the laughter and gestures by others, the scars that the subject bears on his body never stop producing hardship and a particular state or kind of subjecthood. He is constantly immersed in asymmetrical relations of subordination. In contact with others, an atmosphere of submission has permanently been

⁴⁹ Eugène Kitoto (80 years old), oral interview, Kikwit, 7 August 2015.

⁵⁰ Georges Bataille, *Writings on Laughter, Sacrifice, Nietzsche, Un-Knowing*, trans. Annette Michelson, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1986, p. 69.

⁵¹ Hunt, “An Acoustic Register...,” p. 51.

⁵² Mbembe, *On the Postcolony*, p. 103.

⁵³ Hunt, “An Acoustic Register...,” p. 51.

⁵⁴ Bataille, *Writings on Laughter...*, p. 68.

⁵⁵ Hunt, “An Acoustic Register...,” p. 51.

⁵⁶ Eugène Kitoto (80 years old), oral interview, Kikwit, 7 August 2015.

created because of the transformations that his body has undergone. Within the deeply paternalistic society in which a man like Kitoto lives, having lost his manhood, his own wife speaks to him in the way one speaks to a child. He is deprived of any right to assert himself. His body is both the object of appropriation and rejection. He is constantly driven to question the reasons for his continued existence.

We who were born very well have now become like kids because of the lack of testicles. [...] Oh, the *militaires*! My wife can treat me as her child and give me orders: 'Turn these cassava chips [*cossettes de manioc*].'⁵⁷ I have no other alternative. I must do it; otherwise she will not give me food. [...] If I dare to speak, she says to me: 'Shut up, sterile. Have you got anything on your body that you can give to a woman? Your body has been dead a long time ago.' This is my life. She and I, we never had children. The only ones that we have are those that she had elsewhere. When I look at those three children, I constantly cry out. [...] Papa, since the day she discovered that I had no testicles we have no longer had romantic encounters. She has chased me from her bed. I sleep on the floor. [...] What can I say to her? When I tried to talk to her, she replied with brutality: 'Open your mouth again, I will tell everyone here that you are not a man, [...] that you do not have testicles.' [...] These days she is dating a young boy named Jonathan. [...] What can I do? Those who have the power to impregnate women have confiscated my wife. I do not have testicles, what can I do? [...] One day, I made her sit down and talk to me. She said: 'Look at this thing that is telling me that [Jonathan] is a child! Do you think he is not a man? [...]. In my opinion, Jonathan is completely a man. [...] You, rather, you are not a man. Have you got anything on your body that you can give me?' [...] Papa, what a humiliation! Instead of going out with an adult like me, my wife would rather go with a child. Oh, the world!⁵⁸

This is how the violence experienced during the Mulele rebellion of the 1960s continues to produce and reproduce humiliation. For Kitoro, it is made far worse by his wife attributing to him a lack or failure, even though it is one for which he bears no responsibility. This is the life of scars.

Bodily disruptions, temporality, and suffering

Seeing my child having [his arm cut off] [...] was a big shock to me. [...] I never stop regretting that. [...] I remember one day [in late 1965], after leaving the *Hôpital Général de Kikwit*, I had to wash my child. I took his clothes off. [...] I made him sit in his pond. Papa, I sprinkled water on his head. [...] It was painful. I began to cry. And to rub soap on his amputated arm, it was a big

⁵⁷ It is his second wife.

⁵⁸ Eugène Kitoto (80 years old), oral interview, Kikwit, 7 August 2015.

problem for me. I could not bear the pain. [...] My heart was burning. [...] After many hesitations, I managed to wash him. I took him out of the pond. [...] I made him sit on my legs. [...]. To dress him, it was painful. I was crying. [...] My right hand was holding his arm.⁵⁹ I was touching his scars. I was crying while I was looking at these scars. [...] I was asking myself: 'Now that he has got only one arm, what does the future hold for him? [...]' I was so scared. [...] I kept asking myself: 'Now that my son's arm is cut off, what exactly will he do in life?' I could not believe it. [...] I could foresee all kinds of suffering that was awaiting him in his life. [...] I could see my son suffering. [...] I could see how his friends would laugh at him. [...] Papa, looking at my child's arm was so painful to me. [...] I was afraid to see my own child suffering.⁶⁰

These are the memories of Angélique Niépela, a woman from Impanga Mbele, whose child experienced a terrible accident at the beginning of 1965.⁶¹ On the one hand, they highlight the tremendous and deep pain that a mother experienced at the suffering of her child. On the other hand, they show the possibility of reading time—the future, in this

⁵⁹ The amputated arm.

⁶⁰ Angélique Niépela (77 years old), oral interview, Kinshasa, 3 August 2015.

⁶¹ The accident took place in early 1965. Her son, then aged three, was shot by a bullet which cost him his right arm. Isidore Labila, the child's uncle, described the circumstances of the accident as follows:

The *militaires* arrived in the village of Impanga. [...] There was nobody in the village. [...] The *militaires* followed people into the bush at night. [...] Our grandfather Ndoko encountered one of the *militaires* as he was coming out of his bivouac to go and piss. He turned around. He alerted the camp. [...] It led to a rout. In the morning, the *militaires* searched the camp. They did not find anyone. They ransacked it and began to follow the footsteps of the people who were fleeing. As they [the *militaires*] were advancing, they communicated among themselves.

Mama Ambroisine and Mama Angélique, respectively the maternal aunt and mother of the child, were hiding in the bush, not far from the road, as they were tired. They heard people talking. Mama Ambroisine, Angélique's big sister, came out of the bush where she was hiding. She thought it was the villagers who were coming back from their flight. Unfortunately, it was the *militaires*. They [the *militaires*] said to her: '*Kokima te!* [Do not run away!]' When Mama Angélique heard it from where she was hiding, she understood that it was the *militaires*, not the people from the village. So, she lifted up her child and began to run. The *militaires* shouted at her: 'Stop!' She continued to run. The *militaires* fired. Mama Angélique fell to the ground. Unfortunately, the child lifted up his arm. The *militaires* fired for the second time. The bullet penetrated the child's arm. Blood flowed. Mama Angélique, after having seen this, began to cry. The *militaires* followed. They caught both the mother and the child. They took them to where Mama Ambroisine was. [...] It was so hard. (Isidore Labila, 62 years old, oral interview, Kinshasa, 3 August 2015)

specific case—from the scars that a person carries on the body. This is particularly true given the fact that, at the time, the issue of marked bodies and their well-being did not seem to be at the forefront of the Congolese authorities' agenda. For the Mobutu regime, the fact that someone was located in the rebel zone at the time of the rebellion was a direct indication of collaboration with the rebels. Mobutu wanted to punish not only the marked bodies, but the region as a whole, accusing everyone living in it of supporting Mulele and his rebellion.⁶² This had a huge impact on the imagination—and conception of life in general—of those whose bodies were marked. The way in which they conceived of time and of the future in particular was determined by their physical condition. Kitoto, for example, remembered projecting himself into an “eternal” future on the basis of the scars of his testicles and thinking about how the life he had planned for himself would never come about.⁶³ Many others with injured bodies took the same approach. The following is the case of Kuma Kuma's brother-in-law whose severe disfigurement was imposed on his body in the late 1960s. Kuma Kuma shows that not only that marked bodies perceived themselves to have no future, but that they were actively prevented from having this future by the central government, the community, as well as by local authorities.

Papa, may nobody delude you with persuasive speech. [...] One can somewhat give oneself the luxury—I insist on the word somewhat—of not worrying about what happened to one's body, or what this body has become, only if one knows that the injuries have been fully taken care of—either by the state or by the family. [...] But when you have undergone [a series of mutilations], like my brother-in-law, and no effort is being made by the government or those in the immediate environment to guarantee his safety and life, he who has experienced these mutilations, how could you expect this person not to worry about his life and his future in general? [...] Georgine [my wife] has just told you about her cousin who, as she described, was a very strong and well-built man. [...] His arms were [brutally] amputated by the *militaires*. [...] Do you know how he spent the two years before he died? It was horrible for him. [...] He would not stop complaining about his loss. [...] He was always absent-minded.⁶⁴

He continued:

⁶² Ernest Kiangou (60 years old), phone call, Johannesburg-Kinshasa, 28 January 2016. This did not change during the rest of Mobutu reign, as we will see in the following chapter.

⁶³ Eugène Kitoto (80 years old), oral interview, Kikwit, 7 August 2015.

⁶⁴ Adolphe Kuma Kuma (76 years old), oral interview, Kikwit Sacré Coeur, 6 August 2015.

Georgine has just told you that he would not stop looking at the stumps of his arms. [...] This is someone who was abandoned to himself. [...] He did not receive any help, neither from the government, nor from the community. [...] People could barely help him. [...]. His own wife left him behind with two children because of his disabilities [...]. At the time, we had just come out of the bush. We had almost nothing to eat.⁶⁵ [...] I guess you understand how difficult it was for a man without arms to feed two kids on a daily basis. [...] He would cry every single day. [...]. He would think about his future and that of his children. [...] Whenever I visited, he would not stop sharing his fears: ‘Adolphe, I am scared about the future of my children. I know I will die, maybe this evening, maybe tomorrow morning, or late in the evening. But should I die anytime soon, please do not forget to take care of my children.’ [...] This had, practically, become his new life until 1968 when he passed away. [...] Papa, [...] may nobody convince you otherwise. The question of the future of these people was absolutely out of the agenda of the authorities. Nobody cared at all at the time.⁶⁶

It is this active denial of a future that led most of those who suffered mutilations during the rebellion to use their scars, to project themselves into the future, and to imagine what could happen in this future. The question was now to know how this imagined future, terrifying and full of fears and uncertainties, would come to fruition. A careful examination of the fragments of testimonies given by the injured people and their acquaintances shows that they could not attach a specific date to what they were fearing would happen in the future.⁶⁷ All of them, nevertheless, seemed to be certain that this terrifying future would come. Niepela’s testimony is clear in this regard. “As a parent,” she said, “I could not wish anything bad for my child. But [my consciousness] would not stop reminding me that, one day, this thing would eventually end up [making its appearance].”⁶⁸ As a result, the entire life, or the rest of life, was reduced to waiting for this terrifying future, this “yet-to-come,” to make its appearance.⁶⁹

But how many presents needed to pass before this terrifying future would make its appearance? How long should one remain “between what goes and what comes, in the middle of what leaves and what arrives” for this imagined future would make its intrusion? A focus on the fragments of testimonies of those onto whom this terrifying

⁶⁵ See Chapter 1 of this thesis.

⁶⁶ Adolphe Kuma Kuma (76 years old), oral interview, Kikwit Sacré Coeur, 6 August 2015.

⁶⁷ This is not to say that this kind of imagined future did not come to pass.

⁶⁸ Angelique Niepela (77 years old), oral interview, Kinshasa, 3 August 2015.

⁶⁹ Jean-Paul Martinon, *On Futurity: Malabou, Nancy and Derrida*, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007, p. 1.

future had been projected since 1965 allows a better understanding of the realization of this “yet-to-come.”⁷⁰

All started in 1968. [...] I must have been five or six years old at the time. [...] It was the first time that I came to realize that I was abnormal. [...] I was playing with my friends. I was observing them. I could see that each of them had two arms while me, I only had one. It was painful for me to discover this truth. I began to be ashamed [...]. My friends began to make fun of me. They would single me out: ‘Oh, look at him. He has only one arm!’ It was a big shock to me. [...] Over the years, things got complicated [...]. I was sad all the time, even though sometimes I would pretend that everything was okay. [...] In 1975, when I went back to the village for the first time since 1965, it was even worse. [...] People gathered around me. They wanted to see me, the child whose arm was taken away by the *militaires* during the rebellion. It was not easy for me because such attention caused emotion and pain in me. [...] But it is at the age of 18 that I really felt the weight of my suffering. [...] I came to realize that I was no longer this child who used to think that life was normal and that his parents would still be doing everything for him. I came to realize that I was becoming an adult and that I had to take care of myself. [...] But when I turned to look at myself, all I could see was my deformity. And that made me feel terrible. [...] I was so scared of my own future. I was asking myself: ‘What will the future hold for me, I who have this deformity? I could not stop asking myself this question. This is what I was fearing most of the time. [...] And the more the years went by, the more my fears intensified. I was so scared to face [this] future because of my disability.’⁷¹

These testimonies identify the key moments in the chain in which the terrifying future projected at 1965 began to materialize itself. In the case of Alidor, for example, there are two key moments at either end of the continuum: five years and eighteen years of age. Each of these ends is dominated by the awareness of one’s physical condition. What was the future in 1965 became, as time passed, the present and then the “present past” or “past present.”⁷² The fragments of testimonies of the child lead to another

⁷⁰ Jacques Derrida, *Specters of Marx: The State of Debt, the Work of Mourning and the New International*, trans. Peggy Kamuf, New York-London: Routledge, 1994, p. 29.

⁷¹ Alidor Muliongo (53 years old), oral interview, Kikwit, 3 August 2015.

⁷² Jacques Derrida, “A Time for Farewells: Heidegger (read by) Hegel (read by) Malabou,” Preface to Catherine Malabou, *The Future of Hegel: Plasticity, Temporality, and Dialectics*, trans. Lisabeth During, New York: Routledge, 2004, p. xix. See also Koselleck, *Future Past...*, pp. 9-25, 58-71, 93-114, 137-151, 255-275; Noël Bonneuil, “The Mathematics of Time in History,” *History and Theory* 49, 4 (December 2010), pp. 28-46; Helge Jordheim, “Against Periodization: Koselleck’s Theory of Multiple Temporalities,” *History and Theory* 51, 2 (May 2012), pp. 151-171; Paul A. Roth, “The Pasts,” *History and Theory* 51, 3 (October 2012), pp. 313-339; and Juliet Floyd and Sanford Shieh (eds), *Future Pasts: The Analytic Tradition in Twentieth-Century Philosophy*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001. It would be great to insert the child’s realization, on the brink of turning 18, into a political commentary on how what political and other consequences bearing these scars would have for him. Unfortunately, the fragments of

reality: fear of the future, his own future. His testimonies suggest that, as a state of mind, this fear gradually multiplied as he approached this “new” future, the one that he posed, as his mother did long ago, as the “yet-to-come” or that which “comes towards us.”⁷³ He relied upon his present situation, as he went beyond perception and what could “present itself in the present tense of sight.”⁷⁴ This emotional state—or this way of anticipating—something detrimental reflects what Heidegger wrote about the phenomenology of fear in *Being and Time*:

That in the face of which we fear can be characterized as threatening. [...] What we encounter has detrimentality as its kind of involment. It shows itself within a context of involvements. [...] The target of this detrimentality is a definite range of what can be affected by it; thus the detrimentality is itself made definite, and comes from a definite region. [...] The region itself is well known as such, and so it is that which is coming from it; but that which is coming from it has something ‘queer’ about it. [...] That which is detrimental, as something that threatens us, is not yet within striking distance, but it is coming close. In such a drawing-close, the detrimentality radiates out, and therein lies its threatening character.⁷⁵

In this dreading, or “bringing-close,” close-by of fearing, the self-reflective mind could not have other alternatives than to rely on his emotional states and develop, at the same time, a variety of moods.

It was not easy at all. [...] Fearing my own future had brought a lot of trouble in my life. I would get angry easily. If I was not sad, I would become shy. [...] I began to isolate myself from the people around me because of shame. [...] I could not stop looking at myself. [...]. My own life became boring. [...] Evil thoughts would abound in my mind, you have no idea! [...] I would foresee situations where my friends would be working and getting money, while I could not do anything because of my deformities. [...] Mentally, I was already limited. [...] I could not spend a day without fearing my own future. [...] I was so scared. [...] I would imagine myself working with friends somewhere. I would imagine them being aware of my incapacity to work like them, but none of them would help me [...] [or] say: ‘Let us give him at least 1% of our salary because his physical condition prevents him from working like us.’ [...] No one could give me anything because, physically, I was not in good shape; and

testimonies at my disposal do not allow such a move. However, as I will show in the last part of this section, these fragments reveal the emergence of strong anger towards politicians by the time the child turned 18: “They are the ones who brought their rebellion, of which I do not even know the motivations, if only to get my arm cut off,” he said.

⁷³ Martinon, *On Futurity...*, p. 1.

⁷⁴ Derrida, “A Time for Farewells,” p. xxii.

⁷⁵ Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans. John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson, London: SCM Press, 1962, pp. 179-180.

that I did not work like them. [...] These are the kinds of thoughts that were torturing me. [...] I could see how I would already been dismissed from life whenever it came to work. [...] This is [precisely] what was troubling [me] in my early twenties as a disabled person.⁷⁶

But the most difficult moment in this process of dreading, which leads, as we have just seen, to the proliferation of thoughts, is the impression of passivity created on the side of those who were socially involved with the wounded child. In Muliongo's own words, it seems as if the others were unwilling to take any responsibility to avoid this "terrifying" future that was anticipated since 1965. It seems as though the others operated, in Žižek's vocabulary, as "passive aggressive" people.⁷⁷ They did nothing and thus actively ensured that nothing really changed. In an informal discussion, an interviewee who wished to remain anonymous strongly objected to this view, and accused the injured themselves of irresolution, passivity, laziness, and weakness:

It is amazing to see how these people [the injured people] remained entirely passive. [...] Normally, when I have anticipated my own future, and I have discovered that this future I have projected onto myself is not promising, I cannot just cross my arms and be relaxed about time. [...] I must do something. [...] I must think about the ways in which I can overturn this future that seems too unpromising. [...] I cannot take pleasure in withdrawing myself from the battle, sit down and watch how I am going to fail. [...] I must do something. [...] I am greatly surprised that they remained passive when they knew that the predictions regarding their future were not promising.⁷⁸

Such way of thinking, based essentially on a lack of consideration, is evidence of the kinds of encounters that the injured people continued to have on a daily basis. The others, by reading passivity, irresolution, and laziness into the actions of the injured people, to a large extent ignored the efforts made by the injured to counteract this terrifying "yet-to-come."⁷⁹ Muliongo's parents, for example, worked laboriously to give him a better future. They sent him to school at a very young age in the understanding of the time that it was the best means of gaining social mobility.⁸⁰ Muliongo completed his

⁷⁶ Alidor Muliongo (53 years old), oral interview, Kinshasa, 3 August 2015.

⁷⁷ Slavoj Žižek, *The Parallax View*, Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 2006, p. 341.

⁷⁸ Anonymous, informal discussion, Kinshasa, 14 December 2015.

⁷⁹ Martinon, *On Futurity...*, p. 1.

⁸⁰ Today, with the increasing number of unemployed academics, the school increasingly loses its symbolic value of social mobility. See Noël Obotela Rachidi, "L'Université face à une jeunesse en quête de

studies in the early 1980s.⁸¹ Unfortunately, when he began to search for work coincided with a crisis of unemployment in wider Zairian society. By 1980, the country was experiencing the consequences of an economic breakdown that had begun in the early 1970s.⁸² To avert the crisis, many individuals branched out into the more informal economy.⁸³ As most of the young people of his generation, Muliongo felt compelled to participate in these informal activities. Yet it is exactly in this informal economy that all his thoughts and fears found their expression. In a long testimony, he provided an overview of his life trajectory and how he became involved in informal activities.

After leaving school in 1983, I embarked myself in the *libanga* [informal economy]. [...] In 1985, I was going to buy goods to Brazzaville and sell them here in Kinshasa. [...]. Quickly, I came stopped with it because we were treated like animals on the Brazzaville side. There was no respect for human rights. [...] In the mid-1990s, [...] my friends convinced me to join them seeking for diamonds at the Congolese-Angolan border. The deal was made. I went with them. [...] In any case, I did not gain anything. I came back empty handed. [...] It was a bad experience. I would even say an ordeal. I could not work like everyone else because I was limited. [...] The diamonds having become rare, I had to dive into the river to get them.⁸⁴ With one arm, how could I swim? [...] It was very hard for me. I felt useless and unproductive. [...] Life became so difficult to the extent that I could not even afford to buy bread. [...] Nobody would give me anything as I could not work like the others. [...] I felt somehow like I was harvesting the fruit of my deformity.⁸⁵

He continued:

In June 2015 I was returning from Kenge. [...] I had some merchandise. [...] I took a large vehicle. When we reached Bukanga Longo, the vehicle was about

modèle,” in Isidore Ndaywel è Nziem (ed.), *L’université dans le devenir de l’Afrique: Un demi-siècle de présence au Congo-Zaïre*. Paris: L’Harmattan, 2007, pp. 253-261.

⁸¹ Alidor Muliongo (53 years old), oral interview, Kinshasa, 3 August 2015.

⁸² Ndaywel è Nziem, *Histoire générale du Congo...*, pp. 727-744.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, pp. 745-750. On this informal form of economy, see also Pierre Pean, *L’argent noir*, Paris: Fayard, 1988, pp. 139-166; Gauthier de Villers et al. (ed), *Manières de vivre: Economie de la débrouille dans les villes du Congo/Zaïre*, Tervuren: Institut Africain, CEDAF, 2002; Theodore Trefon (ed), *Reinventing Order in the Congo: How People respond to State Failure in Kinshasa*, London: Zed Books, 2004; and Sylvie Ayimpam, *Économie de la débrouille à Kinshasa. Informalité, commerce et réseaux sociaux*, Paris, Karthala, 2014.

⁸⁴ On the issue of diamonds, see Filip de Boeck, “Postcolonialism, Power, and Identity: Local and Global Perspectives from Zaire,” in Richard Werbner and Terrence Ranger (eds), *Postcolonial Identity in Africa*, London: Zed Books, 1996, pp. 75-106; Filip de Boeck, “Domesticating Diamonds and Dollars: Identity, Expenditure and Sharing in Southwestern Zaire (1984–1997),” *Development and Change* 29, 4 (1998), pp. 777-810; and Filip de Boeck, “Garimpeiro Worlds: Digging, Dying & ‘Hunting’ for Diamonds in Angola,” *Review of African Political Economy* 28, 90 (2002), pp. 549-562.

⁸⁵ Alidor Muliongo (53 years old), oral interview, Kinshasa, 3 August 2015.

to fall down a cliff. [...] All passengers and the crew jumped off, except me. [...] With only one arm, I could not grab hold of the cross-beams of the vehicle and jump like them. As a result, I went down together with the vehicle. My left foot was seriously injured [Figure 12]. The heel was torn. [...] The bone came out. It protruded from the foot. Everybody could see it [Figure 13].⁸⁶

The nurses at Kenge Hospital did not suture my wound well. There was no difference between a beast and me.⁸⁷

It was painful. If I had both my arms, I would have jumped from the car as the others did. [...] Now that I am talking to you, I am no longer walking. To get out of the house, I have to crawl like a baby. [...] I am lost. What should I expect again from life? [...] First of all, I have one shortened arm; now that they are going to cut my leg off, what am I going to become? [...] I am already unproductive with one arm. With this [...] additional blow, it is clear that I am completely downgraded in life. What should I expect again from life now that I am 53 years old?⁸⁸

Here are fifty years of a life trajectory, essentially dominated by “a proliferation of metaphysics of sorrow,”⁸⁹ despair, and suffering, and the end of which Muliongo, the marked body, no longer expected anything, neither from time, nor from existence in general. Even the future which, not long ago, had made him tremble with fear was no longer important. It was replaced by a lack of expectations. Time “has gone farther away, leaving behind only a field of ruins, an immense weariness,” as well as “an infinite distress.”⁹⁰ At the heart of this distress, the injured body can only discover the senselessness of the life he has spent on earth: “I have wasted my life for nothing. What have I earned from all of this? Oh, life is unfair! It has no mercy at all.”⁹¹ If not nullity, it is a combination of disgust, pain, and sorrow.⁹² This relates to the kind of suffering that Kiangu referred to as “supreme suffering” when he said: “One feels like a wreck that was used and that has been subsequently cast, because it does not have any value.” And, as a result, the injured body “feels completely lost, and, at the same time, disconnected from

⁸⁶ Alidor Muliongo (53 years old), oral interview, Kinshasa, 3 August 2015.

⁸⁷ Alidor Muliongo (53 years old), oral interview, Kinshasa, 19 December 2015.

⁸⁸ Alidor Muliongo (53 years old), oral interview, Kinshasa, 3 August 2015.

⁸⁹ Mbembe, *On the Postcolony*, p. 199.

⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁹¹ Alidor Muliongo (53 years old), oral interview, Kinshasa, 19 December 2015.

⁹² Alidor Muliongo (53 years old), oral interview, Kinshasa, 3 August 2015.

the world.”⁹³ In contact with others, the marked body has always been considered as a burden, a surplus, an excess, because of its physical condition.

Even in my family people usually do not need me because they know that I am worthless. When there are family gatherings, no one invites me. They know that I will not bring any money or any contribution to their reunion. [...] I am the king of rejection. [...] On more than one occasion I overheard my own family members saying: ‘Ah, what is it that Alidor is going to do again in his life?’ Even my own nephews, they often repeat that: ‘It is over for him. He will no longer do anything in life.’ [...] You see! Now, do you think there is anything else I can do to change their minds? What can I tell them to convince them, I who has already been downgraded in life? [...] I am useless. [All of this is happening] because of this arm.⁹⁴

Confronted with the proliferation and continuity of this “metaphysics” of sorrow, the marked body cannot do better than immerse itself into negativity and produce a critique of time—and the future more specifically:

With all of these [pains and sufferings], why should I continue to believe in the future? I am 53 years old now. I will be 54 years old next year. I am not married.⁹⁵

I do not have a wife. I do not even have a girlfriend. Ladies do not like me. Even when I approach them for a simple friendship, they run away because of my arm.⁹⁶

⁹³ Ernest Kiangi (58 years old), oral interview, Kinshasa, 14 December 2015.

⁹⁴ Alidor Muliongo (53 years old), oral interview, Kinshasa, 3 August 2015.

⁹⁵ On the issue of marriage, this is what Isidore Labila, his uncle, said:

You see, with his amputated arm, he does also think of finding a woman. [...] In 2012, he came to ask me to find a wife for him. [...] He told me sadly: ‘Big brother, with this age that I have reached, [50 years old now]], can I not get married? Can’t you consider finding me a woman?’ [...] It was very embarrassing for me. [...] My answer was simple: ‘Go find yourself a wife because, at the time you will talk to her, she will see herself that you have an arm amputated. [...] If she agrees, please then come back and tell me. Together with others, we will organize ourselves and go pay the dowry.’ [...] This is what I told him. [...] But until now, He never came back to tell me anything. (Isidore Labila, 62 years old, oral interview, Kinshasa, 3 August 2015)

⁹⁶ On 19 December 2015, Alidor was completely amazed when he saw me disembark at his place with my friend L., for the follow-up to our meeting in August 2015. This because he felt, in many ways, that he was the king of rejection. The fact that I was paying attention to him was unusual to him. After I had gone to talk to his mother who was sick in the house, Alidor asked L.: “Is Emery your boyfriend?” L. replied: “No, he is my friend. We have known each other for three years now. We met at the American School.” Alidor was completely overwhelmed to hear this answer from L. He asked her: “Are you sure he is just a friend? I do not believe that. And you have come from a far just to accompany him do his research? I am impressed.

I do not have children. Why should I continue to believe in the future? My friends with whom I grew up are all married. They have children. [...] Tomorrow, it is these children who will be helping them. For my friend, there is at least a hope for the future. [...] The future means something for them. For me, however, it is nothing at all. [...] Why should I continue to think about the future? Have I ever gained anything from this future for me to continue to believe in it? [...] My life is a mess. I have failed everything. I do not even have an offspring because of my deformities. Why should I again believe in the future? It is over.⁹⁷

To compensate for this lack of interest in the future, the marked body turns back to the past and lives in a mode of repetition. But in this movement to the past, he no longer sees “the connected and sequential chain of events” he, as a “forward-looking” person, used to conceive of as a future possibility.⁹⁸ All he can now see is one catastrophe; the thing that made part of his body, in this case the arm, prematurely lifeless; a material thing that brought an untimely experience of death, as well as an incomplete sense of time.

I was a child at the time. I must have been two or three years old. [...] I do not even know why the rebellion broke out. [...] I never asked anybody because it is out of my interest. [...] When I am deeply in my thoughts, all I can see from this past is only my wound. The rebellion has brought a lot of pain in my life; that is all I can see. [...] When it comes to the rebellion itself, it is really out of my interest. I do not even know why Mulele [took arms] and started the rebellion. [...] All I know is that I got injured from his rebellion. And this has brought a lot of trouble in my life.⁹⁹

To me, it means that you are really good friends.” He went on saying: “I, however, have always had trouble approaching girls in my life. Even when I offer them a simple friendship, they never wanted. They have always pushed me away.”

After this long talk, Alidor asked L.'s phone number which L. gave him without any hesitation. On our way back home, L. told me about her conversation with Alidor. When I asked her whether she had given her phone number to Alidor, she said: “Of course, I did. But it is a wrong number. If he calls me, he will not get hold of me.” I asked her: “But, why did you do that?” She said to me: “What? Do you really think I can give my phone number to this guy? Never will I do that. I do not want him to bother me. Besides, what can I do with such a man? What will he give me? He will just impregnate me unnecessarily and tomorrow I will suffer with my children. I do not really want that happen to me.”

L.'s reaction and perception show the extent to which people lack consideration, interest, and respect in the present and future of the marked-bodied people.

⁹⁷ Alidor Muliongo (53 years old), oral interview, Kinshasa, 3 August 2015.

⁹⁸ I am drawing here on Walter Benjamin's conception of history. See David Couzens Hoy, *The Time of Our Lives: A Critical History of Temporality*, Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 2009, p. 154.

⁹⁹ Alidor Muliongo (53 years old), oral interview, Kinshasa, 3 August 2015.

This is the life of scars, a life which consists of navigating backwards and forwards in time, only to find oneself at the heart of disappointment, disinterest, nullity and inutility.

Figure 10: Eugene Kitoto's scars on his leg¹⁰⁰



¹⁰⁰ Photo by author, Kikwit, 1 November 2013.

Figure 11: Eugène Kitoto's scars on the cheek¹⁰¹



¹⁰¹ Photo by author. Kikwit, 1 November 2013.

Figure 12: Alidor Muliongo's newly injured foot¹⁰²



Figure 13: Alidor Muliongo's foot¹⁰³



¹⁰² Photo by author, Kinshasa, 2 August 2015.

¹⁰³ Photo by author, Kinshasa, 19 December 2016.

Conclusion

This chapter deals with scars, their signifying capacity, their relationship not only with the body but also with the apprehension of time, the arresting of time, and the annihilation of future time that the scars seem to both signify and put into effect by making the body useless and also undesirable, revolting to others. To be tortured during the rebellion was unimaginably terrible. But the suffering did not stop there. There was something beyond that, something even more important, that causes a kind of psychic suffering which not only exceeds the physical, but also extends across time. This happened first and foremost at the moment in which the self encountered its image, a deformed image, an image it could not recognise, a representation which, to a large extent, was also a monster of itself. It also happened at the termination of seeing one's life continuously failing. It finally happened at the moment when the injured people engaged in social relations with others. In this sense, the scars that people bear on their bodies register and condense, in the course of time, a sense of hurt. They bristle at the unethical treatment that the injured people receive from others, by the indifferent or cruel regard in which they are held by others, those who ought to exercise greater moral responsibility towards them. This only shows the extent to which the people, whose bodies were made ugly during the rebellion, are continuously being made ugly and objectified, throughout time, by the gaze of others, the very same people that are supposed to help them reconcile their bodies with themselves. Because this process of reconciling with one's body never takes place, it is not possible to expect marked bodies to live in peace. Rather we find frustration, desolation, and lack of interest in time—and in existence.

Chapter Four – The Politics of Forgetting

It was the [1st of October 1968]. [...] I turned on my small radio that had survived the rebellion. [...] I heard that Pierre Mulele was now in Kinshasa. [...] The journalist said that an agreement concluding his extradition was signed between the Government of Brazzaville and that of Kinshasa. [...] After listening to this news, I got worried. But not too much because I had faith in our president. [...]

On the [10th of October 1968], I switched on my radio once again. After few songs, the journalist went on to say that Pierre Mulele had died. He was put on trial by the military court and found guilty and then killed. [...] The journalist added that now people can rejoice. Because their enemy was definitely defeated. He ended by saying that the page was turned. [...] Everyone should forget about everything. [...]

Seized with emotion, I burst into tears. [...] I had completely forgotten that it was forbidden to talk about Mulele, or about events in relation to his name. [...] I got into my house. I scratched my head. I could not believe that Mulele was killed. [...] It was just impossible to believe, knowing who this man was. [...] It pained me to hear that. Mulele was someone who lived among us. After hearing this, how could I not be worried? [...]

I had not spent thirty minutes inside the house when I heard someone knocking on my door: ‘Bastard! Come out of the house. Today, we are going to crush your head.’ I came out of my house only to find that seven plain-clothed armed men had invaded my yard. [...] One of them raised his voice and said: ‘Bastard! You have not learned anything! Are you a stranger to this region? You know very well that it is forbidden to talk or think about this monster. But now you allow yourself the luxury of resuscitating him. Today, you are going to see what we will do to you.’ Even before this man finished talking to me, another raised his bayonet and stabbed me, here, on the chest. I moved a little bit. The bayonet scratched me here. You can see the scar. [Figure 14] I begged them, but none of them would listen to me. [...] I cried out: ‘Please, I have had nothing to do with this man.’ They said to me: ‘Shut up, idiot! You think you are above the law. Today, we are going to correct you.’ [...] They began to beat me up. My mouth swelled up. You could not even see my face. I became unrecognizable. [...] They grabbed me. They threw me in their vehicle. They took me to Kikwit and put me in jail.¹

With these words Cyril Mukelenge, a former rebel from Idiofa whom I met in December 2013, recalled his experiences in the late 1960s. Painful by nature, these words referred to the Mobutu regime’s approach to managing the memory of the rebellion. It is this politics, which I call *the politics of forgetting*, that constitutes the subject of this chapter.

¹ Cyril Mukelenge (73 years old), oral interview, Idiofa, 23 December 2013.

The main argument is that putting in place a variety of strategies to force people to forget about their past experiences, or to force them to remember those experiences in a particular way is to do violence to these people. In what follows, I will demonstrate this by analysing, first, the ways in which the Mobutu regime maintained a system of control and surveillance over people in the aftermath of the rebellion (1960s-1970s); and, second, by focusing on the suspicions that this system of monitoring caused among Mulele's followers and how they responded to it in the 1970s and 1980s. With the collapse of the Mobutu regime in 1997 and the transfer of power to Laurent Désiré Kabila, significant changes took place in the country. I will briefly examine this era, Kabila's politics towards the rebellion, and the renewed suffering that it brought about among those who had been subjected to bodily disruption during the rebellion.

End of the rebellion: Imbroglia and tight control of people

From 1964 to 1968 the Congolese government attempted to pacify the Kwilu region.² It was during this period that people came out of the bush. During this time, many of the rebel leaders were arrested, with most of them killed by the Mobutu regime.³ These arrests and killings essentially quashed the rebellion.⁴ They marked the end of a historical moment that had begun in July 1963 when Pierre Mulele reached the Kwilu region to set up his *maquis*, as we saw in Chapter One.

Yet, even if the arrests and killings marked the official end of the rebellion, the problems that rebellion had caused for the ruling regime were not solved. The first years when people returned from the bush were dramatic. The controversy sparked by the rebellion rebounded dramatically. Those who had been affected and even threatened by

² See Chapter 1 of this thesis; and CRISP (ed.), *Congo 1965*, pp. 125-134.

³ See Jean Mbadu, "Lettre: Arrestation Commandant rebelle adjoint Menaba Evariste," Kikwit, 6 Novembre 1967, reel 11, box 8, folder 4, file F, doc. G67/34. Archives Conseil National; Anonymous, "Télégramme," Kikwit, 29 novembre 1967, reel 11, box 8, folder 4, file F, doc. G67/ 35. Archives Conseil National; Innocent J. Lobo, "Lettre: la rébellion en C.I. Imbongo," Imbongo, 1 février 1968, reel 11, box 8, folder 4, file F, doc. G68/5. Archives Conseil National; and François Ngunda, "Rapport administratif sur l'arrestation du chef rebelle Louis Kafungu," Kilembe, 25 juin 1970, reel 11, box 8, folder 5, file F., docs. G70/ 18 A-18 B. Archives Conseil National.

⁴ See the title of Ndom Nda Ombel's book, *Pierre Mulele assassiné...*

the rebellion demanded that effective and fair trials should be held.⁵ People bitterly demanded revenge for their suffering, to the point of re-fracturing social cohesiveness.⁶ The re-opening of courts at the level of the sectors acted as a catalyst in this situation. The heads of sectors called on those living in their jurisdictions to lodge complaints. These could vary from dealing with mere annoyances to reporting big offenses. In September 1965, the chief of Lozo sector vigorously defended this decision: “Everyone must lodge their complaint with the court as was done before [the rebellion]. [...] In every country where the courts do not work, the population is not at peace. Things must work normally [as they used to].”⁷ Encouraged by this decision, people flooded to the courts. On 30 April 1966, for example, a man reported the theft of stolen goods:

They [the rebels] stole my 3 iron metal trunks. Each had 60 *pièces américanis* [fabrics]. Each *pièce* costs 800 francs. The grand total was 48,000 francs. They also stole 3 pairs of my pressed trousers. Each of them was worth 3,000 francs. The three of them would cost 9,000 francs in total. They stole 3 empty iron metal trunks. Each of them was 350 francs; 1,050 francs in total. They stole 2 dress shirts, each of them was worth 600 francs; 1,200 francs in total. [...] They stole 30 drinking glasses, each cost 20 francs; 600 francs in total. They took 2 golden oil cans, each cost 150 francs; 300 francs in total. They stole 2 singlets, each was worth 100 francs; 200 francs in total. They stole my brand new Continental typewriter [...] for my office. I had bought it at 50,000 francs. [...] They stole 3 deluxe cupboards I bought in Kikwit at 5,000 francs each; 15,000 francs in total.⁸

⁵ Frade Zunga Zunga (56 years old), oral interview, Kinshasa, 29 September 2013; Agnès Lakung (56 years old), oral interview, Kikwit, 16 October 2013; Fidéline Kifokie (63 years old), oral interview, Idiofa, 16 November 2013; Grégoire Engwel (71 years old), oral interview, Idiofa, 16 November 2013; Eulalie Fam (59 years old), oral interview, Idiofa, 16 December 2013; and Adolphine Izingamio (64 years old), oral interview, Idiofa, 15 December 2013. Eulalie Fam joined the *maquis* when she was 14 years old.

⁶ Odette Zunga Zunga (66 years old), oral interview, Kinshasa, 29 September 2013; Palmie Andiang (75 years old), oral interview, Idiofa, 24 November 2013; Tony Etono (70 years old), oral interview, Luano, 26 October 2013; Hortense Ngo (63 years old), oral interview, Idiofa, 22 November 2013; Isidore Ngyum (73 years old), oral interview, Idiofa, 21 November 2013; Bertin Mukela (70 years old), oral interview, Idiofa, 23 December 2013; Théophile Kambembo (57 years old), oral interview, Idiofa, 18 November 2013; Ndiang Kabul (67 years old), oral interview, Kinshasa, 30 March 2013; Prospère Yamba (62 years old), oral interview, Kikwit, 24 October 2013; and Bastin Bembo (66 years old), oral interview, Idiofa, 16 December 2013.

⁷ Anonymous, “Procès verbal de la réunion du Conseil de secteur Lozo tenue en date du 4 septembre 1965,” reel 11, box 8, folder 2, file D, doc. G65/27A. Archives Conseil National.

⁸ David Yengo, “Rapport: Conséquence de la révolte, Mukedi, 30 avril 1966,” reel 11, box 8, folder 3, file D, doc. G66/ 29. Archives Conseil National.

The grand total of the stolen goods comes to 128,950 francs. I say one hundred twenty-eight thousand nine hundred and fifty francs.⁹

By 24 June 1966, wanted notices against individual rebels were multiplying, as this letter by the mayor of Gungu to the head of Lozo sector shows:

Mr. Chief of Lozo sector, I have the honour of sending you a warrant of arrest against Nzofu, accused by the Chief of the Kiboba-Matadi sector of confiscating his goods during the rebellion. We called him before our court, but he did not want to attend. He ran away. He is now in your jurisdiction. He is from Lozo Munene. [Here is the list of goods he confiscated:] 1) Two pairs of pants. 2) One pair of trousers 3) Three long-sleeved shirts. 4) A bed sheet and 1,500 francs in cash. 5) One bar of Tango soap. I would appreciate it if you could send him to me under escort.¹⁰

On 30 June 1966 a man lodged a complaint against the rebels about his friends who had been killed during the rebellion. He vigorously called for an investigation in order to establish who was responsible for this:

Here are the names of my fellows [...] murdered by the Mulelists: Kapita, [...] Kiwevua, [...] Leonardo Poofele, [...] [Jacob] Kituku, [all of them from] Mukedi. Matthieu Kabula, one of the most important merchants of Mukedi. Thau, a mother; she left four children behind. Hangwa, from Mukedi, has [also] left four children behind. Bwalungu, the chief of the Madimbi *groupement* has also been killed. Kipoy, Bwalungu's little brother, was killed. [Norbert] Khongolo, a [...] man from Madimbi, was [also] killed. [Justin] Yenge, Ngulungu and Mutemangandu from Madimbi, [have also been killed]. [...] Those who committed these crimes must pay before the court.¹¹

⁹ David Yengo, "Rapport: Conséquence de la révolte, Mukedi, 30 avril 1966," reel 11, box 8, folder 3, file D, doc. G66/ 29. Archives Conseil National. See also Matadi-Frère and B. Kambembo, "Liste de bien [pillés] lors des événements dans le village Lufuchi–secteur de Loso," reel 11, box 7, folder 13, file G, doc. F?. Archives Conseil National; F.G. Mukanzo, "Liste des biens pillés pendant la rébellion 1964-1966, secteur Gudi," Gudi, 30 mars 1969, reel 11, box 7, folder 13, file G, doc. F?. Archives Conseil National; Anonymous, "Liste des gens et du montant confisqué," reel 11, box 7, folder 13, file G, doc. F?. Archives Conseil National; and Daniel Gidinda, "Les biens du collège permanent, Gidinda Daniel, consommés par les jeunes mulelistes," reel 11, box 7, folder 13, file G, doc. F?. Archives Conseil National.

¹⁰ J.B. Fu..., "Lettre: Affaire Nzofu," Gungu, 24 juin 1966, reel 11, box 8, folder 1, file G, doc. G66/37. Archives Conseil National. See also Modeleur Richard Xavier, "Lettre," 13 mars 1964, reel 2, box 2, doc. 1190. Archives Conseil National; and Richard Mhodelece, "Rapport des biens enquêtés et pris par le dirigeant de l'équipe de Kafunda–Mukedi Victor," Soudan-Ngonga, 13 mars 1964, reel 2, box 2, doc. 1191. Archives Conseil National.

¹¹ David Yongo, "Rapport conséquence de la révolte," Mukedi, reel 11, box 8, folder 3, file D, doc. G66/66. Archives Conseil National. See also Sébastien Kikongo, "Dépôt n° 15 au chef de bureau administratif de et à Léopoldville," Itanga, 31 janvier 1966, reel 11, box 7, folder 13, file G, doc. F? (22). Archives Conseil National; Emile Mungulu, "Lettre: Assassinat parents fonctionnaire Mungulu Ball Désiré par les rebelles mulelistes," Kikwit, 30 septembre 1965, reel 11, box 8, folder 2, file D, docs. G65/26 A-B, E. Archives Conseil National; and Emile Désiré Mungulu, "Liste nominative et définitive des principaux

During the days that followed, the situation became increasingly confusing. Everyday life came to be regulated by an economy of vengeance. The rebels could no longer live in peace in the sectors: they were being dragged in front of the courts and forced to pay tax for the *Mulele Caisse* [the Mulele checkout till]. This was to compensate for what they had stolen during the rebellion. In early 1966, for example, the authorities of the Kobo sector forced Vendo, a man from Kikhandji, to pay 10,000 francs for the *Mulele Caisse*.¹² At the same time, Edouard Kita from Kikanda village paid 5,000 francs to the same authorities. In April 1966 Kita said the following to the Gungu *préfet*:

Mr. *Préfet*, I should tell you the truth. At a certain moment, I went to the sector's office. I was told, verbally, that I had to bring all the money and goods that I used to keep in the warehouse, during the rebellion. When I went back to the village, I took what I still had with me: 5,000 francs, a jacket and a pair of trousers, and went to deliver them to the *secteur*.¹³

Even within the administration tensions ran high. Most of the administrative officers adopted extremist positions against the rebels. They wanted to avenge what they called “wounded conscience” [*conscience blessée*].¹⁴ The main reason for them to act in such a way was that they had been the rebels' primary target during the rebellion. The rebels had strongly believed that the administrative officers embodied the power of the Congolese state. They killed many of the officers and humiliated many others. They weakened the officials' authority and replaced it with their own hegemony. This had a huge impact on the decisions taken by the administrative officers at the end of the rebellion. Many applications submitted by former rebels for their re-insertion into the administration were dismissed.¹⁵ The situation became extremely chaotic.¹⁶ Herbert

auteurs de la mort tragique des parents du fonctionnaire Mungulu Emile Désiré, assassinés par les rebelles mulelistes le 11 janvier 1964—en annexe à la lettre n° 0076/M.E.D./ 65 du 30 septembre 1965,” Kikwit, 30 septembre 1965, reel 11, box 8, folder 2, file D, doc. G65/ 26 C. Archives Conseil National.

¹² F. Kindela and Ph. Makulu, “Lettre: Perception taxe pour caisse Mulele,” Kobo, 16 avril 1966, reel 11, box 8, folder 3, file D, doc. G66/32A. Archives Conseil National.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Secrétaire provincial du Kwilu, “Reprise des fonctions du chef de secteur Banga,” Kikwit, 1 février 1966, reel 11, box 8, folder 3, file D, doc. G66/7. Archives Conseil National.

¹⁵ Laurent Luyolo, “Lettre: transmission rapport administratif de Mr Kalunga Philippe sur ses activités dans le bois, Mbangi, 13 octobre 1965,” reel 11, box 7, folder 14, file E, doc. G63/16. Archives Conseil National. See also B.H. Kambembo, “Rapport sur le dossier de Mr Samano J., agent territorial sorti récemment de forêt,” reel 11, box 7, folder 13, file G, doc. F? doss 14. Archives Conseil National; Joachim Samano, “Commentaires, Gungu, 19 mai 1964,” reel 11,

Weiss, an American political scientist who later wrote a book on political protest in the Congo¹⁷ said the following about his visit to the region in 1966:

I can give you a short testimony to confirm what you have just said. It is the case of Fimbo. Fimbo [...] was perceived by the administration [officers] [and] also by other civilians [...] of Gungu as having been fierce in his activities as *Chef de zone* [during the rebellion]. Nevertheless, he managed to get out of the bush and continued to live in Gungu. The administrator of Gungu hired him for hunting wild game. He [the administrator] gave him a rifle and cartridges. [...] This was a combination [of events] that had nothing to do with him. In the absence of the administrator he was put in prison for illegal possession of a weapon. Yet it is the administrator who had given him the weapon and cartridges. [I guess you understand that] he was only arrested because of jealousy [...]. This is how the District Commissioner, with whom I spoke later, interpreted it.¹⁸

Added to this state of confusion was the hostility felt by the population for the rebels. In many areas communities judged rebel activities with extreme severity. They demanded social re-organizations. They asked that all those who had instilled fear and terror during the rebellion be excluded. They forced many rebels to move away.¹⁹ Those who failed to move were subjected to reprisals.²⁰ They were accused by the *militaires*

box 7, folder 15, file E, doc. G64/28. Archives Conseil National; and Daniel Gidinda, "Les biens du collège permanent, Gidinda Daniel, consommés par les jeunes mulelistes," reel 11, box 7, folder 13, file G, doc. F?. Archives Conseil National.

¹⁶ Delphin Mafuta (75 years old), oral interview, Kikwit, 22 October 2013.

¹⁷ Weiss, *Political Protest...* He first came to Congo in 1959 as a member of the African Economic and Political Development Project at the Center for International Studies, Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

¹⁸ Herbert Weiss, "Commentaires Ndom-Weiss sur les documents Kwilu-administration," Bruxelles, Summer 1988, 7609_a_0000927_r02_pt02-N'Dom, Weiss-CD2of2. Archives Conseil National. It is also the case of Louis Kinkondo, the rebel's chief, who was arrested a few months after his release by Major Yamvwa. The administration officers believed that he had committed many crimes. Therefore he should be sent to jail. They questioned his release by Major Yamvwa. They imprisoned him in the absence of the latter. He was then transferred to Leopoldville where he spent several months in the Makala prison. Delphin Mafuta (75 years old), oral interview, Kikwit, 22 October 2013.

¹⁹ Laurent Luyolo, "Lettre: transmission rapport administratif de Mr Kalunga Philippe sur ses activités dans le bois," Mbangi, 13 octobre 1965, reel 11, box 7, folder 14, file E, doc. G63/16. Archives Conseil National; and F. Kindela and Ph. Makulu, "Lettre: Perception taxe pour caisse Mulele," Kobo, 16 avril 1966, reel 11, box 8, folder 3, file D, doc. G66/32A. Archives Conseil National. Also Justin Kaziamu (60 years old), oral interview, Kinshasa, 1 December 2013; and Bastin Bembo (66 years old), oral interview, Idiofa, 16 December 2013.

²⁰ B.H., "Lettre," Gungu, 6 septembre 1965, reel 11, box 8, folder 2, file D, doc. G65/23A. Archives Conseil National. See also Odette Zunga Zunga (66 years old), oral interview, Kinshasa, 29 September 2013; Palmie Andiang (75 years old), oral interview, Idiofa, 24 November 2013; Tony Etono (68 years old), oral interview, Luano, 26 October 2013; Hortense Ngo (63 years old), oral interview, Idiofa, 22

who were still in the region.²¹ In the following extract the receiver of revenue of the Lozo sector referred to this climate of hostility in a letter of 6 May 1966 about the hearing of *Cercle* Kilembe:

I have the honour to inform you that [...] only two workers [may] take care of [Lozo-Munene and Kinzamba] dispensaries. [...] The worker in charge of Kinzamba dispensary will be Mr. Bernabé Kianza. Mr. Beledji will be in charge of the Lozo-M[unene] dispensary. But the latter is in one month's arrears because he had seriously threatened the population during their rebellion. [...] The population of Lozo does not want to see him working in the dispensary again. [...] At the end of May, we will send his successor.²²

To deal with this situation, the Congolese authorities introduced new measures between 1966 and 1970.²³ First they decided to treat everyone as “victim” of the rebellion, regardless whether they had been rebels or civilians.²⁴ Mulele alone would be made to carry the responsibility for all the crimes committed during the rebellion.²⁵ Those who were captured by the peacekeeping mission were issued certificates stating

November 2013; Isidore Ngyum (73 years old), oral interview, Idiofa, 21 November 2013; Bertin Mukela (70 years old), oral interview, Idiofa, 23 December 2013; Théophile Kambembo (57 years old), oral interview, Idiofa, 18 November 2013; Prospère Yamba (62 years old), oral interview, Kikwit, 24 October 2013; Bastin Bembo (66 years old), oral interview, Idiofa, 16 December 2013; and Emile Nkwimi (58 years old), oral interview, Kwanga Carrefour, 18 October 2013.

²¹ Théophile Kambembo (57 years old), oral interview, Idiofa, 18 November 2013; Bastin Bembo (66 years old), oral interview, Idiofa, 16 December 2013; and Emile Nkwimi (58 years old), oral interview, Kwanga Carrefour, 18 October 2013.

²² Timothée Fulbert Gamaygelo, “Lettre: engagement travailleurs dispensaires C.I. Mukedi, 6 juin 1966,” reel 11, box 8, folder 3, file D, doc. 66/33. Archives Conseil National. These conflicts also emerged in families and clans. People used occult practices and poisoning to eliminate those who were fearsome during the rebellion. See Bastin Bembo (66 years old), oral interview, Idiofa, 16 December 2013; Justin Kaziana (60 years old), oral interview, Kinshasa, 1 December 2013; and Willy A. (40 years old), oral interview, Idiofa, 16 December 2013.

²³ Constant Ndom, “Commentaires Ndom-Weiss sur les documents Kwilu-administration,” Bruxelles, Summer 1988. 7609_a_0000927_r02_pt02-N'Dom, Weiss-CD2of2. Archives Conseil National.

²⁴ Monnier, “La province de Bandundu,” p. 331.

²⁵ Herbert Weiss, during his stay in Gungu in June-August 1966, said:

It is the reason why I had to abandon the project of doing interviews when I travelled there—because everyone who was known to have participated in the rebellion in summer [19]66 said that they were Mulele's prisoners. You could not find a former rebel throughout Kwilu region. There were only Mulele's prisoners.” (Herbert Weiss, “Commentaires Ndom-Weiss sur les documents Kwilu-administration,” Bruxelles, Summer 1988. 7609_a_0000927_r02_pt02-N'Dom, Weiss-CD2of2. Archives Conseil National)

On the fate of the leaders of the rebellion, see Anonymous, “Le Général Mobutu déclare: Les chefs de rébellion comme les Mulele, les Bocheley, les Soumialot, les Gbenge doivent être jugés par la justice congolaise,” *Courrier d'Afrique* 39, Thursday 3 October 1968, no 2102, pp. 1, 5.

that they were survivors of war.²⁶ This measure allowed many rebels to be re-integrated into the administration.²⁷ In 1988, Constant Ndom, a former rebel, said:

What happens at this point in Zaire [in 1966-1967], [and more specifically] in the Kwilu region, is that everyone is being treated as a victim of Mulelism. [The authorities] sought to re-integrate the people into their previous lives and have, [to a certain extent], avoided making them scapegoats. The only person responsible, who remained to be found and arrested, was Mulele. Even people like Kafungu or Kandaka were not seen as responsible. [...] So those who came out of the bush at this point and fell into the hands of the peacekeeping mission were not accused of any crime. They were not presented as people who had done something [nasty and] whose heads should be cut off. [...] Since they all were sons of the country and had fallen into the hands of the peacekeeping mission, [...] they should not be condemned for any crime, so be it. [...] And therefore they had to return to work.²⁸

The second measure taken by the authorities consisted in the suspension of all prosecutions for stolen property during the rebellion. The Provincial Secretary, following the Council of Ministers of the Bandundu province²⁹ held in August 1969, instructed his administration as follows:

I have the honour to inform you that the study and approval of records of property looted during the rebellion have been suspended by the Council of Ministers. Given the above, I refer you to read the following instructions: 1) No more administrative authority of the province of Bandundu can approve a dossier on the matter, nor conduct any investigation relating thereto. 2) The cases filed in your office will be inventoried, numbered and kept pending until further notice. 3) Three copies of the minutes concerning the deposits of these files will be sent to the Department of Internal Affairs and Customary

²⁶ Delphin Mafuta (75 years old), oral interview, Kikwit, 22 October 2013. But those who fell in the hands of the *militaires* continued to be killed. See Prospère Yamba (62 years old), oral interview, Kikwit, 24 October 2013; and Bastin Bembo (66 years old), oral interview, Idiofa, 16 December 2013.

²⁷ Isidore Ngyum (73 years old), oral interview, Idiofa, 21 November 2013; and Delphin Mafuta (75 years old), oral interview, Kikwit, 22 October 2013. The issuing of a certificate to everybody so that they become officially “victims” on paper, created a specific relationship between the government and the “victims.” This further complicated the situation because the “real victims”—in the humanitarian sense of the word—never get any assistance from the government as we saw in the previous chapter. This kind of victimhood made official by the government has been recently at the core of debate and theorization. See Pamila Gupta, “Departures of Decolonization: Interstitial Spaces, Ordinary Affect, and Landscapes of Victimhood in Southern Africa,” in Steffen Jensen and Henrik Ronsbo, *Histories of Victimhood*, Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2014, pp. 198-217.

²⁸ Constant Ndom, “Commentaires Ndom-Weiss sur les documents Kwilu-administration,” Bruxelles, Summer 1988. 7609_a_0000927_r02_pt02-N’Dom, Weiss-CD2of2. Archives Conseil National. See Also Delphin Mafuta (75 years old), oral interview, Kikwit, 22 October 2013; and Anonymous, “Remarques sur le rapport d’inspection administrative de Gungu du 24 mars au 16 avril 1966,” pp. 2-3, cited by Monnier, “La province de Bandundu,” p. 333.

²⁹ In 1966, Congolese authorities created Bandundu province and Kwilu became one of its districts.

practices. This is an instruction. I ask you to ensure its wide dissemination among the Regionals of your respective jurisdictions.³⁰

The final measure was to call upon the population to live in peace and harmony.³¹ The words “forgiveness” and “reconciliation” became common in official speeches.³² This was the official launch of the regime’s policy in dealing with the past. The authorities wanted to make the rebellion a place of loss, but a loss that should not necessarily lead to the claiming of debt.³³ Strong emphasis was placed on forgetting the past.³⁴ Everyone should transcend the rebellion and the problems it caused.³⁵ People could rejoice that the “lost children” had been “retrieved.”³⁶ The region was liberated. Everyone could enjoy their freedom.³⁷ A speech made by the administrator of Gungu during the release of prisoners in 1970 demonstrates the scope of this measure:

The honour falls to me, today, to thank in particular the forces of order of our valiant Congolese National Army which, day and night, deployed commendable efforts to restore order, tranquility and peace in this [...] territory. [...] Today constitutes a decisive phase for the administration. [...] It is understood that, after the efforts of the Congolese National Army and the Congolese National Police, we have found hundreds of our misguided brothers who have returned to the fold. As says an adage of the Gospel: ‘These are the lost children who find their father.’ The paternal decision of the General Headquarters of the National Congolese Army, requesting the surrender to the civil authorities of all [...] persons captured during operations, is a reunion for them. In fact, they are required to return to their villagers, rebuild their villages [...] and live again in peace. This day marks the end of the disorders that has [...] [paralysed] the region. Lost brothers, [...] go back to your villages! Forget the past! I invite you to rebuild the territory. You will have to redo your huts,

³⁰ A. Musumani, “Lettre: Assistance à l’audience pour dossiers biens pillés par les rebelles,” Kikwit, 4 Août 1969, reel 11, box 8, folder 5, file H, doc. G69/16. Archives Conseil National.

³¹ Anonymous, “Allocution prononcée par Monsieur l’Administrateur de territoire de Gungu à l’occasion de l’évacuation des personnes capturées par l’Armée Nationale Congolaise, Gungu, 25 avril 1970,” reel 11, box 8, folder 5, file F, doc. G70/ 8A. Archives Conseil National.

³² Daniel Palambwa (83 years old), oral interview, Kinshasa. 23 September 2013. See also Anonymous, “L’Assajef tente une réconciliation entre les divers partis au Kwilu,” in *Courrier d’Afrique*, 35, Thursday, 18 August 1964, no 190, p. 5; and Monnier, “La province de Bandundu,” p. 320.

³³ “You lost your goods and family members during the rebellion, but you cannot claim them anymore.” Ernest Kiangu (59 years old), oral interview, Kinshasa, 14 December 2015.

³⁴ Anonymous, “Allocution prononcée par Monsieur l’Administrateur de territoire de Gungu à l’occasion de l’évacuation des personnes capturées par l’Armée Nationale Congolaise, Gungu, 25 avril 1970,” reel 11, box 8, folder 5, file F, doc. G70/ 8A. Archives Conseil National.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Ibid.

[...] your fields, [...] get back to life, as in the past, and live in harmony and peace [...] gained at the cost of enormous sacrifices.³⁸

“Concord,” “peace,” “harmony,” and “freedom” are the words that most capture the imagination of the people who gathered at the ceremony.³⁹ The restitution of property looted during the rebellion was indeed suspended. Those who came out of the bush truly benefitted from the fact that the status of being a victim was conferred to everyone. But the promise to enjoy the freedom achieved “at the cost of a thousand sacrifices”⁴⁰ remained, for most of those who returned from the bush, a utopian project. The authorities distinguished themselves by their inability to maintain a balance between theory and praxis. Their attitude towards those who came out of the bush was completely ambiguous. Zénon Mibamba, former companion of Pierre Mulele and sent from one prison to another between 1968 and 1972, is one of those who lived these ambiguities. In an interview he said:

When I was released [in 1972], Matungulu, who was head of security here in Kinshasa at the time, received me in his office. He said to me: ‘Zénon, you have now been released. But you are not free. You must know that they will follow you wherever you go. So be careful about all you are going to say. Be careful about the people you are going to spend time with. You must be careful about your behavior. Do not say anything. Do not do anything. [...] Do not spread ideas against the government. Do not join any movement, otherwise, tomorrow, they will come and pick you up and throw you in jail. [...] You have been released. But you must know that you are not free at all. They will follow you. You will be watched. At the slightest movement, you will be caught.’⁴¹

These ambiguities were in compliance with the general policies of Mobutu regime. It should be said that the main concern of local authorities at the time was the implementation of the regime’s overall vision: “People and colleagues,” wrote the administrator of Gungu to his regionals and heads of sectors in April 1966, “we all must

³⁸ Anonymous, “Allocution prononcée par Monsieur l’Administrateur de territoire de Gungu à l’occasion de l’évacuation des personnes capturées par l’Armée Nationale Congolaise, Gungu, 25 avril 1970,” reel 11, box 8, folder 5, file F, doc. G70/ 8A. Archives Conseil National.

³⁹ Philémon Lozo (74 years old), oral interview, Gungu, 12 January 2014; Elie Kakesa (79 years old), oral interview, Gungu, 12 January 2014; and Nestor Mukwangu (79 years old), oral interview, 12 January 2014. These three people were among the crowd.

⁴⁰ Anonymous, “Allocution prononcée par Monsieur l’Administrateur de territoire de Gungu à l’occasion de l’évacuation des personnes capturées par l’Armée Nationale Congolaise, Gungu, 25 avril 1970,” reel 11, box 8, folder 5, file F, doc. G70/ 8A. Archives Conseil National.

⁴¹ Zénon Mibamba (75 years old), oral interview, Kinshasa, 28 March 2013.

now follow the policies and dictums of the current government.”⁴² As stated in the literature, Mobutu suspended the activities of political parties after his *coup d'état* in November 1965.⁴³ He set up a single-party regime that abolished people's freedoms.⁴⁴ He sought the collaboration of members of his administration to consolidate and stabilize his regime.⁴⁵ He instructed them to watch over all forms of political and social conflict.⁴⁶ He recommended that they oppose all forms of political propaganda that criticised his

⁴² Here are more excerpts from the letter:

I have the honour to reproduce for you the full text of the letter of Mr. Minister of Interior and Public Administration [...] in order to educate the entire population. I regret to inform you that [...] I can [...] [still] listen to political slogans along the road. [...] I hope that you will do everything in your power to put an end to this [situation] so that, the next time, when I come back, I can no longer hear all of these. You will agree with me that [...] this mindset can hinder the actions of the administration. People must be educated by you. It is in your responsibility to make every effort to change this state of mind. [...] This means that people and ourselves must now follow the politics and slogans of the government that is currently leading us. This is in a word the meaning of the remark of the Minister. Please go and immediately execute this instruction. (B.M. Kambamba, “Lettre: Rapport fanatique de la population,” Gungu, 14 avril 1966, reel 11, box 8, folder 3, file D, doc. G66/25. Archives Conseil National)

⁴³ Monnier, “La province de Bandundu,” pp. 305, 311.

⁴⁴ Ndaywel è Nziem, *Histoire générale du Congo...*, pp. 665-772. See also Jules Chomé, *L'ascension de Mobutu: du sergent Désiré Joseph Mobutu au général Sese Seko*, Paris: Maspero, 1979; Jean Kestergat, *Du Congo de Lumumba au Zaïre de Mobutu*, Bruxelles: Paul Legrain, 1986; Jean-Claude Willame, *L'automne d'un despotisme: Pouvoir, argent, obéissance dans le Zaïre des années quatre-vingt*, Paris: Karthala, 1992; Colette Braeckman, *Le dinosaure. Le Zaïre de Mobutu*, Paris: Fayard, 1992; Nzongola-Ntalaja, *The Congo...*; Charles Didier Gondola, *The History of the Congo*, Westport, CO: Greenwood Press, 2002.

⁴⁵ Ernest Kiangu (59 years old), oral interview, Kinshasa, 23 March 2015. See also B.M. Kambamba, “Lettre: Rapport fanatique de la population,” Gungu, 14 avril 1966, reel 11, box 8, folder 3, file D, doc. G66/25. Archives Conseil National; and Monnier, “La province de Bandundu,” p. 303.

⁴⁶ B.M. Kambamba, “Lettre: Rapport fanatique de la population,” Gungu, 14 avril 1966, reel 11, box 8, folder 3, file D, doc. G66/25. Archives Conseil National; Ernest Kiangu (59 years old), oral interview, Kinshasa, 23 March 2015; and Zénon Mibamba (75 years old), oral interview, Kinshasa, 28 March 2013. An overview on the history of Congolese student movements can show how any form of contestation was violently repressed. See Emery Kalema, “Les Congrès de l'UGEC (1961-1968),” *Mémoire de licence*, Université de Kinshasa, 2012; Isidore Ndaywel è Nziem (ed.), *L'université dans le devenir de l'Afrique: Un demi-siècle de présence au Congo-Zaïre*, Paris: L'Harmattan, 2007; Isidore Ndaywel è Nziem (ed.), *Les années Lovanium: La première université francophone d'Afrique subsaharienne*, vol. 2. Paris: L'Harmattan, 2010; Jean-Marie Mutamba Makombo, “L'Union Générale des Etudiants Congolais et la lutte pour la démocratie (1961-1969),” in Sabakinu Kivilu, *Elites et démocratie en République Démocratique du Congo*, Kinshasa: PUK, 2000, pp. 83-89; and Pedro A. G. Monaville, “Decolonizing the University: Postal Politics, the Student Movement, and Global 1968 in the Congo,” PhD thesis, University of Michigan, 2013.

regime.⁴⁷ Yet to a large extent the rebellion continued to play a central role in the Kwilu region. It allowed the articulation of political propaganda contrary to that of the Mobutu regime and its impression on both individual and collective memory.⁴⁸ It is from this that the necessity arose for the regime to maintain control and surveillance over the people that returned from the bush. A former intelligence security officer of the Kwilu region explained this in an interview:

Even if the rebellion was over and people came out of the forest, it was quite obvious that we could not suddenly stop monitoring their actions. [...] It is true that they suffered a lot during the rebellion. [...] But this did not prevent the authorities to continue to exercise vigilance. [...] We could not trust any of them. [...] We knew that things could blow up [any time]. [...] It would not be good to wait for the outbreak of a new insurgency against which the authorities would need to fight. We had to take precautions. This explained why we continued to monitor them closely.⁴⁹

The regime opted for a system of monitoring based on the imbalance between what was seen, the visible, and what was not seen, the invisible, the intention; and between what was heard or spoken and what was concealed, the secret. The regime would take care of the ex-rebels, or some of the orphans left by the most influential of them, only to put them under its control.⁵⁰ In this way the regime added mental and psychological aspects to traditional technologies of surveillance and control of people. The authorities ensured that the ideas raised by the rebellion, as well as the name of the man who had

⁴⁷ B.M. Kambamba, "Lettre: Rapport fanatique de la population," Gungu, 14 avril 1966, reel 11, box 8, folder 3, file D, doc. G66/25. Archives Conseil National.

⁴⁸ Bogumil Jewsiewicki, "Pour une histoire comparée des révoltes populaires au Congo," in Catherine Coquery-Vidrovitch and al., *Rébellions-révolution au Zaïre*, vol.2. Paris: L'Harmattan, 1987, p. 141. Also Zénon Mibamba (75 years old), oral interview, Kinshasa, 28 March 2013.

⁴⁹ N.M. interviewed by Kibari Nsanga in the late 1980s, private collection, Kibari Nsanga, Kikwit. See also Théophile Kisasi (Frère), "Lettre: Protestation contre les arrestations arbitraires," Kingandu, 12 Octobre 1966, reel 11, box 8, folder 3, file D, doc. G66/ 49. Archives Conseil National; and Zénon Mibamba (75 years old), oral interview, Kinshasa, 28 March 2013.

The children of some of the rebels were forced to marry intelligence agents so that, through them, the regime could gain better control over their parents. Also, in this process of control of people, other rebels, especially those who had been feared during the rebellion, lost their wives to the heads of intelligence services, as punishment. The wife of Zénon Mibamba, for example, was impregnated by the head of the intelligence service while Mibamba was imprisoned. Zénon Mibamba (75 years old), oral interview, Kinshasa, 28 March 2013.

⁵⁰ After the assassination of Mulele, some of Mulele's children benefitted from the care of some *militaires*, without knowing that the latter were watching them (Jeannette Mulele, 57 years old, oral interview, Kinshasa, 16 September 2013). Zenon Mibamba was intentionally given a post in the administration so that he could be easily monitored (Zénon Mibamba, 75 years old, oral interview, Kinshasa, 28 March 2013).

raised them, disappear from people's minds.⁵¹ The regime distinguished itself by its ability to dispossess social actors by claiming the power of sharing and talking about the events of the rebellion and the suffering it had caused. Speaking about the rebellion became an offense against the regime in everyday practice.⁵² The name of Mulele was banished from the public sphere. The regime officially declared a "war" against those who pronounced the name of Mulele, as well as those who remembered the events associated with this name.⁵³ The regime set up mechanisms to fight against all forms of mobilization of this memory. The following fragments of testimonies of those who lived during the 1960s and 1970s provide an insight into how these strategies worked:

Papa, who could speak again about Mulele? [...] Mobutu placed guards everywhere, here. They were watching us in our villages.⁵⁴

At the end of the rebellion, [...] [four] *militaires* were still stationed here in Mungay. One of them was called Maurice. The second, *Alia Atundi*, meaning 'he who has eaten and who is now full.' The third was called *Alingi Abima*, meaning 'he wants to get out.' He nicknamed himself *Alingi Abima* because, once he pulled his bayonet out of its protective carrier case, he would only

⁵¹ Mukidi Mbongo (68 years old), oral interview, Gungu, 13 January 2014.

⁵² Prospère Mbwisi (63 years old), oral interview, Kikwit Sacré Coeur, 17 October 2013; and Zénon Mibamba (77 years old), oral interview, Kinshasa, 30 March 2013.

⁵³ Palmie Andiang (75 years old), oral interview, Idiofa, 24 November 2013; Tony Etono (68 years old), oral interview, Luano, 26 October 2013; Hortense Ngo (63 years old), oral interview, Idiofa, 22 November 2013; Isidore Ngyum (73 years old), oral interview, Idiofa, 21 November 2013; Bertin Mukela (69 years old), oral interview, Idiofa, 23 December 2013; Théophile Kambembo (57 years old), oral interview, Idiofa, 18 November 2013; Prospère Mbwisi (63 years old), oral interview, Kikwit Sacré Coeur, 17 October 2013; and Bastin Bembo (66 years old), oral interview, Idiofa, 16 December 2013.

⁵⁴ Prospère Mbwisi gives further explanation about who exactly became these guards and intelligence agents.

Is there anyone who could pronounce the name of Mulele again? Those who dare to pronounce his name died immediately. Mobutu infiltrated intelligence agents among us. There was first the CVRs [*Corps des Volontaires de la République*], and then the JMPRs [*Jeunesses du Mouvement Populaire de la Révolution*]. These are the people who used to watch everyone here. [...] If they see you talking about Mulele, finish! You will immediately disappear. [...] Here in Kikwit, they had an office that was cooperating directly with the presidency of the Republic in Kinshasa. If they see you talking about Mulele or the rebellion, they arrest you. They will not judge you here. They send you directly to Kinshasa headquarters of the intelligence service. [...] Many people disappeared here because of that name. [...] We used to live in fear here in Kikwit. There was no single time when you would not hear that a person has been kidnapped. We used to breathe and eat in fear. (Prospère Mbwisi, 63 years old, oral interview, Kikwit Sacré Coeur, 17 October 2013)

return it back if he had hurt someone. [...] The fourth was called Napoleon. [...] These are the nicknames they brought to the region. [...]

They would brutally kill people. If they caught someone, it was only to cut their head off. [...]. One day, those that had been infiltrated among us to monitor [not only] us [but also] [...] our conversations arrested a man. They accused him of inciting people to talk about Mulele. [...] They took him to Mungay. [...] For *Alia Atundi*, this man was only a beast. Before he was even untied, *Alia Atundi* had already taken out his bayonet. [...] He jumped on the man. He strangled the man. [...] It was hot that day. The blood was flowing. *Alia Atundi* asked for a bowl. They brought him a bowl. [...] The blood of this man ran into the bowl as if he was a beast. [...] The man died on the spot. [...] To the surprise of everyone, *Alia Atundi* undressed. He mixed blood with water. He began to bathe in the presence of everyone. [...] It was horrible [...] [to see how] [...] a man, responsible for a family, was killed [...] simply because they wanted him to forget Mulele's name.⁵⁵

He continued:

The next day, they brought another boy. [...] He was accused of stealing and talking about Mulele. The *militaires* said to him: 'It is Mulele who taught you how to steal. [...] Today, we are going to help you get rid of Mulele permanently.' *Alingi Abima* took his bayonet out. He began to stab the boy: *Kwek, kwek, kwek*. Papa, blood! *Alingi Abima* opened his mouth widely. [...] He began to drink the blood of the boy. Without even worrying about anything, he told us who were gathered there: 'This is our beer. We drink it and we have always drunk it. It is not a problem at all.'⁵⁶

He concluded:

Papa, we lived a terrible life when we came out of the bush. [...] It was even hard to think about what we went through during the rebellion. [...] Personally I was scared to do so because I thought somehow I would end up talking to myself [...]. And, do you know what would happen if somebody heard me talking to myself about what we went on during the rebellion? They would go and accuse me of resurrecting the name of Mulele. [...] This was our curse.⁵⁷

From these testimonies, we can see how the “bodies” of the “victims” were subjected to destruction by the *militaires* in the name of the policy of forgetting; and how, at the same time, those who were forced to witness the deployment of violence onto these “bodies” were exposed to the perpetual renewal of a stronger fear, the one that wrecks

⁵⁵ Tony Etono (68 years old), oral interview, Luano, 26 October 2013.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

even the ability of thinking.⁵⁸ Hence, to set up a variety of strategies in order to control people and force them to forget images they had formed during the rebellion is to do violence to these people. It is to uphold a regime of suffering on these people and deprive them of their fundamental freedom to hold their own memories.⁵⁹ It is to condemn their minds to constantly navigate between “wanting not to know” and “wanting not to tell” their experience(s) of the past.⁶⁰ As the interviewees put it in these testimonies:

After the rebellion, [wanting not to know] what others had experienced when fleeing during the rebellion was a very tough task. [...] Personally I was curious to hear the stories of others. But since it was strictly forbidden to talk about it, I had to discipline myself. [...] But it was not easy at all. Many times I found myself walking into the trap, even though I knew that, at the end, it was a choice between life and death.⁶¹

This is why, all this time, I never got the courage to tell my children what I had experienced. [...] I did not want them to become victims. [...] You know how kids are. You tell them something now; even if you say to them that it is a secret, they will end up sharing it with their friends. [...] I was scared that one day they would end up being arrested because they shared what I had told them. [...] I preferred to keep quiet for the sake of their safety.⁶²

The result of navigating between “wanting not to know” and “wanting not to tell,” as the above testimonies show, was the repression of one’s memory within oneself. People were doomed to fall back on themselves as fragmented “bodies,” and live piecemeal between the corporeal world, the body, and the incorporeal world, the world of memory.⁶³ Because they were not allowed to share these memories, their lives became fragmented—and they themselves became fragmented people. In the real world, as

⁵⁸ See also Chapter 2 of this thesis. Reflecting upon the “what is a thinking thing?,” René Descartes writes: “It is a thing that doubts, conceives, affirms, denies, wills, refuses, that imagines also, and perceives” (René Descartes, *A Discourse on Method*, trans. John Veitch, London: Dent, 1912, p. 89). Doubting, conceiving, affirming, denying, willing, refusing, imagining as well as perceiving are the attributions of existence; they are existence in themselves. In the context of extreme fear—as Etono’s testimonies show—it is impossible for the subject to think. In such conditions, existence becomes a denial—and the subject a non-existence because they are unable to perform to think.

⁵⁹ Neuro-psychological theories would probably argue that memory is not a freedom. It is a natural reaction, impulse, or compulsion; it is a function of the human brain, and as such it cannot be subjected to any form of control. But, and this is what I am suggesting here, I strongly believe that in the political realm, which is my concern here, memory can be framed as a freedom, as something that can be subjected to the forms of control by political power.

⁶⁰ Paul Ricœur, *La mémoire, l’histoire, l’oubli*, Paris: Seuil, 2000, p. 580.

⁶¹ Hortense Ngo (63 years old), oral interview, Idiofa, 22 November 2013.

⁶² Tony Etono (68 years Old), oral interview, Luano, 26 October 2013.

⁶³ On the corporeal dimensions of memory, see Chapter 3 of this thesis.

Etono's words above demonstrate, they would live in fear. While seeking refuge in the incorporeal world, they would feel watched by the state.⁶⁴ Under such conditions of permanent fear, the incorporeal world itself became a space of organized repression, a site of the impossibility of all possibilities. This is what Tony Etono referred to as the "impossibility of thinking," reminding us of the work of trauma and the impossibility of making memory.⁶⁵

To set up a variety of strategies to control people and force them to forget their past experiences is also to force them to live continually between the domain of secrecy—a form of remembering, but specifically and deliberately not disclosing or making known what one remembers at all—and the refusal to consider this secret as a secret—because the conscious mind is aware that what happened is not secret. It is the impossibility of navigating between these contradictory poles that led to numerous people being arrested in the late 1960s and early 1970s. Cyril Mukelenge, who was arrested in 1968, raised this problem in front of the investigating judges of the *Parquet de Kikwit* in 1969, framing it within the realm of memory and forgetting. He recalls:

I kindly told the judge: 'Dear sir, with all the suffering that we went through during the rebellion, I wonder if it is really possible to forget everything.' [...] We were in 1968. We had just come out of the bush. [...] Whenever you were tired and tried to sleep, what is it that [always] came to mind? Isn't it [the images] of the rebellion? Either you are fleeing the *militaires*, or you are burying someone who has just passed away because of malnourishment. [...] With all of these [experiences], how could we forget everything? [...] How could we forget, when our [own] dreams were [infused] with [the images] of the rebellion? [...] This is what I told him.⁶⁶

⁶⁴ See Tony Etono's testimonies above.

⁶⁵ See Primo Levi, *The Voice of Memory: Interviews, 1961-1987*, edited by Marco Belpoliti and Robert Gordon, New York: The New Press, 2001; Fabienne Castaignos-Leblond, *Traumatismes historiques et dialogue intergénérationnel: Un difficile exercice de mémoire*, Paris: L'Harmattan, 2001; Richard Werbner (ed.), *Memory and the Postcolony: African Anthropology and the Critique of Power*, London: Zed Books, 1998; Duncan Bell (ed.), *Memory, Trauma and World Politics: Reflections on the Relationship Between Past and Present*, New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2006; Katharina Hodgkin and Susannah Radstone (eds), *Contested Pasts: The Politics of Memory*, London: Routledge, 2003; Bruce M. Ross, *Remembering the Personal Past: Description of Autobiographical Memory*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1991; Roger Luckhurst, *The Trauma Question*, London: Routledge, 2008; Cathy Caruth, *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative, and History*, Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996; Cathy Caruth (ed.), *Trauma: Explorations in Memory*, Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995; Hannah Arendt, *The Burden of Our Time*, London, Secker and Warburg, 1951; and Paul Connerton, *The Spirit of Mourning: History, Memory, and the Body*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011.

⁶⁶ Cyril Mukelenge (73 years old), oral interview, Idiofa, 23 December 2013.

Despite these remarks on the impossibility of an absolute forgetting,⁶⁷ the authorities seemed not lose their commitment of fighting against the memory of the rebellion. Several people continued to be sent in jails. The shadows of these people were constantly monitored under the effects of the “panopticon.”⁶⁸ Through this approach, the authorities sought to create a new “anatomy of power” that would help define their relations to those onto whom they sought to impose forgetting. As this man explains in this testimony:

I thought my comments would bring the judge to reason. On the contrary, it only brought confusion. [...] The judge opened his eyes widely. [...] He became raging mad. His attitude changed completely. [...] You could read it from his face. [...] His gaze became increasingly threatening. [...] He rose from his seat. He pointed his finger at me and said: ‘Who are you to challenge the president, huh? [...] Today you are going to die. Nobody will plead for you.’ [...] He ordered that I be sent to prison. [...] Two policemen came to escort me. They threw me in jail. [...] It was awful. [...] It was a small room with a few dozen prisoners. There were two small windows above, which [...] let in fresh air. [...] But, even with them the smell of urine was unbearable. [...] Lower down in the wall there were two other openings. They were protected by an anti-theft system. [...] It is through these openings that our movements were tracked. [...] The supervisor would see our shadows moving and come open the door roughly: ‘*Tala biyungu yayi!* [Look at these idiots!]. Do you want to be released? Invoke Mulele to come and release you!’⁶⁹

In some prisons, portraits and effigies of the president were distributed to prisoners, as a way of maintaining control over them. After liberation, the ex-prisoners were forced to put these portraits in their private homes, just as they would have been in public and official spaces.⁷⁰ To avoid any attempt of re-embracing Mulele’s ideas, they had to contemplate portraits of the president every morning.⁷¹ They were made to acknowledge that the president’s power was based on the notion of exclusivity and concentration of sovereignty.⁷² The idea that the president was jealous and, as such, could not tolerate any other forms of worship than those addressed to him was enforced.⁷³ This demonstrates

⁶⁷ On this topic, see Ricœur, *La mémoire...*

⁶⁸ Gilles Deleuze, *Foucault*, Paris: Minuit, 1986, p. 40; and Foucault, *Surveiller et punir...*, p. 197.

⁶⁹ Cyril Mukelenge (73 years old), oral interview, Idiofa, 23 December 2013.

⁷⁰ Mukidi Mbongo (68 years old), oral interview, Gungu, 13 January 2014; and Cyril Mukelenge (73 years old), oral interview, Idiofa, 23 December 2013.

⁷¹ Mukidi Mbongo (68 years old), oral interview, Gungu, 13 January 2014.

⁷² Ernest Kiangu (60 years old), phone call, Johannesburg-Kinshasa, 28 January 2016.

⁷³ Mukidi Mbongo (68 years old), oral interview, Gungu, 13 January 2014. Mobutu constructed his person around a religious cult from early 1970s onwards. See Filip de Boeck and Marie-Françoise Plissart, *Kinshasa: Tales of the Invisible City*, Antwerp: Ludion, 2006, p. 110.

how the regime, over and above controlling physical bodies, sought to gain control over people's imaginations, making them strongly believe in the actual existence of the forms of bodily power "dis-embodied" in official photograph and portraits.

Symbolically, rapprochement through the portraits of the president indicated the regime's presence among its detractors. It exercised personal surveillance over its opponents. The president's "magical power" allowed the exercised of tight control over them.⁷⁴ But, above all, the president's rapprochement through portraits was an indication of both the abolition and maintenance of distance.⁷⁵ He was far away in Léopoldville-Kinshasa while, at the same time, he was present in people's houses as "tangible, palpable, and visible" material.⁷⁶ A former *militaire* of the 1960s strongly confirmed in an interview that it was their responsibility to maintain this rapprochement by the president.

Our task was to show to people that Zaire, as a state, had a president; and that all those who went against the will of the president would be punished. [...] When we wanted to punish, we would do so without any hesitation. [...] We had to ensure that those we were punishing no longer went back to past mistakes. [...] In the late 1960s, when I began my military career, those that we arrested for the Mulele case, we had to ensure that each of them got a portrait or an effigy of the president when they were released. [...] We would ask them to put them up in their houses [...] We would tell them that the president himself was going to watch them. [...] He would be with them, live among them, and participate in their lives. [...] We would remind them that the president was endowed with magical powers. [...] He could multiply whenever he wanted and listen to their conversations in what form they were. [...] We would tell them that the president could read their thoughts, including their intensions. [...] We would remind them that the president was a leopard and that his portrait could anytime [...] devour those who would think about Mulele again. [...] This is how we proceeded.⁷⁷

⁷⁴ Mukidi Mbongo (68 years old), oral interview, Gungu, 13 January 2014. On the magical aspect of the president, see Pius Ngandu Nkashama, *Les magiciens du repentir: Les confessions du frère Dominique (Sakombi Inongo)*, Paris: L'Harmattan, 1995; John F. Clark, "Mobutu Sese Seko of Zaire as a Nondemocratic Presidential Leader," in Lyn Graybill and Kenneth W. Thompson (eds), *Africa's Second Wave of Freedom: Development, Democracy, and Rights*, Lanham: University Press of America, 1998, pp. 81-101; Carter Grice, "'Happy are those who sing and dance': Mobutu, Franco, and the Struggle for Zairian Identity," MA thesis, Graduate School of Western Carolina University, 2011; and Gary Stewart, *Breakout: Profiles in African Rhythm*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992.

⁷⁵ In Cameroon, Paul Biya proceeded in the same way. See Mbembe, *On the Postcolony*, p. 153.

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ Anonymous (70 years old), oral interview, Idiofa, 22 December 2013. On the effigy of the president, see H. Thassinda Uba Thassinda, *Zaire: les princes de l'invisible. L'Afrique noire bâillonnée par le parti unique*, Paris: Editions, 1992, pp. 93-110. On the leopard, see Serge M'Boukou, "Mobutu, roi du Zaïre.

This is how, in the name of a politics of forgetting, people's imagination became the subject of control alongside their physical bodies. The authorities were convinced that the distribution of portraits of the president should have an effect on the imagination of those on whom they sought to impose forgetting. But, they were also aware of the fact that the mere distribution of the portraits was not enough to bring the figure of the president to the core of his detractor's lives. Thus, they resolved to maintain a dose of coercion on the people, to whom they promised protection and freedom, to get them to comply.⁷⁸

The principle was, therefore, to infiltrate information officers among former prisoners, to ensure that the latter had kept the portraits of the president on their walls.⁷⁹ The implication was that there was virtually no limit to what the president could do. He could tear their flesh and organs apart and break their bones.⁸⁰ He could drink their blood and, in so doing, demonstrate the locus of his excessive power and brutality.⁸¹ It was known that he was "the all-powerful warrior who, because of his endurance and inflexible will to win, goes from conquest to conquest, leaving fire in his wake."⁸² Strong emphasis was put on the fact that he was an absolute subjectivity, "god."⁸³ As such, he could surround everyone and have dealings with them; especially because they had not managed to replace him with Mulele.⁸⁴ All of this contributed to people permanently living in fear, as this man remembers:

Living during the Mobutu [era] was painful. [...] Every morning I had to kneel down in front of his portrait. [...] I had to testify continuously my loyalty in front of his portrait. I was supposed to do this every morning [...] as [my] morning prayers. [...] This is something I could not get over. [...] I was

Essai de socio-anthropologie politique à partir d'une figure dictatoriale," *Le Portique* [En ligne], 5-2007 | Recherches, mis en lignes le 06 décembre 2007. Accessed on 11 February 2016. URL:<http://leportique.revues.org/1379>.

⁷⁸ Anonymous (70 years old), oral interview, Idiofa, 22 December 2013.

⁷⁹ Mukidi Mbongo (68 years old), oral interview, Gungu, 13 January 2014; and Cyril Mukelenge (73 years old), oral interview, Idiofa, 23 December 2013.

⁸⁰ See Chapter 2 of this thesis.

⁸¹ See Etono's testimony above and Chapter 2 of this thesis.

⁸² This is the meaning of Mobutu's full name, Sese Seko Kuku Ngbendu wa za Banga, which he adopted in 1972 onward.

⁸³ See Unna Stannard, *A Few Kind Words about Hate: The Dark Side of Family Life and the Bible*, San Francisco: Germainbooks, 2006, pp. 42-43.

⁸⁴ Mukidi Mbongo (68 years old), oral interview, Gungu, 13 January 2014; and Cyril Mukelenge (73 years old), oral interview, Idiofa, 23 December 2013.

constantly being monitored. [...] I even became suspicious of my own wife and children because you never know who is going to betray you. [...] Who could stand against Mobutu? [...] Papa, no one. [...] There was no way to escape.⁸⁵

This is the point to which the obsession with controlling people and forcing them to forget their past experiences led. The authorities maintained this logic to the point of getting themselves immersed in a regime of indistinctiveness. The regime even targeted who criticised the rebellion in art. It confiscated these artworks in the name of the politics of forgetting. The artists were told to stop bringing the “pervasive” name of Mulele to the surface. Justin Kaziamba is one of those people who experienced the arbitrariness of the regime, for defying the president’s authority. In 1971 he brought to life a substantial critique of the Mulele rebellion through his play *La mort de l’abbé Lankwan*.⁸⁶ It led not only to the arrest of all actors, but also to their intensified surveillance.

The deputy commissioner called the head of my school and said to him: ‘Before we release your teacher, he must reassure us that: 1. He will no longer make plays for the theater, neither here in the town of Idiofa nor in other parts of the territory of Idiofa. He must guarantee us that he will keep his promise. 2. He must bring us all the texts, manuscripts, and typescripts [...] that he and his students used for the production of this play. We will burn them. [...] No one will have access to these documents again. 3. He must reassure us that, from now on, he will pay attention to the type of readings that he will provide his students with. No more anti-revolutionary readings. 4. He must promise to everyone that he will never convey messages that go against the president personality nor against his ideology. 5. And you, his head of school, from now on you will ensure that he is transmitting good quality of education to his students. [...]’ These are the conditions under which the Commissioner of the zone released me. [...] I lost my freedom [...] The security services were constantly watching me. [...] I stayed in Idiofa for a while. Then I decided to leave.⁸⁷

The above testimonies show how the regime was deeply invested in its politics of forgetting. It did not matter that someone was critiquing the rebellion; what was taken exception to was that the name and the presence of Mulele were highlighted in people’s imaginations. From 1963 onwards, the regime was at war with this name and its

⁸⁵ Cyril Mukelenge (73 years old), oral interview, Idiofa, 23 December 2013.

⁸⁶ *Abbé* Adolphe Lakwan was a priest of the Diocese of Idiofa. He was arrested and killed in 1965 by the rebels in his attempt of running away from the *maquis*.

⁸⁷ Justin Kaziamba (60 years old), oral interview, 1 December 2013.

presence. Hence it felt the need to censor the play and impose a strict control over all persons involved in it, as well as its means of production and dissemination of knowledge.

The “re-incarnation” of Mulele: Mourning, ghost, and forgetting

The regime’s ambiguities analysed above, and the suffering that these ambiguities caused, led many people to become suspicious of the regime. If it was true that Mobutu had killed the man who had threatened his regime, why did he continue to mistreat them?⁸⁸ Why was the government working so hard to deprive them of their freedom of thinking, if the man who constituted the threat was dead?⁸⁹ Why did the government keep doing this?⁹⁰ Why did it not allow them to live in peace? Why did they continue to have to subject themselves to this regime?⁹¹ These are some of the questions that people affected by this regime began to ask themselves in the late 1960s and early 1970s. The treatment of Mulele’s body after his death, as well as the absence of any burial of the body, reinforced these suspicions even more.⁹² The testimony by Osam illustrates this:

They said they killed him, but where did they bury him? Before Mulele left, he recommended that we return to our villages. [...] He said he went to seek reinforcements in Brazzaville [...] He advised that we return to our respective villages and go wait for him. [...] We were surprised when we learned that he was killed. [...] If, indeed, he had been killed, where had they buried him? [...] What did they do to his body? [...] This man, we had seen him doing extraordinary things; how could he let himself be killed without escaping? [...] Besides, Mulele had all the power. [...] He could turn into anything. [...] He could become a woman or a girl. [...] We used to call him *Eniang Mvul* [Raindrop]. How could someone kill a raindrop? [...] Whenever the *militaires*

⁸⁸ Osam (81 years old), oral interview, Idiofa, 24 November 2013.

⁸⁹ Bastin Bembo (66 years old), oral interview, Idiofa, 16 December 2013; and Cyril Mukelenge (73 years old), oral interview, Idiofa, 23 December 2013.

⁹⁰ Cyril Mukelenge (73 years old), oral interview, Idiofa, 23 December 2013.

⁹¹ Ibid. My interpretation.

⁹² Osam (81 years old), oral interview, Idiofa, 24 November 2013; Bastin Bembo (66 years old), oral interview, Idiofa, 16 December 2013; and Cyril Mukelenge (73 years old), oral interview, Idiofa, 23 December 2013. In terms of the treatment reserved for the body of Mulele, it is clear in *Faccia Di Spia* (1973), a film directed by Giuseppe Ferrara, that Mulele was an object of dismemberment and several mutilations. In 1977, the former governor of Bandundu province, Daniel Monguya Mbenge, confirmed these facts in his *Histoire secrète du Zaïre: l'autopsie de la barbarie au service du monde* (Bruxelles: Editions de l'espérance, 1977). In 1985, Ludo Martens took up this story in his book *Pierre Mulele ou la seconde vie de Lumumba*.

wanted to arrest him, he disappeared and reappeared on the other side. [...] We were very surprised to hear that they killed him. If it is true they killed him, where did they bury him? [...] Where did they put his body? Mulele could not be killed. For the record, he continued to live with us. [...] We saw him many times appearing to us [...] and giving us his instructions. [...] Whenever he came back, he would go and sleep at my friend's place.⁹³

These are the mysteries that surrounded Mulele's death. Apart from the skepticism that it created among Mulele's followers, it left many of them in a situation where it was impossible to mourn. Osam's testimony seems to be, at first glance, phantasmagorical. But a close reading of them shows that, to a large extent, it is this impossibility of mourning that was at stake. In addition to the fact that "the contract" between them, the living, and the dead had not been broken—which is the opposite of Filip de Boeck's postcolonial "beyond the grave"⁹⁴—this impossibility of mourning led Mulele's followers to keep the dead Mulele among them. They could revive him in their imagination, talk to him and interact with him, despite all of the regime's prohibitions against interiorizing or exteriorizing Mulele in any form whatsoever. They could let themselves be entertained by him.⁹⁵ They could bear his name in their thoughts, while being unable to locate and identify his corpse and his remains.⁹⁶ They could appropriate him as an image and, as such, internalize him and incorporate him within themselves, in a form of "cannibalistic consumption."⁹⁷ This way of proceeding to keep the dead alive, because of a lack of a corpse and the absence of a burial, reflects what Jacques Derrida evokes in his theory of specters, even though he is writing from within a European context: "[Mourning] consists always in attempting to ontologize remains, to make them present, in the first place by identifying the bodily remains and by localizing the dead." For these identifications and localizations to take place in good condition,

[o]ne has to know. *One has to know it. One has to have knowledge.* [...] to know is to know *who* and *where*, to know whose body it really is and what

⁹³ Osam (81 years old), oral interview, Idiofa, 24 November 2013. Even now, he still does not believe that Mulele was killed. When he received me in his house, he said to me: "Who knows if you are not Mulele. Mulele used to take many forms. He could present himself like a young man like you."

⁹⁴ De Boeck and Plissart, *Kinshasa...*, p. 82.

⁹⁵ Osam (81 years old), oral interview, Idiofa, 24 November 2013.

⁹⁶ Cyril Mukelenge (73 years old), oral interview, Idiofa, 23 December 2013.

⁹⁷ Sean Gaston, *The Impossible Mourning of Jacques Derrida*, London: Continuum, 2006, p. 2. See also Jacques Derrida, *The Work of Mourning*, trans. Pascale-Anne Brault and Michael Naas, Chicago-London: University of Chicago Press, 2001, p. 159.

place it occupies—for it must stay in its place. In a safe place. [...] Nothing could be worse, for the work of mourning, than confusion or doubt: *one has to know* who is buried where—and *it is necessary* (to know—to make certain) that, in what remains of him, *he remains there*. Let him stay there and move no more!⁹⁸

The impossibility of getting rid of Mulele, as well as the incapacity to locate and identify the remains of his body, had certain consequences. It left many of Mulele's followers in an interminable period of waiting. For most of them, Mulele's life has never ended. His life, as well as his living self, have never been interrupted. Hence the firm belief that he will come back, a coming back that lies not far in the future.⁹⁹ Because Mulele had the power to transmogrify and turn into something else,¹⁰⁰ all would begin, to use Derrida's words, "in the imminence of a reappearance," "a reappearance" of his spirit "as apparition for" the second time.¹⁰¹ They strongly believe in such a return because of the "agreement or the contract signed" between them and Mulele. While Mulele was among them, they took on the responsibility of remaining faithful and loyal to him. They promised to fight against any form of conspiracy against Mulele.¹⁰² They promised to work, even unto the ultimate sacrifice, to preserve the life of their leader. After the departure of Mulele to Brazzaville, most of his followers renewed their commitment:

We had to hold on to our promise. [...] When he was among us, we promised that we would protect him. And that nobody would betray him. [...] This is what we did. We kept our promise and nobody betrayed him.¹⁰³

He remained among people as a fish in water. [...] All this time, from 1963 to 1968, he stayed in a small territory. [...] The central government mobilized enormous resources. They even resorted to anti-Castro, the Cuban counter-revolutionaries [...] They sent them to villages to capture Mulele. But they

⁹⁸ Derrida, *Specters of Marx...*, p. 9. See also Augustin Nsanze, "Le deuil du passé est-il possible?," *Cahiers d'Etudes Africaines* 44, 173-174 (2004), pp. 420-425; and Igor Kopytoff, *Ancestors as Elders in Africa*, New York: Bobbs-Merill, 1971. The same happened for Lumumba. See Bogumil Jewsiewicki and Bob W. White, "Mourning and the Imagination of Political Time in Africa. Introduction," *African Studies Review* 48, 2 (2005), pp. 1-9; Tshonda, *Lumumba, drame sans fin...*, pp. 221-262; and Bogumil Jewsiewicki, "Corps interdits: la représentation christique de Lumumba comme rédempteur du peuple zairois," *Cahiers d'Etudes Africaines* 36, 141-142 (1996), pp. 221-262.

⁹⁹ Ernest Kiangu (60 Years old), phone call, Johannesburg-Kinshasa, 28 January 2016.

¹⁰⁰ On this aspect, see Chapter 2 of this thesis.

¹⁰¹ Derrida, *Specters of Marx...*, p. 4.

¹⁰² Adolphe Kuma Kuma (76 years old), oral interview, Kikwit Sacré Coeur, 6 August 2015.

¹⁰³ Placide Ngay (77 years old), oral interview, Idioba, 17 November 2013.

could not capture him. [...] Why? Because people had signed an agreement with Mulele. They had promised to protect him despite everything that could happen to them.¹⁰⁴

[In 1968], when he was about to take leave from us, he recommended that we return to our villages. [...] He said to us that he went to seek reinforcements and that he would return. [...] These were his own words. [...] He said he would come back. [...] We were sure and certain that he would come back. That is the reason we went back to our villages to wait for him.¹⁰⁵

This was the psychological atmosphere that prevailed at the time. The combined elements of the harassment by the regime, the mystery surrounding Mulele's death, the impossibility of grieving and mourning, as well as the anxious wait for Mulele's return caused people to mobilize *en masse* when, in the late 1970s, a prophet by the name of Kasongo suddenly made his appearance in the region. Kasongo proclaimed to be Mulele "re-incarnated." With this re-incarnation, the memory of the rebellion that the authorities had sought to contain resurfaced. No one could speak of anything else but this man, the "new" Mulele. No one could think of anything anymore, except only of this specter, the becoming-body, the "new" Mulele.¹⁰⁶ Even though Kasongo had a body and attachments to the land, Mulele's followers firmly believed that he was an absence; something not really existing.¹⁰⁷ They were convinced that he was the "living repetition" of Mulele, the "regenerating reviviscence" of his spirit.¹⁰⁸

These "ghostly" and "magical" ways of thinking were largely dependent on the ways in which Kasongo, the "new" Mulele, introduced himself to the region. His life mirrored that of the "old" Mulele. Kasongo was primarily a "vagabond." He entered the region from the north of Idiofa. He settled in sector Banga. After being dislodged by the authorities, he went to Madimba sector and later on to Lukamba. He set up his headquarters in Mulembe, at the very same location where the "old" Mulele had established his headquarters. And as the "old" Mulele, Kasongo could speak the language of the "revolution." He could teach the "revolution" to his followers. He could teach them how to conquer the keys to power and how to neutralize and overturn

¹⁰⁴ Zénon Mibamba (77 years old), oral interview, Kinshasa, 30 March 2013.

¹⁰⁵ Osam (81 years old), oral interview, Idiofa, 24 November 2013.

¹⁰⁶ Emile Nkwimi (58 years old), oral interview, Kwanga Carrefour, 18 October 2013.

¹⁰⁷ Grégoire Engwel (71 years old), oral interview, Idiofa, 16 November 2013.

¹⁰⁸ Derrida, *Specters of Marx...*, p. 109.

Mobutu's hegemony.¹⁰⁹ In the same way that administrative officers were considered to be the representatives of the state power during the "old" Mulele era, they were now perceived with the "new" Mulele.¹¹⁰ Kasongo could attack them anytime and, if necessary, kill them.¹¹¹ He could use the same war strategies as the "old" Mulele to neutralize his enemies. In January 1978, when he started his "revolution," his followers used *poupous* (home-made guns), machetes, sticks, bows, and arrows, exactly as during the time of the "old" Mulele. Faced with military bullets, his followers filled their pockets with sand and declared themselves invulnerable, exactly as Mulele's followers had done in the 1960s.

Although Kasongo was primarily driven by economic interests,¹¹² his sudden appearance was of great value to most of Mulele's followers. It allowed them to re-imagine the physical integrity of their leader. It offered them the opportunity of fantasizing about the presence of their leader. As some of those who were part of the movement remembered, they could represent him not as an amorphous and motionless mass but as a presence-absence, as he was now a specter.¹¹³ They could project him as something that is cast on an imaginary screen.¹¹⁴ They could visualize him—at the very moment when they were unhurriedly projecting themselves into the incorporeal world. At the end of this process they would gain peace, evoke their own memories as in dreams, and escape from the constraints of time and location.¹¹⁵ Under such conditions, the stability and tranquility of mind were quickly retrieved.

We used to go at night to the camp. [...] There was food and drink. [...] There were big holes, underground deposits, where we used to keep our goods, as at the time of Mulele. [...] We had everything. [...] We were fine. [...] Personally, I did not get to see Kasongo. He was hiding in a house. But even then we were reassured that he was Mulele. [...] He would teach us and give us time to remember Mulele's marvels. [...] He would give us a time for intense meditations. [...] Everyone would remain calm. [...] After these moments of meditation, we would gather in front of his house. Everyone would tell what

¹⁰⁹ Emile Nkwimi (58 years old), oral interview, Kwanga Carrefour, 18 October 2013.

¹¹⁰ Insim (70 years old), oral interview, Kwanga Carrefour, 20 October 2013.

¹¹¹ Ibid. Also Grégoire Engwel (71 years old), oral interview, Idiofa, 16 November 2013.

¹¹² Kasongo was primarily a traditional healer. He wanted to use the name of Mulele and, in doing so, extort the population as he knew that the latter would easily be fooled after hearing the name of Mulele.

¹¹³ Anonymous (60 years old), phone call, Johannesburg-Kinshasa, 28 January 2016. Emphasis is mine.

¹¹⁴ Ibid.

¹¹⁵ Ibid.

he had seen during his meditation. [...] People would say everything. Some people would say that they had seen Mulele alongside Lumumba. [...] Others would say that they have seen him sitting beside Kimbangu. Some others would say that they saw him with a big army that was going to free the country soon. [...] After all that, we would have the moment of prayers, followed by healing sessions. People would go one after another in his house. [...] They would not see him, but only listen to his voice.¹¹⁶

With all of these activities, the camp of the “new” Mulele became not only the place of production of reverie and fantasy as during the colonial era, but also the site of remembering the rebellion.¹¹⁷ The camp became a site *par excellence* for the representation of the past, where the move between the corporeal and the incorporeal world was no longer subjected to any forms of control.¹¹⁸ Those who attended the camp declared that they held a portion of the specter. Through a purely paradoxical incorporation, the “new” Mulele’s followers believe that the specter could confer Mulele’s powers on them. Following the completion of this process, those who received the power of the specter could leave their bodies and travel through time. They could exceed the boundaries of what they could usually express in their language. They could stutter or go into trance where they could talk with the specter.¹¹⁹ When ideas were detached from the specter, Kasongo’s followers would prepare their “bodies” to receive them.¹²⁰ After receiving the ideas, their bodies were, in turn, fused and merged, to use Derrida’s words (although made in a different context), “by the very subject of the operation who, claiming the uniqueness of its own body” would then become “the absolute ghost,” “the ghost of the ghost of the specter.”¹²¹ At the end of such an operation, the ghost who had become “the ghost of the ghost of the specter”¹²² engendered several other ghosts, the small ghosts. These, in turn, would also generate other ghosts, through the spread of the ideas of the previous ghost, the “original” specter,

¹¹⁶ Anonymous (71 years old), oral interview, Kwanga Carrefour, 20 October 2013.

¹¹⁷ On *Nganda* (camp) as site of refuge, reverie and fantasy during the Belgian colonization, see Hunt, *A Nervous State...*, pp. 80-81, 101-110, 113-116; and Hunt, “Espace, temporalité...,” pp. 115-136.

¹¹⁸ Anonymous (60 years old), phone call, Johannesburg-Kinshasa, 28 January 2016; and Anonymous (71 years old), oral interview, Kwanga Carrefour, 20 October 2013.

¹¹⁹ Anonymous (60 years old), phone call, Johannesburg-Kinshasa, 28 January 2016.

¹²⁰ Osam (81 years), oral interview, Idiofa, 24 November 2013; and Anonymous (60 years old), phone call, Johannesburg-Kinshasa, 28 January 2016.

¹²¹ Derrida, *Specters of Marx...*, p. 127.

¹²² *Ibid.*

the becoming-body, the “new” Mulele. In so doing, Kasongo could maintain his lineage.¹²³ The “new” Mulele based his action in this system of beliefs.

The echoes of this movement were quick to reach the political sphere. The authorities were very confused. Most of them could not make sense of what was going on.¹²⁴ They did not understand, not because they were ignorant but “because this non-object, this non-present present, this being-there of an absent or departed one, no longer” belonged “to knowledge.”¹²⁵ They did not understand whether it was living or dead. Even though they did not speak of Kasongo as Mulele directly, they were confused whether it might not be Mulele after all. In their anxiety and their obsession with dismembering collective memories, they decided to conjure away the “new” Mulele,¹²⁶ this “presence-absence,” the becoming-body, the man who brought back to the surface not only the name of their enemy, but also the popular ideology of resistance.¹²⁷

In January 1978, Mobutu sent the Red Berets from *camp* Tshatshi (Kinshasa) to occupy the whole territory of Idiofa.¹²⁸ The decision was to kill Kasongo, he who condensed himself into people’s lives and overtook their personal identities. Before making use of the violence of death, the *militaires* began their procedures by hunting. They hunted the ghost, as well as those who belonged to his lineage, like animals. To effectively combat the “new” Mulele, civil authorities of the region were forcibly militarized. The intelligence services were mobilized.¹²⁹ Youths of the MPR were mobilized and encripted, alongside the brigadiers of the sectors. They had to assist the *militaires* in their efforts of putting people to death.¹³⁰ All Idiofa villages, and some villages of Gungu, were invaded by the *militaires*. Several people were arrested, but most of them were killed in the name of both the politics of forgetting and the powerful

¹²³ Osam (81 years), oral interview, Idiofa, 24 November 2013; and Anonymous (60 years old), phone call, Johannesburg-Kinshasa, 28 January 2016.

¹²⁴ Ignace Kapitene (72 years old), oral interview, Idiofa, 20 December 2013. He was the head of Cité d’Idiofa in 1978.

¹²⁵ Derrida, *Specters of Marx...*, p. 6.

¹²⁶ Ibid, p. 127.

¹²⁷ Jewsiewicki, “Pour une histoire compare...,” p. 135.

¹²⁸ Anonymous (71 years old), oral interview, Idiofa, 21 December 2013; and Mbo Way (57 years old), oral interview, Kinshasa, 6 October 2013.

¹²⁹ Anonymous (71 years old), oral interview, Idiofa, 21 December 2013.

¹³⁰ Emile Nkwimi (58 years old), oral interview, Kwanga Carrefour, 18 October 2013.

bureaucratic tradition of fear of resistance that the regime had towards the population.¹³¹

One of the intelligence agents who participated in this operation remembers:

The *militaires* arrived at Idiofa. [...] They were armed to the teeth. They commanded us to serve as guides. They gave us uniforms. [...] Together we moved across the villages. [...] They would force the chiefs of the villages to gather people. [...] They would call the names of those who had gone to Kasongo's headquarter. [...] We would put our hands on them and pass them to the *militaires* who would then kill them. [...] We arrested Impey, a man from Musenge Mputu. We also arrested Célestin Nsinankutu and Inswey. [...] We handed them over to the *militaires*. They killed them at close range in the bush. [...] In my own village, we arrested eight people. [...] I still remember that the *militaires* killed a lot of people that day. They buried them in mass graves in the bush [...]. Those they could not bury were left within reach of the pigs. [...] Corpses were everywhere. When they began to smell, it was terrible. No one could stand the smell.¹³²

If the death given to most of the little ghosts was private—that is, mostly administered in the bush and not witnessed by the other villagers—the death of the “new” Mulele took on public qualities. Because Kasongo had made an attempt to raise the name of Mulele to the surface, the *militaires* declared absolute ownership over his body and the right to end his life.¹³³ Together with fourteen of his disciples, Kasongo was hanged in Mayunga stadium in Idiofa.¹³⁴ Unlike the secretive characteristic of the assassination of the “old” Mulele, the *militaires* decided to make Kasongo's execution a “highly visible act.”¹³⁵ They requested a huge crowd to witness how his body and those of his followers were “invested by power”¹³⁶: the crowd was meant to realize that, as in the time of the rebellion, the power of the state in Congo-Zaire was primarily based in an economy of death. The bodies of Kasongo and his followers were smashed with extraordinary power. The *militaires* intended to ensure that, in the future, they would no

¹³¹ Bastin Bembo (60 years old), oral interview, Idiofa, 16 December 2013; Isidore Ngyum (73 years old), oral interview, Idiofa, 21 December 2013; Grégoire Engwel (71 years old), oral interview, Idiofa, 16 November 2013; and Jewsiewicki, “Pour une histoire comparée,” p. 135.

¹³² Anonymous (60 years old), oral interview, Kwanga Carrefour, 20 October 2013.

¹³³ Isidore Ngyum (73 years old), oral interview, Idiofa, 21 December 2013; and Grégoire Engwel (71 years old), oral interview, 16 November 2013.

¹³⁴ 15 people according to the president of Mulele Foundation (Anonymous, “Commémoration du 35ème anniversaire de la mort de Pierre Mulele,” 14 October 2003, http://www.f-ce.com/cgi-bin/news/pg-newspro.cgi?id_news=1175, accessed on 17 March 2016).

¹³⁵ Paul Muyenzi (64 years old), oral interview, Kikwit, 16 October 2013.

¹³⁶ Mundele (57 years old), oral interview, Idiofa, 16 November 2013; Paul Muyenzi (64 years old), oral interview, Kikwit, 16 October 2013; and Innocent Yamb (56 years old), oral interview, Kinshasa, 29 September 2013.

longer come back¹³⁷ because, as Derrida reminds us, “the specter is” first and foremost “the future. [...] It is always to come, it presents itself only as that which could come or come back” again in the future.¹³⁸ They assured the crowd of the impossibility of any further return of the specter, either publicly or in secret. They forced the same crowd to witness this certainty, as these two men remember:

We were mobilized *en masse* to see how the man who had caused trouble in the region was killed. [...] Mobutu decided that Kasongo, as well as his disciples, should be killed where they were arrested. [...] The *militaires* requested Charles Dia’s orchestra. [...] There was music to decorate the hanging scene. We all surrendered to the *militaires*. They were looking at us. [...] No one could cry. We had to applaud.¹³⁹

Kasongo was killed here outside by the *militaires*. [...] Everything started with a speech. A *militaire* gave a long speech: ‘I have been sent by the military court to execute some people.’ He then mentioned the name of Kasongo. [...] They asked him to stand on the staircase. They forced him to confess. [...] Then they quickly removed the planks [he was standing on]. [...] Kasongo was suspended in the air. Suddenly he began to urinate. Finished! He was dead. The *militaires* cut the rope off. [...] They asked the medical doctor who was there to confirm that Kasongo was dead. The latter approached the corpse. He confirmed with certainty that he had died. The *militaires* shot the corpse to show the crowd that Kasongo was really dead.¹⁴⁰

Then a bayonet was plunged into his chest. They began to tear his body apart, in the presence of everyone. After that they threw the pieces of his body into their vehicle. [...] It was the end. [...] Kasongo was dead. No one could deny it.¹⁴¹

Even though the “ghost of the ghost” was killed, the multitude of small ghosts he had brought to life were eradicated, and people shared the certainty that a future return of the specter was impossible, the regime’s obsession with controlling people and forcing them to forget their experiences of the rebellion did not come to an end. On the contrary, the regime continued to mobilize resources. People’s imaginations remained under control.¹⁴² The meanings the military invested in Kasongo’s physical body, followed by the public spectacle of its destruction, revived the trauma of the rebellion that many of

¹³⁷ Innocent Yamb (56 years old), oral interview, Kinshasa, 29 September 2013.

¹³⁸ Derrida, *Specters of Marx...*, p. 39.

¹³⁹ Grégoire Engwel (71 years old), oral interview, 16 November 2013.

¹⁴⁰ Mundele (57 years old), oral interview, 16 November 2013.

¹⁴¹ Grégoire Engwel (71 years old), oral interview, 16 November 2013.

¹⁴² Mbo Way (57 years old), oral interview, Kinshasa, 6 October 2013.

them had not confronted for years. The result was that many of the people became incapable of remembering themselves as integrated beings.¹⁴³ The biographies and trajectories of those who were killed in the bush and buried randomly in mass graves according to the arbitrary will of the state power became entangled with the landscape. They continued to haunt the place like ghosts.¹⁴⁴ The name of Mulele and discourse associated with his name remained banned. Idiofa was declared a red zone of high political and social conflict for the rest of Mobutu's reign. Together with Gungu, its inhabitants were subject to maneuvers by the military operations Nguma I and II in the 1980s.¹⁴⁵ People from the area continued to be arrested and tortured as a result of these military activities.¹⁴⁶ This is the situation which the politics of forgetting put people into during the 1970s and 1980s.

The re-invention of Mulele: Facts, friction, and suffering

On 17 May 1997 the troops of the *Alliance des Forces pour la Libération du Congo* (AFDL) entered Kinshasa.¹⁴⁷ With this, Mobutu and his regime fell.¹⁴⁸ Laurent Désiré Kabila took power.¹⁴⁹ This was the beginning of a new era in the history of Congolese nationalism in general and Mulelism in particular. As with most Congolese nationalists, the Mulelists were honoured.¹⁵⁰ Many of them were rewarded for their “anti-Mobutu” and “anti-imperialism” efforts of the 1960s.¹⁵¹ They recovered the freedom they had

¹⁴³ Pascal Atum (68 years old), oral interview, Kinshasa, 4 December 2013; Mbo Way (57 years old), oral interview, Kinshasa, 6 October 2013; and Mundele (57 years old), oral interview, Idiofa, 16 November 2013. Atum's wife had an abortion following the spectacle of the killing of Kasongo and his disciples.

¹⁴⁴ Mundele (57 years old), oral interview, Idiofa, 16 November 2013; Emile Kwimi (58 years old), oral interview, Kwanga Carrefour, 18 October 2013; and Adolphe Kuma Kuma (76 years old), oral interview, Kikwit Sacré Coeur, 6 August 2015.

¹⁴⁵ Mukidi Mbongo (68 years old), oral interview, Gungu, 13 January 2014.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid. In Kinshasa, those who defied the power of the president by pronouncing the name of Mulele in public were arrested. It is the case of Thérèse Pakasa of the Parti Lumumbiste Unifié (PALU), and many other women of the same political parti. See Anne-Marie Akwety Kale, “Itinéraire politique d'une femme: Thérèse Pakasa. Du P.S.A. au Palu (1959-1995).” *Mémoire D.E.S.*, Université de Kinshasa, 2011.

¹⁴⁷ Reyntjens, *The Great African War...*, pp. 102-166.

¹⁴⁸ Ndaywel è Nziem, *Nouvelle histoire du Congo...*, p. 604.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid.

¹⁵⁰ Zénon Mibamba (77 years old), oral interview, Kinshasa, 17 September 2013.

¹⁵¹ Ibid.

been denied for years. Now they could talk about Mulele. They could remember him without worrying about anything. With the new regime giving them this chance, they could evoke his name in public places without any problem.¹⁵² It was a complete liberation of the memory of the rebellion.¹⁵³

The presence of Faustin Munene as Minister of Interior made things easier.¹⁵⁴ Presenting himself as Mulele's "spiritual heir," he devoted all his energy to re-valorizing and re-inventing Mulele's memory.¹⁵⁵ His task was to give assistance to the forgotten dead.¹⁵⁶ He had to exhume Mulele for a "third" life, the first and the second having been

The great Congolese politicians do not intervene directly in all cases. For each political gang [*clan politique*], they choose a man they use for that, somehow, to serve as their vassal. [...] For the Western Front, Laurent Kabila chose Abdoulaye Yerodia. It was him who should channel all the aspirations and claims of the people of the West, including the Mulelist. [...] Me, for example, I was appointed Member of the ACL-PT [Assemblée Constituante et Legislative—Parlement de Transition]. People jostled to submit their applications at Grand Hotel. Even M'zee Kabila's political opponents fought to get there. But I had not submitted an application to become a member of parliament. I was secretary general in the Administration. [...] One day, we found ourselves at the Palais du Peuple for a political awakening morning, a series of encounters organized by the presidency office. [...] They used to invite the population, executives, in short, everyone. And that day, I accompanied my Minister of Youth, Mutombo Tshibal. After his speech, I meet Professor Mupapa. [...] The latter said: 'Noko [uncle], you were chosen as deputy. You are going to Lubumbashi as Member of Parliament.' I asked him: 'Noko, how?' He said: 'Yes, that is how it is.' I asked again: 'But how?' He said to me: 'The president asked comrade Yerodia for five people from Western Front. Yerodia asked me for the name of people he could send to Lubumbashi. I gave him your name.' He said: 'Ah, *noko*, I was still going to forget about him!' You see? I had never sought to become a deputy. I did not even think about it. But it happened because M'zee Kabila rewarded above all the revolutionaries.

¹⁵² Paul Lama (54 years old), oral interview, 22 September 2013.

¹⁵³ Ernest Kiangu (59 years old), oral interview, Kinshasa, 14 December 2015; Zénon Mibamba (77 years old), 28 March 2013; Paul Muyenzi (64 years old), oral interview, Kikwit, 16 October 2013; and Grégoire Engwel (71 years old), oral interview, Idiofa 16 November 2013.

¹⁵⁴ This was Mulele's nephew. He was among the people that the Mobutu regime arrested on 2 October 1968 in Bomboko's residence, together with Pierre Mulele.

¹⁵⁵ Honsek, "Faustin Munene, l'héritier spirituel de Pierre Mulele," *La Solidarité*, 4-7 October 1997, no 136, p. 3.

¹⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

brutally stripped away by the Mobutu regime.¹⁵⁷ In an interview in October 1997, he said:

I remember [...] in prison [...] that night, one last time he [Mulele] said to me: ‘My son, we are stuck. I can escape, but where to? To Brazzaville? There I will still be taken and it will not do any good. As we are stuck, I want something of me to remain. They [can] kill me. Let them kill me. Let them do with me whatever they want. But I want something to remain. I am thinking of you. If you are ready to serve the revolution; if you can affirm that, I will die happier.’¹⁵⁸

The Mulele Foundation, created in June 1995, served as a springboard for this project.¹⁵⁹ One only has to read press articles published between the 2 and 4 October 1997 in Kinshasa to realize the magnitude of this project. During these three days, Kinshasa was in an uproar.¹⁶⁰ Grandiose demonstrations were organized by the Mulele Foundation to commemorate the 29th anniversary of Mulele’s assassination. Countless events, on an epic scale, were organized to celebrate the anniversary.¹⁶¹ Members of government and officials took part. Panel discussions on Mulele’s life, work, ideas and legacy were held at the Kinshasa Zoo.¹⁶² Poems evoking the immortality of Mulele were recited.¹⁶³ Mulele’s biography was sung by Langung, a folk group from Idiofa. Concerts featuring nationally acclaimed artists, such as Tabou Ley, were organized.¹⁶⁴ Mulele’s friends and fellows stood at the podium, one after another testifying to Mulele’s life.¹⁶⁵ There was an unprecedented effervescence.¹⁶⁶ Mulele’s daughter, who took part in this ceremony, remembers:

It was great! A large crowd of all kinds of people came to discover the greatness of Pierre Mulele. [...] For the first time we gave him the tributes he

¹⁵⁷ Paul Lama (54 years old), oral interview, 22 September 2013.

¹⁵⁸ Honsek, “Faustin Munene...,” p. 3.

¹⁵⁹ M. Lakubu (57 years old), oral interview, Kinshasa, 21 September 2013.

¹⁶⁰ E. Kiekike, “Réhabilitation de la mémoire de Pierre Mulele,” *La Solidarité*, 4-7 October 1997, no 136, p. 3.

¹⁶¹ Ibid.

¹⁶² Particularly by Ludo Martens, Pierre Mulele’s hagiographer.

¹⁶³ Anonymous, “Programme des manifestations pour la célébration du 29^{me} anniversaire de la mort de l’assassinat de Pierre Mulele,” *La Solidarité*, 4-7 October 1997, no 136, p. 1. The poem recited by Georgette Kimpanga was entitled “To die in order to live” (*Mort pour vivre*).

¹⁶⁴ Kiekike, “Rehabilitation...,” p. 3.

¹⁶⁵ Especially Léonie Abo, Théophile Bula-Bula, Léon Makasa and Nelly Labut.

¹⁶⁶ Zénon Mibamba (77 years old), oral interview, Kinshasa, 17 September 2013.

deserved. We showed the world that Mulele was a great man. [...] We showed everyone that Mulele was the subject of an excessive demonization by Mobutu. I, who am speaking to you, how many times have I not been subjected to scorn because of my father? At school, friends used to tell me: ‘Get out of here; your father is a rebel!’ [...] One morning you get to school and you hear people singing in front of the flag: ‘*Pipi dongo, nani atiaki tembe na Mobutu? Mulele atiaki tembe na Mobutu, lelo asuki!* [*Pipi dongo* who defied Mobutu? Mulele defied Mobutu, today he is no longer!]’ Can you see? A song professing insults against my father! I guess you understand the pain I felt at the time as a young Mulele girl! [...] Morally, we have suffered in our lives. We were put to shame. We were told that our father was a rebel. [...] It was said of him that he was an assassin. They never presented his good side. [...] I, who am talking to you, I have spent my whole life crying. [...] I even managed to change my name from Mulele to Holele to avoid this moral suffering. [...] How could we go to school? My brother, Benoit, was a rowdy child. At school, he was the target of everyone. ‘Mulele Rebel,’ this is how they used to insult him on a daily basis. [...] Even if we had to make an effort to overcome all of these, it was not possible because we were consumed. [...] We suffered terribly. But, from the 2nd to the 4th of October 1997, we managed to turn the page. It was really great! For the first time in our lives, we could breathe.¹⁶⁷

The aim of these commemorations was to expand the presence of the dead, Mulele, into the realm of the living. He had to come back, this time not to be conjured away but to live forever and serve as a bridge between the living and the dead. He had to come back so that the forgetting “equation” imposed by the Mobutu regime could be reversed, from “remembering-forgetting” to “forgetting-remembering.” Paul Lama, one of the Mulele Foundation staff members explained it as follows: “During the Mobutu regime, we were forced to forget. But, when Laurent Kabila came into power, things changed completely. We were asked to remember Mulele.”¹⁶⁸ The tradition of commemorating the anniversary of his assassination was maintained and continued over the years. The Mulele Foundation set up exhibitions to spread his memory.¹⁶⁹ Numerous activities were organized to explain the meaning of his struggle. Congolese historians were approached by the Foundation to write “a scriptural tomb” to Mulele.¹⁷⁰ The name of Mulele began to re-capture the Congolese imagination in a new way.¹⁷¹ On 3 October 2001, Abdoulaye

¹⁶⁷ Jeannette Mulele (57 years old), oral interview, Kinshasa, 16 September 2013.

¹⁶⁸ Paul Lama (54 years old), oral interview, 22 September 2013.

¹⁶⁹ Ibid.

¹⁷⁰ Michel de Certeau, *The Writing of History*, trans. Tom Conley, New York: Columbia University Press, 1988, p. 2.

¹⁷¹ Zénon Mibamba (77 years old), oral interview, Kinshasa, 17 September 2013.

Yerodia—one of Mulele’s former companions, director of the office of president Laurent Désiré Kabila between 1997 and 1999 and Foreign Minister between 1999 and late 2000—held a rousing speech. In his address, he raised Mulele to the level of a signifier and martyr. He invited the population to award him honours worthy of a national hero.¹⁷² He reiterated his loyalty to the memory of the symbol of Mulele.¹⁷³ He called all Congolese to proceed in the same way as him, reminding them of the form of death that Mulele had been subjected to:

Mulele dead 33 years ago, comes out of a forgetting into which they wanted to hide him. He stands [...] in front of us, as he cannot disappear; he has been raised to the dignity of a symbol. As you may know, the symbol stands for something else. [...] We are loyal to the Mulele memory, as we are faithful to the memory of Lumumba and Kabila. [...] May there arise everywhere [...] the flames with the names of those who were tortured and executed. The names of Lumumba, Mpolo Okito, Mulele, Kabila. [...] I pronounce the names of the victims so that executioners recognize and remember what they did, particularly the plenipotentiary that led Mulele to the boat, who accommodated him at his home for three days, to fatten him up, before delivering him to the ignoble punishment of which we have video images: they cut his hands off with an ax; they cut his legs off with an ax; they tore out his eyes. Mulele was still alive! They cut his body into small pieces. [And with the help of a helicopter,] they scattered the pieces [of his body] in the Congo River. That is the reason why our dear Pierrot [Pierre] does not have a grave. The ghosts will say: ‘We dissolved Lumumba’s body in acid; we picked Mulele up in Brazzaville and we conveyed him to the place of his execution; we also arrested Lumumba, tortured, and sent him to his execution.’ These crimes must be remembered and shouted in the face of all ghosts.¹⁷⁴

But above all, in his speech, Yerodia invited everyone to reflect upon the meaning of the supreme sacrifice which Mulele symbolized. He repeatedly insisted on the fact that the figure of Mulele was indexical of “the Congolese nation” and that, by identifying with him and his death, each Congolese person was invited to stand for, index, embody or instantiate the nation as a whole—and the individual self-sacrifice that made the transcendent, enduring collectivity possible and imaginable. He strongly recommended that a special place be reserved for Mulele by each Congolese person to allow his reproduction and survival, this time in the absolute “deepening” of their imagination.

¹⁷² Abdoulaye Yerodia Ndombasi, “Sur quel[le] mort suis-je vivant?” Allocution du Camarade Yerodia Abdoulaye Ndombasi à l’occasion de la commémoration de la mort de Pierre Mulele, Kinshasa, 2001, p. 4.

¹⁷³ Ibid.

¹⁷⁴ Yerodia, “Sur quel[le] mort...,” pp. 4-5, 7-9.

Interestingly, he added a comment that resonates with the supreme sacrifice of Jesus Christ, automatically rehabilitating and re-inventing Mulele:

Our brother and comrade, Mulele, had none of the funeral pomp reserved for heroes, those who have served their country. We do it for the first time in 33 years. This raises a question. Each of us should reflect on—and answer—the question that I’ve formulated from Retamar’s poem: ‘We, the survivors, who are we to survive? Who died for us in jail? Who received in their heart the bullet that was meant for me? On what death am I alive? His bones incrustated in mine, the eyes that they tore from him can see from the gaze of my face; and the hand which is not mine stands at the end of my arm. This hand which is not mine traces broken words where they no longer survive.’¹⁷⁵

This great campaign of the rehabilitation of Mulele and his release from oblivion came to fruition in 2002. The governor of Kinshasa, in discussing what he called the “historical struggle” led by Mulele in the liberation struggle of the Congo, declared the death of Mulele as a sacrifice “for the safeguarding of” the Congolese state’s “independence and sovereignty.”¹⁷⁶ Having considered the duty to immortalize Mulele in the history of the Congo, he decided, in his order of 8 February 2002, to rename *Avenue de la libération* after Pierre Mulele, the man who paid with his life in 1968.¹⁷⁷ With this the governor assigned Mulele a *lieu de mémoire* which he had been denied for many years, in the heart of the Congolese capital. The new *Avenue Pierre Mulele* became both a symbol of the reconciliation with loss, the dead Mulele, and a grave for this loss. The media reported the event lively, considering the “renaming” itself as a form of revenge against the Mobutu regime:

On 8 February 2002, a moving ceremony was held in central Kinshasa. The avenue which, in 1968, led Pierre Mulele to his death at Camp Kokolo was renamed after the martyr [Mulele]. The Minister Abdoulaye Yerodia, who chaired the ceremony, began his speech with very simple words: ‘I look forward to unveiling this plaque of Avenue Pierre Mulele.’ His voice breaking with emotion, he continued: ‘There are not many people to whom it means something to hear the name of Pierre Mulele. This is not the case for those of us who have followed him in his fight [...]’ Indeed, the choice of this street is not the result of any coincidence. This *Avenue de la libération*, that will now bear the name of the chief of *maquis* of Bandundu, was formerly called

¹⁷⁵ Yerodia, “Sur quel[le] mort...,” pp. 11-12.

¹⁷⁶ Anonymous, “Pierre Mulele, héros et martyr d’Afrika,” *Servir le Peuple, le blog des Nouveaux Partisans*. <http://servirlepeuple.over-blog.com/article-pierre-mulele-heros-et-martyr-d-afrika-41243941.html>. Accessed on 16 March 2016.

¹⁷⁷ Anonymous, “Pierre Mulele...”

‘*Avenue des victimes de la rébellion,*’ and then ‘*Avenue 24 Novembre,*’ the day of Mobutu’s coup in 1965. It is a form of revenge that, today, it becomes ‘*Avenue Pierre Mulele.*’ Because, as recalled by Abdoulaye Yerodia, ‘Pierre has no grave. His tomb is the waves of the river, the waves multiplied by the number of pieces of his body since, while he was still alive, Mulele was sliced, cut up into pieces, in a place that is always there, on the avenue that bears his name.’¹⁷⁸

If these sepulchral mechanics, triggered by the new regime in 1997 and prolonged until 2010,¹⁷⁹ contributed to re-inventing the name of Mulele in the imagination of the Congolese, it should be said that it also constituted a form of subjugation for those who suffered during the rebellion. Men and women whose bodies were marked with disruptions by the violent interventions of war have seen—and continue to see—in these practices the manifestation of a political power, both authoritarian and exclusivist; as intensively devoted as the previous regime to control the minds of its citizens. They have seen—and continue to see—in these decisions an attempt by a regime to impose a unique form of remembrance—through the production of an authoritative historical master narrative which reifies the emergence and the hegemonic presence of Mulele, the man who brought pain and sorrow in their lives. They have seen—and continue to see—in these procedures the embodiment of a political power, as strongly devoted as the previous regime, to transform its citizens into “beings-outside” the world. They have seen—and continue to see—in these proceedings the manifestation of a political power characterized by an unprecedented and spectacular blindness, the one that is driven by a strong desire of imposing a unique form of apprehension of the past in order to only “totalize the de-totalized totality which”¹⁸⁰ it is. This is what these two people express in the following testimonies:

The ways in which [my body] was treated [during the rebellion], how different is it from death itself? [...] The *militaires* gave me a bullet through my cheeks. [...] They [literally] destroyed [my organ of language]. [...] They seized my testicles, they cut them off. What is that? And when they sing: ‘*Mulele*

¹⁷⁸ Anonymous, “Pierre Mulele...”

¹⁷⁹ In 2010 General Faustin Munene attempted a coup against Joseph Kabila. Since then, the name of Mulele has been banished again from the public sphere; this time, because of its association with Munene’s name.

¹⁸⁰ Sartre, *Being and Nothingness...*, p. 357.

asekwa! [May Mulele resurrect!],’ where does that put me? [...] Where is my place? Don’t I deserve to be treated with dignity and honour?¹⁸¹

These are the scars that we will continue to carry throughout our lives. We will never forget about them. [...] The day they took the decision to rehabilitate Mulele, it was a big humiliation for us. [...] They showed us that we are [...] only the figures of indignity; people mingled here and there for scraps of a derisory humanity. [...] They belittled us and, more than that, they force us to continuously live with an unbearable pain. [...] This is something we will take up for infinity. [...] And what is ridiculous is the fact that they got up one morning and decided to rename an avenue in the heart of the city after Mulele. What is that? It is like all the evil that this man did to us was not enough. [...] Now they come forcefully to impose to the [very] same people the man who hurt them badly. [...] Isn’t this a kind of violence on the people? [...] Isn’t this a way of continuing to insult the same people whom this man made suffer? [...] Isn’t this a [form] of colonization? [...] And you want people to applaud you! [...] What about those who died prematurely in the bush? [...] What about those who lost their lives in the midst of the forest and whose bodies we could not locate? Are they also going to be proclaimed martyrs? This is unacceptable [and] painful.¹⁸²

But above all, the same people whose bodies were marked by disruptions have seen—and continue to see—in these decisions a “gruesome” performance of a “sadistic” behavior by the state. In their own words, this “sadistic” behavior is characterized by “tenacity.”¹⁸³ As the previous regime, the new one is strongly engaged in a “for-itself” kind of relationship. It is engaged in this form of relationship to the extent of seeing itself as engaged, while intentionally ignoring the consequences of this engagement for those who suffered during the rebellion. It persists in this “for-itself” form of relationship and colonizes its subjects. It invests in their minds to the point of incarnating in them, through the violence of speech,¹⁸⁴ the other, Mulele, the man who brought the rebellion that left them in unbearable pain and suffering.

This new form of state sadism is what many of them understood as “appropriation” because, as Sartre reminds us, “the object of sadism is” first and foremost “immediate appropriation.”¹⁸⁵ It is appropriation in so far as “it seeks to strip the other of the acts which hide him. [...] It enjoys being a free appropriating power confronting a freedom

¹⁸¹ Eugène Kitoto (80 years old), oral interview, Kikwit, 7 August 2015.

¹⁸² Frade Zunga Zunga (58 years old), oral interview, Kinshasa, 8 August 2015.

¹⁸³ Anonymous (59 years old), oral interview, Kinshasa, 9 August 2015; and Anonymous (58 years old), oral interview, Kinshasa, 29 September 2013.

¹⁸⁴ See Yerodia’s speech above.

¹⁸⁵ Sartre, *Being and Nothingness...*, p. 375.

captured by flesh.”¹⁸⁶ But since the culture of inflicting physical pain on the flesh belonged to the past, the sadist—that is, the new regime—enjoys “confronting a freedom captured” by the minds of its subjects. It enjoys making suffering more apparent by “consciously” treating those who suffered during the rebellion as instruments: decomposing their minds, getting hold of their freedom and capacity of imagining and freely interpreting their past; as well as forcing them to remain subjectively crushed as they used to be during the Mobutu regime. Hence the presence of frustration, disappointments, and disapproval on the side of the injured people, as shown in the testimonies above. This is where the reversal of the remembering “equation,” from “remembering-forgetting” to “forgetting-remembering,” led those living with disruptions in their bodies.

¹⁸⁶ Sartre, *Being and Nothingness...*, p. 375.

Figure 14: Cyril Mukelenge showing his scars¹⁸⁷



Conclusion

Every political regime in Congo from the late 1960s up to the present has dealt with the memory of the Mulele rebellion in different ways. Through fragments of stories, this chapter looked deeply into this history in order to understand the ways in which this politics has been constructed since the late 1960s. During the Mobutu regime, this politics was incredibly violent. The regime distinguished itself by its ability to configure a set of strategies to enforce silence and create a public forgetting about Mulele. In this manner, the regime shifted the focus of control from the physical (or actual bodies) to the mental, the mind or the imagination. This is to show that relations of domination during

¹⁸⁷ Photo by author, Idiofa, 23 December 2013.

the Mobutu regime were very powerful because even the mental fields of its citizens were controlled by power relations. This way of proceeding, which consists of setting up a variety of strategies to control people and force them to forget images of their experiences of the rebellion, was primarily to do violence to these people. It was also to impose a regime of suffering on these people and deprive them of their fundamental freedom to remember their own past. It was to condemn their minds to constantly navigate between “wanting not to know” and “wanting not to tell” or transmit these experiences of the past.

The result of this new form of control was that people were doomed to fall back on themselves as fragmented “bodies” and live piecemeal between the corporeal world—the body—and the incorporeal world—the world of memory. Because they were not allowed to share the images of these memories, all their lives became fragmented and they themselves became fragmented people. In the real world, they would live in fear. While moving to the incorporeal world to seek refuge, they would feel as if they were continuously being watched by the same power, the state.

This new form of control proved to be “partially” a failure, given the fact that memories of Mulele merely became private or secret and that the potential for a ghostly avatar that would re-publicize those memories always remained, as evidenced by Kasongo. The advent of Kabila in 1997 as well as the inversion of the injunction to forget Mulele after he came to power left Mulele’s victims feeling equally and mentally “colonized” by the political memory-work of the new regime.

Conclusion

Summary of arguments

This thesis is about a moment that is relatively forgotten in the history of decolonization in Africa: the period that almost immediately followed the declaration of independence and transfer of sovereignty from colonial authorities to the authorities of the new states. In a number of countries, this period was characterized by conflict, most of them calling into question the legitimacy of the new states. This was the case of the Congo in the 1960s when the political sphere was dominated by a cycle of contestations and the national territory was torn apart by a spiral of violence in an event called the Mulele rebellion.¹

Naming, transcribing, documenting, and analysing the suffering caused by this rebellion was one of the goals of this thesis. How this suffering was inscribed in the imaginary of the survivors—and, indirectly, the Congolese State and different political regimes in power in Kinshasa from the 1960s to the present—was also the subject of exploration. It is the overall question of the “imaginaries of suffering” that lay at the core of analysis. Four meanings were given to the concept of suffering: suffering as what a person experiences in the concrete conditions of the rebellion; suffering understood as what a person experienced in the body during the rebellion; suffering as what the “body” remembers because it carries visible marks, recognizable by the self and others; and suffering as what leaves marks in the minds of the suffering subject. The thesis used the voices of the victims and the testimonies of the witnesses for a deep analysis of power, its meaning, and the interplay of forces between power, suffering, and memory.

The thesis draws upon debates from philosophy, history, anthropology, literary studies, and medical humanities published over the last thirty years by scholars from Europe, Asia, the Americas and Africa. Key theoretical inspiration was drawn from the work of Georges Bataille, Deleuze, Michel Foucault, Reinhardt Koselleck, Achille Mbembe, Jean-Paul Sartre, Martin Heidegger, Jacques Derrida, Elaine Scarry, Jean-Luc

¹ See Isidore Ndaywel è Nziem, “Du Congo des rebellions au Zaïre des pillages,” *Cahiers d’Etudes Africaines* 38, 150-152 (1998), pp. 417-439.

Nancy, Frantz Fanon Nancy Rose Hunt, Walter Benjamin, Cornelius Castoriadis, Paul Ricœur, Jean-Pierre Vernant and Sabine Melchior-Bonnet.

The analysis led to five major conclusions. Firstly, violent conflicts in their nature always shatter the mental, temporal, and spatial frameworks from which people make sense of their lives. The thesis shows that when the conflicts in Congo broke out, and accompanied by violence, terror, and actual physical movements, they ruptured the previous logics of daily life that people used to make sense of their lives. Not only did this affect the physical bodies of people, but it also affected the relationship of the self and the environment. To grasp the meaning of suffering produced by such conflicts and its inscription in the imagination of people necessitates the mobilization of a variety of approaches: from philosophy and the study of (un)consciousness to phenomenology and the study of affect.

Secondly, the rebellion and the Congolese state had a particular way of inflicting pain and suffering on the bodies of its subjects: its enemies. This—way of inflicting pain—strongly relied upon a triple logic of cruelty, excess, and sadism. It consisted of seizing people and torturing them until their bodily integrity was violated. It followed them beyond death and beyond all suffering. It humiliated and annihilated them in their present actuality to the extent of inscribing pain and suffering into the future for those who remained alive, as living “bodies.”

Thirdly, the thesis demonstrates that the scars and marks left on the bodies of the subjects tortured during the rebellion—including those who were accidentally injured—have the ability of producing and reproducing suffering in the *longue durée*, as long as those who bear them live. This may apply to most—if not all—post-conflict situations, not only in the region explored in this thesis. To be tortured during the rebellion was unimaginably terrible. But the suffering did not end there. There was something beyond that, something even more important, that caused a kind of psychic suffering which not only exceeded the physical, but also extended itself across time. This happened first and foremost at the moment of the encounter of the self with the mirrored image of itself, a deformed image, a non-recognizable image, a representation which is also a monster of oneself. It also happened at the termination of time, when a person, the scarred “body,” decided he had had enough of seeing his life breaking down continuously. It finally happened at the moment of the involvement of the scarred “body” in social relations with others.

Fourthly, the thesis shows that efforts by the state and quasi-state authorities to put in place a variety of strategies to force people to forget their past experiences, or to force them to remember those experiences in a particular way, was to do violence to these people. It was also to maintain a regime of suffering on these people and deprive them of their fundamental freedom to remember their own past. It was to condemn their minds to constantly navigate between “wanting not to know” and “wanting not to tell” or transmit these experiences of the past. As is extensively shown in the thesis, the result in the context of the Mulele rebellion was that people were doomed to fall back on themselves as fragmented “bodies” and live piecemeal between the corporeal world—the body—and the incorporeal world—the world of memory.

Finally, the thesis explores the interplay of forces between power, memory, and suffering. This interplay is complex. It does not form a simple interlocking form, with a power-memory pair opposing a power-suffering pair. The situation rather takes a triangular form of power, memory, and suffering. Its mode of operation follows a pattern of power producing suffering, in the first instance, during the rebellion. It is because of power that the bodies of the subjects were assaulted at that time. That same power was the reason for pain, objectification, torture, anger and fear being spread. Suffering was embodied into this “original” power [*pouvoir originel*]. But what made this suffering continue long into the future was memory. Particular forms of memory were continuously evoked through power. Power, as the transmission belt of memory, always generates suffering. It moves between spaces, keeping the “energy” up and continuously changing itself. At the same time, it changes the other that is the suffered “body.” Power does not flow from a particular person or memory. It is outside of bodies and memory. It is because of power that memory reverberates across time and takes new forms. It is because of the same power that memory can never heal and continues to produce suffering.

Challenges, contributions, and perspectives for the future

Writing a thesis on the Congo from South Africa can never be easy. One does not always have the documentation needed as scholarly literature in French is not easily accessible in Johannesburg. The same applies to the Congo itself where little scholarly literature is available in English and where it is hard to find archival materials relating to the post-colonial era. As a result researchers are forced to work with “absences.” Despite the

paucity of the data, I humbly believe that the thesis has made some significant theoretical interventions. One such intervention relates to disciplinary methodological debates. The thesis argues for a confluent approach, one not contained by conventional historiographical, ethnographic or philosophical frameworks. This approach can be useful to scholars working in repressive postcolonial contexts where debates, critical historical research, and dissenting views are curtailed.

A second intervention lies in the relationship between place and memory—*lieu de mémoire*—which scholars, often historians, have looked at separately. When discussing suffering on the body, writers from Elaine Scarry to Veena Das have focused on corporeal suffering. This thesis proposes that it is necessary to consider four elements—the landscape, the body, the scars, the mind or memory—in a way that allows these to be part of a unified structure. It has done so by bringing them into conversation with existing and insightful theoretical and historical works.

A third intervention is how the thesis has approached the analysis of disability. There is a big divide between pessimistic and optimistic approaches in the study of disability.² This thesis suggests a different direction, neither the first nor the second, but rather argues that the wound from the rebellion remains active across time and space.

The last intervention relates to the historiography of the Mulele rebellion. The themes that have attracted the attention of scholars since the 1960s, as I discussed in the introduction, are issues of ideology, political radicalization, mass mobilization, socio-political analysis of the rebels, their identities, the causes of the rebellion, the ambiguous features of the movement, the Mulele rebellion as an illustration of the processes which led to the founding and development of social movements in the Third World after 1945, the role of international powers in the Congo crisis, Mulele's action as a rebellion or revolution, Pierre Mulele as second Patrice Lumumba, the Mulele rebellion as "social theory," and Pierre Mulele between treachery and heroism. I have expanded these themes by focusing on questions of the imaginaries of suffering, places, the body, and the relationship between power, memory and suffering.

² See, for example, Ernest Cole, *Theorizing the Disfigured Body: Mutilation, Amputation, and Disability in Post-conflict Sierra Leone*, Trenton: Africa World Press, 2014.

This thesis studies suffering in one very particular place and time, the Congo during the Mulele rebellion of the 1960s. Its findings indicate, however, that there is a need for a much wider, comparative study of the history of suffering across the world, a study that would break all bounds of a dissertation. It is a task for the intrepid.

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